

joinNTed

The newsletter of
The Arthritis Foundation of the
Northern Territory Inc.

Trading as



Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT

April 2022

Providing
reliable and up to
date information to
improve the
understanding of
arthritis and
osteoporosis.
Promoting
healthy lifestyles
and self-
management to
optimise health
outcomes.

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Osteoarthritis — Medication pitfalls

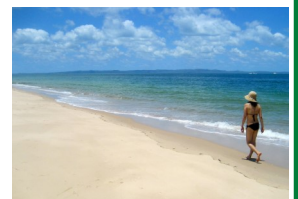
Professor David Hunter of the University of Sydney, a rheumatology clinical researcher in osteoarthritis, says that many people who visit a doctor for help with osteoarthritis will be prescribed an anti-inflammatory pill or paracetamol. One in five will be prescribed an opioid. But these medications can have serious side effects and opioids can actually be dangerous and lead to worsening of pain if used long term.

Dr Christina Abdel Shaheed, also from the University of Sydney, warns that using opioids for more than 12 days can lead to dependence that makes the pain worse: “It might not actually be the pain condition that is worsening, but it’s their dependency to the opioid medicine where they feel like they need to take a higher dose to be able to get the pain relief they used to, but they also experience heightened sensation to pain.”

Best treatment for osteoarthritis

Professor Hunter advises: “the best treatment for osteoarthritis is not a pill or even surgery - it’s weight loss and exercise.”

“Anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen, Diclofenac, Celecoxib probably provide about 25 per cent relief from osteoarthritis pain.”



“Losing weight and exercising would give twice as much pain relief than any pill, but few patients are ever told to do it. A proper program to achieve these goals requires at least 10 to 12 visits to a physiotherapist, dietician, psychologist and exercise physiologist.” But Medicare helps fund only five visits per year to such allied health services.

Thanks to Sue Denlevy, National Health Reporter for The Daily Telegraph. Sunday Territorian, digital 20/03/2022

Exercise options for people with arthritis and/or osteoporosis

As noted on Page 1, one of the best treatments for managing osteoarthritis is exercise. This is true of all forms of arthritis.

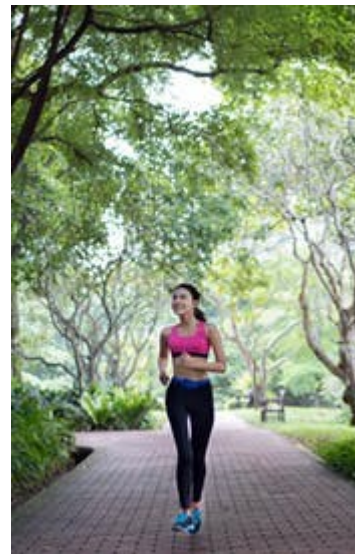
Structured exercise is any physical activity which is:

- ♦ planned, repetitive and purposeful,
- ♦ With the aim of maintaining or improving one or more of the components of physical fitness: flexibility, strength, balance and cardiovascular fitness.



All these aspects of fitness are important to most of our every day activities:

Flexibility and **strength** are essential for work and play.



Cardiovascular fitness :

an efficient heart is needed to deliver oxygen and nutrients to all parts of the body so we can keep on doing the things that matter.



Continued on next page

GENERAL EXERCISE GROUP

 **Movement for Life**
PHYSIOTHERAPY

movementforlifephysio.com.au

08 8945 3799

Diabetes
Osteoporosis
Chronic Heart Disease
Respiratory Disease
Deconditioning
Arthritis

THURSDAYS
11.00am
Bookings essential
HICAPs Available

6 Caryota Court
Coconut Grove

“Movement for Life Physiotherapy” is now running a general exercise program, tailored to the individual, and excellent for people with arthritis and osteoporosis. Private health rebates and people on enhanced primary care (Medicare) plans are welcome. Please feel free to get in touch with any questions. Ring **8945 3799**

Copy provided by Movement for Life Physiotherapy.

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Balance :

is the perfect example of the concept of “use it or lose it.” But **losing your balance is a dangerous proposition when you consider how vulnerable that leaves you to injury from a fall as we get older.** The fitter we are, the better our chances of recovering from a trip or slip, and not hitting the floor at all!



“**Script changes for docs**” article to the right copied from the Sunday Territorian March 13th 2022.

Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT has published several articles in previous newsletters relating to this scheme :

- December 2021, when the relevant laws were passed through NT Parliament
- June 2021, and
- April 2021 for preliminary information

Many of the medicines which will be affected by the scheme are used for pain relief in chronic conditions such as arthritis.

Script changes for docs

BETHANY GRIFFITHS

NORTHERN Territory doctors will now be able to access real-time information on scripts for their patients.

The initiative NTScript is jointly funded by the Territory and federal governments and will mean there is greater accessibility to prescribing records and information about the supply of high-risk medicines.



Natasha Fyles.

The introduction of NTScript will help doctors and patients have informed conversations and reduce the risk of medication-related harm and also improve patient access to some medications.

“Territorians deserve access to high standard health care and NTScript will help doctors and pharmacists to provide extra care and improve patient access to some medicines,” Health Minister Natasha Fyles said.

“Prescription medicines are an important tool to manage the health of Territorians, however, there is growing evidence nationally that particular medicines carry a high risk of dependence, misuse and overuse. NTScript will be a useful tool in improving clinical decision making for new and existing patients,” she said.

It will be available for free for health professionals.

