



ARTHRITIS AND RHEUMATISM ASSOCIATES, P.C.

Board Certified Rheumatologists

Herbert S.B. Baraf
MD FACP FACR

Robert L. Rosenberg
MD FACR CCD

Evan L. Siegel
MD FACR

Emma DiIorio
MD FACR

David G. Borenstein
MD FACP FACR

Alan K. Matsumoto
MD FACR

Robert J. Lloyd
MD MACR

David P. Wolfe
MD FACR

Shari B. Diamond
MD FACR

Paul J. DeMarco
MD FACP FACR

Ashley D. Beall
MD FACR

Angus B. Worthing
MD FACR

Guada Respicio
MD MS FACR

Justin Peng
MD FACR

Rachel Kaiser
MD MPH FACP FACR

Exercise: A Fundamental Treatment

Joshua Costa, PT, DPT
Director of Rehabilitation

Arthritis and Rehabilitation Therapy Services (ARTS) / Arthritis and Rheumatism Associates, P.C.



According to the Arthritis Foundation, 46 million Americans (nearly 1 in 5 adults) are affected by arthritis. It is a disease that can affect many different parts of our bodies, resulting in significant functional limitations. Arthritis is the number one cause for disability in Americans over the age of 15. Increasingly, however, research findings are demonstrating the significant benefits of exercise and movement in combating this disease.

Gone are the days of uncertainty about the benefits of exercise.

We now know how important it is to stay active as we age. There is truth to the old adage “use it or lose it.” When we are sedentary for prolonged periods of time, our muscles can atrophy and become weak. It is very important to maintain an active lifestyle. This might seem like a catch-22 since exercising can cause pain. However, there are ways to minimize the negative side effects of exercise.

Physical therapy can be extremely beneficial in combating the effects of arthritis on our bodies and can help us be active with less pain. Physical therapists specialize in exercise and

movement. Your physician might recommend you see a physical therapist to help decrease your level of pain and increase your strength, range of motion and overall functional mobility. At ARTS our physical therapists perform a thorough evaluation and decide on an individualized plan of care for each patient. The therapist, in concert with the referring physician, determines the appropriate use of modalities, manual therapy and therapeutic exercises.

The therapist will also educate you on the importance of posture, joint protection and body mechanics, and give you an exercise program to perform at home. As your treatment progresses, the therapist will continue to concentrate on decreasing your symptoms. You should begin to notice an increase in your level of energy and strength and a decrease in your level of fatigue and pain. The key to having success in therapy is having a well-balanced program that emphasizes pain relief, improved function, a home exercise program and patient education. Often, continuing with a wellness program after completion of therapy can be beneficial and should be discussed with your therapist.