

April-May 2026



Take the first step & join the first ever Heart Foundation
Aquatic Walking Group
Walking on Water at Swell Palmerston
Mondays at 2.00 pm

For all abilities, walking in water is great for people with low mobility, making it perfect for many of our members. One third of our members live in the Palmerston and rural area, making this a great opportunity for them.

Walk in water and win – 3 walks in 3 months. As a special introduction The Heart Foundation is offering members of Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT 1 free coffee when they do 3 walks in 3 months, April through to June.

Go to Page 3 for more details on registering.

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Shoulder osteoarthritis

University of Queensland PhD student, Mr Daha Muhammad, has contacted us to invite our members who have shoulder OA to participate. In a survey

An opportunity for members to take part in research, your voice can help improve care

Shoulder osteoarthritis (OA) is not uncommon and can be disabling; yet little is known about the experience of those living with the condition. Compared to hip and knee osteoarthritis, there is also limited clinical treatment guidelines for shoulder OA, especially non-surgical care.



Physiotherapists often deliver treatment for people with shoulder OA; however, the views, thoughts and behaviours of adults with shoulder OA regarding the physiotherapist treatment are unknown.

Researchers at the University of Queensland, Australia, are conducting an interview study (conversation) to explore the experience, views and behaviours of adults with shoulder OA regarding the condition.

This study aims to better understand the perception of adults with shoulder OA, and the findings will help inform the development of optimised physiotherapy care.

You may be able to take part if you:

- Are aged 45 years and older
- Had a diagnosis of shoulder OA as confirmed by a healthcare professional or radiographically
- Whether or not you have ever seen a physiotherapist for treatment of your shoulder OA

Taking part involves a 45 - 60 minute interview (online or by phone) at a time that suits you.

You will be reimbursed for your time.

To learn more or express your interest, either

1. scan the QR code below or
2. contact PhD student Daha Muhammad directly through d.muhammad@uq.edu.au or call 0488 019 087



Thank you



Copy provided by Mr Daha Muhammad, University of Queensland.

March 2026

Walking on water

Aquatic Walking Group

Walking on Water at SWELL Palmerston is a social, supportive and simple way to boost health and make connections for free. Offering a unique and inclusive approach, walking together not only improves physical health but also fosters social connections and emotional wellbeing.

Recognising the diverse needs of the community, the program has encouraged innovative approaches to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate, regardless of mobility, injury, age, or chronic health conditions.

Water walking involves walking in the shallow end of a swimming pool with a trained aquatic Walk Organiser. The buoyancy of water reduces impact on joints, making it a safe and enjoyable exercise for older adults, people recovering from injury, those living with arthritis, or anyone seeking a low-impact alternative to traditional walking.

To register you can go online here:

<https://www.heartfoundationwalking.org.au/fundraiser/id-viv97z/walking-on-water-at-swell>

If you prefer you can also meet Chris your Walk Organiser at the pool and she will assist you with an offline registration form. Chris will look after you as she is qualified aquatic instructor with current first aid. She also loves the water and will be excited to have you join her.

Copy provided by the Walking Program Officer, Heart Foundation NT

March 2026

Community engagement

Palmerston Library Info Hub

Participating in the Palmerston Library Info Hub program provides an opportunity to reach the Palmerston & rural community. One third of our members live in this area, so this is an opportunity for them to stop by and check out our materials. We are booked in to have a stall in the foyer there on the fourth Friday of each month from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. We are there to answer queries about arthritis and osteoporosis, provide materials or simply have chat.

Katherine Seniors Expo

This has been rescheduled to 30th April and AONT will have an information stall there. We have also been invited by COTA to participate in their joint workshop on the day before. If you have friends or family in Katherine, please let them know we are on our way!



Upcoming info sessions in Darwin

Third Friday of every month at our office in Rapid Creek
17th April, 15th May & 19th June. More detail on back page.

Hands Up!

Our hands are marvels of architectural design, mechanics and engineering. They are the most flexible and mobile part of the skeleton, and are critically important to our function and independence.

Each hand (usually) has twenty seven bones (some people have more), twenty nine joints, thirty four muscles (located in the forearm), one hundred and twenty three named ligaments (that connect the bones together in a joint), twenty tendons (that join muscles to the bones), and forty eight named nerves (that allow for precise movements).