Baked Salmon with Cucumber Dill Sauce

Number of servings 2

Ingredients

Sauce

- 1/4 cucumber, peeled, seeded, and finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup plain low-fat yoghurt
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1/2 bunch of spring onions, finely chopped
- 1/2 tbs dill, chopped
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper



Salmon

- 2 skinless salmon fillets, about 175g each
- 1 tsp olive oil, 1/2 tbs fresh lemon juice

Method

1. To make the sauce, toss the cucumber with 1/2 tsp salt in a sieve and let stand to drain for 1 hour. Rinse with cold water and pat dry with paper towels. Mix the cucumber, yoghurt, mustard, spring onions, and dill. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Arrange the salmon in an oiled shallow baking dish. Brush with oil, sprinkle with lemon juice, and season with salt and pepper.
3. Bake in the oven for 8-10 minutes, until the salmon is opaque when pierced with the tip of a knife. Using a slotted spatula, transfer the salmon to dinner plates. Stir the pan juices into the cucumber sauce. Spoon the sauce over the salmon. Serve hot.

Patient Information on the COVID-19 vaccination in autoimmune inflammatory rheumatic diseases (AIRD) from the Australian Rheumatology Association 6 April 2022

Why is it important for me to have the COVID-19 vaccine?

Some diseases (including rheumatoid arthritis) are caused by the body's immune system, which usually protects us from infection. When the immune system is affected by arthritis or drugs to treat the condition, the risk from COVID-19 may be increased.

If you get vaccinated, you will be less likely to get COVID-19. Even if you do get COVID-19 when vaccinated, it is more likely to be a milder illness.

People who catch COVID-19 can become very unwell. There is increasing information that being unvaccinated not only makes you more likely to get infected but also that you are more likely to become sick or die if you are infected.

Which vaccine should I have?

The COVID-19 vaccines available in Australia are safe for people with arthritis and people taking drugs that suppress the immune system, even if the condition is active. This is because none of these is a "live" vaccine.

For the full information sheet please call the AONT office, Mon to Thurs 9:30 am to 2:00pm

General Falls overview - from “Standing Tall, www.standingtall.org.au”

a website created by the Falls, Balance and Injury Research Centre at Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA). The website includes quizzes such as: What is your risk of falling? How much do you know about falls? Myths vs facts.



Key points to remember:

- As you get older, you are more likely to have weak muscles and instability, which can lead to falls
- Many falls can be prevented
- By identifying and managing your risk factors, you can reduce your risk of falling
- Even if you haven't had a fall, reducing your risk of falling in the future is important
- Exercise is the most effective action you can take to prevent falls
- Improving your balance can help to reduce your concern about falling, increase your balance confidence and prevent falls

What can I do right now?

- Identify your fall risk factors, a health professional can help you do this e.g. GP or physiotherapist
- Incorporate balance exercise that is challenging but safe (e.g. have something sturdy to hang onto if you need) into your exercise regime
- Talk to health care professionals if you have any concerns regarding your fall risk
- Correct vision problems e.g. cataract surgery, consider single lens glasses for outdoor mobility
- Manage any cardiovascular risks e.g. arrhythmias
- Manage foot pain and problems (see podiatrist)
- Try to be more physically active, physical activity and exercise can help many chronic health problems

What are the **benefits** of exercise and physical activity?

- improve your balance and prevent falls (if you incorporate balance exercises)
- improve your strength and fitness
- keep you independent and able to do the activities you enjoy, such as visiting friends and relatives
- prevent or reduce the impact of chronic diseases
- reduce stress, anxiety and depression
- improve your concentration, confidence and sense of wellbeing

**The Arthritis
Foundation of the
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Trading as
**Arthritis &
Osteoporosis NT**
ABN 67 099 326 608

Patron

Her Honour the Honourable
Vicki O'Halloran AM
Administrator of the NT

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48 Trower Rd Millner

www.aont.org.au

[facebook.com/
arthritis.osteoporosis.nt](https://facebook.com/arthritis.osteoporosis.nt)

We are open:

9:30am – 2pm
Monday to Thursday
(excluding Public Holidays)

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Renae Callaway

What We Do

Our work includes:

- Responding to walk in , email and telephone enquiries
- Providing personalised information packs in response to enquiries
- Producing this newsletter six times a year
- Hosting pain self-management courses for consumers - ring the office, 8948 5232, for more details of the next available course
- Providing information stands at a range of forums throughout the year
- Keeping in touch with other community health organization and the services they provide
- Delivering bulk materials on request to a range of health services
- Presentations to community groups by invitation
- Making applications for various small grants to assist with special projects
- Liaising with Arthritis Australia and other state and territory arthritis organisations
- Liaising with Healthy Bones Australia



Support Groups



Our support groups are opportunities for members to meet informally over a cup of tea or coffee, to chat, exchange news and ideas or anything else you want to do. We hope you feel better when you leave than when you arrived.

Guest speakers and/or activities are usually arranged for each meeting.

You will gain support and understanding with only as much information and advice as you wish to take away.



Palmerston:

Meets at the Brennan
Electorate Office, Palmerston
Shopping Centre (opposite
Target)

Third Monday of each month
at 10.00 am

Darwin:

If any members are at all
interested in the formation of
a Darwin based support
group, please let us know so
we can make it happen!

8948 5232 Mon to Thurs
9:30am to 2:00pm



facebook.com/arthritis.osteoporosis.nt



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