Our fingerprints help us to grip small things and enhance our sense of touch. As we age our skin becomes less elastic and our fingerprints become less prominent.

Hand-le with care

Our hands are subject to a range of injuries including fractures, dislocations, burns, cuts, bumps and bruises, ganglion cysts, strains and sprains. Conditions affecting hands include inflammation or contractures of connective tissues (eg. trigger finger), Dupuytren's contracture (thickening of the skin and fascia on the palm), Raynaud's disease (restriction of blood flow into the fingers) and types of arthritis.

Arthritic joint changes can be in the form of:

- damage to the cartilage that covers the ends of the bones in the joint/s
- bony enlargements
- inflammation or laxity of connective tissues (tendons and ligaments)
- inflammation of the lining of the joint
- crystal buildup in the joint
- and changes in finger shape and nails.

Risk factors for developing arthritis in the hands include being:

- older (for osteoarthritis typically after the age of 50, in rheumatoid between 35 and 50)
- Caucasian
- female
- overweight or obese
- from a family with a history of hand arthritis
- someone who sustained injuries to their hands (e.g. sport or repetitive work).

Hands can develop deformities if arthritis is not diagnosed and actively treated/managed. Over the years, the thumb joints particularly can take a beating. Your thumb is actively involved in over 50% of all movements made by the hands.

Treatment options for hand arthritis are aimed at decreasing stiffness, swelling and pain; improving/maintaining mobility, flexibility and function and slowing down the progression of the condition.

Strategies for protecting hands include:

- preventing damage to the structures of the hands in the first place by avoiding joint stress, using equipment and aids, utilising proper lifting techniques, protecting hands when playing sport, gardening and/or working
- seeking prompt treatment for hand injuries and infections
- for cartilage health, staying hydrated and not smoking
- protecting thumb joints by taking care when using equipment (including for exercise, at work, in the house or the garden)
- listen to your joints - pain in a joint is its way of telling you that you have done too much - rest it in a comfortable position, apply heat or cold, and take note of what activities caused the pain so you can avoid them, modify them or do less
- balance periods of activity and rest - learn your 'pain-free' threshold for doing specific tasks and stop before you reach it. Take frequent breaks, alternating between heavy and lighter tasks
- position yourself well to minimise strain including changing your body position
- use larger joints to do the work and spread the load e.g. use two hands or carry heavy items in a backpack
- use aids, equipment or appliances - kettles that tip, tap turners, jar keys and electric can openers, add padding to handles to offer cushioning
- use splints, braces, finger sleeves, supportive gloves or taping - wear them when working and when sleeping to keep the joints in a good position and guard against deformity
- exercises - the same 'use it or lose it' rule as any other joints applies. Only exercise within your pain-free threshold/limit, exercise your hands submerged in warm/ hot water. A recipe for making Therapy Dough is planned for the next newsletter
- take medications (analgesics and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories) as directed
- eat healthy, unprocessed foods and maintain a healthy weight
- if conservative measures don't work sufficiently surgery may be an option
- ask for help - from family or friends to assist when you are in pain
- seek advice from health care practitioners including your GP, an occupational therapist and/or a hand physiotherapist.

Extracted from the December 2025 issue of "Arthritis Matters" the newsletter of Arthritis & Osteoporosis Tasmania

Relevant resources available from AONTs Rapid Creek office include:

- Arthritis Australia information sheets: Hands and arthritis, Working with your healthcare team, and Dealing with pain
- Arthritis Australia booklets: At home with arthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis - Consumer care guide, Taking control of your osteoarthritis, and Taking control of your pain in arthritis.

Back pain—the importance of moving

A patient's story: thanks to Natalie and Arthritis Tasmania

“It started so suddenly, just a mild twinge one evening and the next day I couldn't move without terrible back pain, I didn't know what had hit me.

At thirty two, the mother of three young kids and active helping my partner on our farm, I have always been fit and well. My only experience of spine-related issues was when I was heavily pregnant, then my back would get tired by the end of the day. That is why I was so surprised when I was literally flattened by this excruciating pain in my back, from doing absolutely nothing out of the ordinary.



At first, all I wanted to do was lie in bed, dreading the time when I would need to get up to go to the bathroom next. I hobbled around a little, bent over and unable to do a thing. I couldn't lift our toddler or help with the older kids, do any housework or help on the farm. After a week, I decided to go to see the GP and just getting there was an absolute trial. It took two and a half hours for me to have a quick shower and get dressed, then the trip in the car was agony – only to be told that the best thing I could do was to move around more, take a Panadol and use a hot water bottle if necessary.

I asked the GP if I needed a scan or X-ray to see what damage I had done, because surely it would show something serious, only to be told that it would be a waste of time and money. She explained that I most likely had a strained muscle and that it would resolve itself, and it would do this sooner if I



started to move as normally as possible. It didn't get better immediately, but each day I was able to do more. I was careful not to twist my spine, and I made an effort to walk as much as I could, often taking the toddler and the dog with me – it was

actually quite lovely. I have since seen a physiotherapist who gave me a few exercises to do to make my back stronger and I do them if I have any twinges, but these are rare now.

I also called Arthritis Tasmania, and they sent me a booklet on back pain which explained a lot and I feel more confident that I can improve function and manage any back issues in the future.”

Images:

Top - farm shed Wikimedia Commons

Middle - painful back, iStock

Right - walking the dogs, Shutterstock



Copies of the booklet, Taking control of your back pain, are available at the AONT office. Simply call in to our office Monday to Thursday 9:30am to 2:00pm, phone 8948 5232, or email us info@aont.org.au

Turkey burgers with herbed yoghurt sauce

Makes 4 burgers

Ingredients

- 400g gold sweet potato, cut into 1cm-thick batons
- Olive oil spray
- 500g turkey mince
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ⅓ cup chopped coriander
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- ¼ cup (70g) Greek-style yoghurt
- 4 multigrain rolls, split, toasted
- 1 medium carrot, peeled, shredded
- 1 cup (80g) finely shredded red cabbage
- 1 medium Lebanese cucumber, peeled into ribbons



Method

Step 1

Preheat oven to 200°C. Line a baking tray with baking paper. Place the sweet potato in a microwave-safe bowl. Cook on high (100%) for 5 minutes or until just tender.

Step 2

Arrange the sweet potato in a single layer on the lined tray. Spray with olive oil spray. Bake for 20 minutes or until brown and crisp.

Step 3

Meanwhile, combine the mince, cumin, half the coriander and half the garlic in a medium bowl. Divide the mince mixture into 4 even portions and shape each portion into a patty.

Step 4

Heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Cook the patties for 5 minutes each side or until golden and cooked through.

Step 5

Combine the yoghurt, remaining coriander and remaining garlic in a small bowl.

Step 6

Place the roll bases on serving plates. Spread with the yoghurt mixture. Top with patties, carrot, cabbage and cucumber. Top with the roll tops. Serve with the sweet potato.

Source:

<https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/recipes/turkey-burgers-with-herbed-yoghurt-sauce>

About us & what we do:



- Responding to walk in and telephone enquiries
- Providing personalised information packs in response to enquiries
- Hosting regular education sessions. Call the office on 8948 5232 for more details and to reserve a spot on our upcoming sessions:
 - ⇒ **Friday 17th April, 10:00am to 12:00pm “Taking the first step to becoming more active”**
 - ⇒ **Friday 15th May, 10:00am to 11:30 am “Understanding and managing arthritis and osteoporosis”**
 - ⇒ **Friday 19th June, 9:30am to 1:00pm “What a Pain!”**
- Providing information stands at a range of forums throughout the year
- Presentations to community groups
- Keeping in touch with other community health organisations and the services they provide
- Delivering bulk materials on request to a range of health services
- Producing this newsletter six times a year
- Liaising with Arthritis Australia, interstate arthritis affiliates and Healthy Bones Australia
- Making applications for various small grants to assist with special projects

The Arthritis Foundation of the Northern Territory Inc.

Trading as

Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT

ABN 67 099 326 608

Patron

Ms Ruth Jones

We are open

9:30am – 2:00pm

Monday to Thursday

(excluding Public Holidays)

Contact us

Freecall: 1800 011 041

(08) 8948 5232

info@aont.org.au

Find us at

Shop 18 Rapid Creek

Business Village,

48 Trower Rd Millner

PO Box 452,

Nightcliff 0814

www.aont.org.au

facebook.com/

arthritis.osteoporosis.nt

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