

Community tips for exercise

Taken from a Facebook chat with an Arthritis Educator.
With many thanks to our dedicated and knowledgeable
Arthritis Educators and the arthritis community in
Aotearoa.



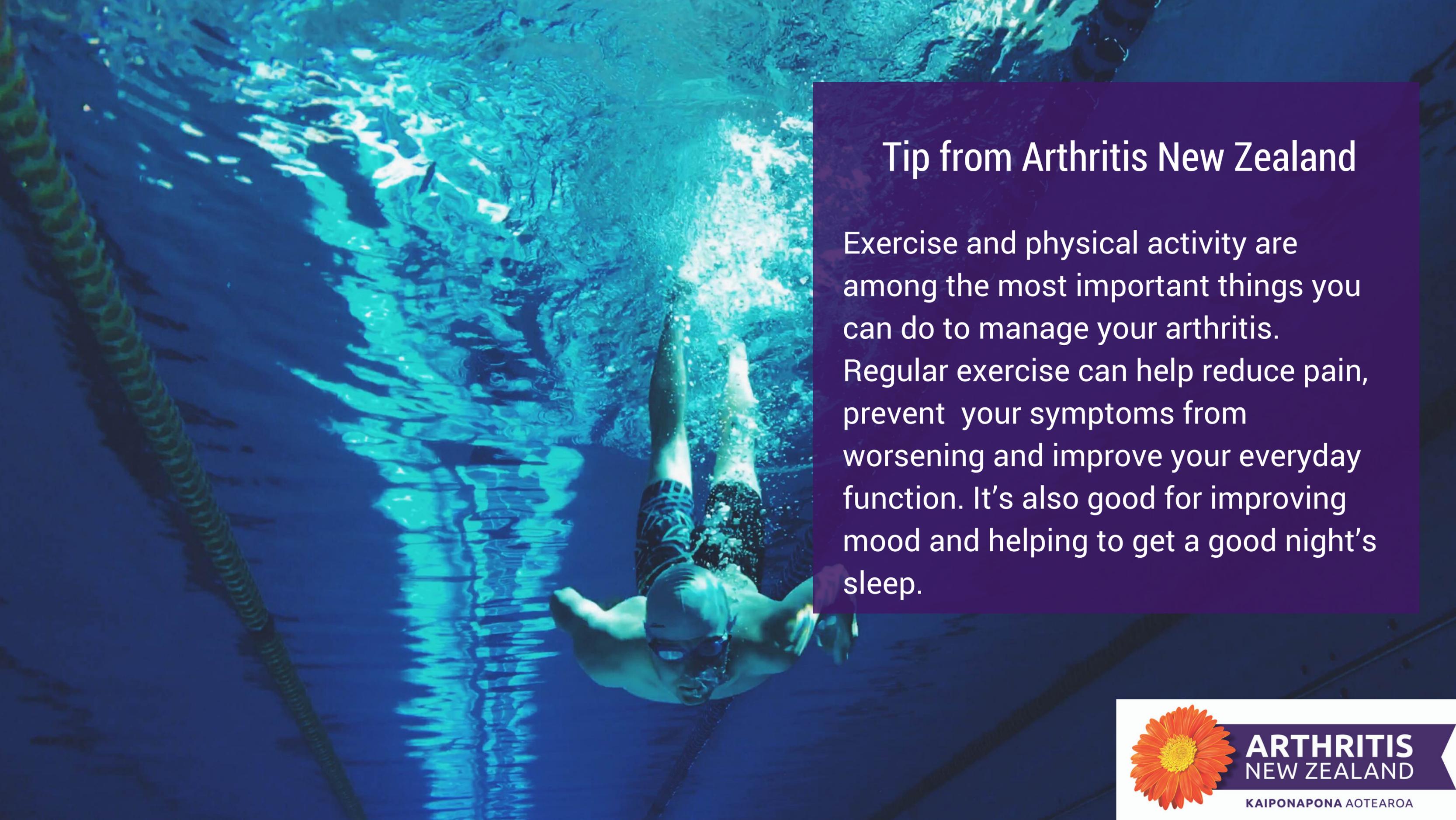
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NEW ZEALAND

KAIPONAPONA AOTEAROA

*Our Vision: Improving the life of
every person affected by arthritis*

*Ko tō mātou aronga: Kia whakapiki
i te oranga o te hūnga kua pāngia
e te mate kaiponapona*





Tip from Arthritis New Zealand

Exercise and physical activity are among the most important things you can do to manage your arthritis. Regular exercise can help reduce pain, prevent your symptoms from worsening and improve your everyday function. It's also good for improving mood and helping to get a good night's sleep.



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Tip from Arthritis New Zealand

A Green Prescription can help you stay motivated as you are linked with an exercise support person who will work with you to help you set exercise goals, just for you.

It's good to be flexible with your exercise routine. Some days will be better than others. Knowing what you can do and then having other choices on days when joints are sore is a really great way to maintain a regular exercise routine.



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Tips from the arthritis community

"I've recently started going to the pool with a friend also with arthritis. We spend time doing exercises in the water. We both find we can do more with ease in the water."

"I like using the gym best doing upper body and leg strength and bike. No knee exercises that cause strain and stress on knee joints. When my knee is really sore or my elbow is playing up I go to pool instead and swim lengths."

"I started off with Green Prescription. I notice I seize up and get stiffer than usual if I miss more than a couple of days. We do our classes in a warm pool."

"I go to aquacise classes three times per week. It really helps to keep me moving."



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Tip from Arthritis New Zealand

Motivation is important as it really affects how we think about what we do/whether we do it, and how confident we are to exercise.

Motivation to exercise can be linked to the goals that drive you. These goals can start off being simple and then develop to become longer term goals. So for example if goals are realistic rather than too ambitious, then goal setting is less likely to fail.

Having a sense that you can do something and then going about it in a way that works for you can really make a difference to your ability to exercise.

Enjoying doing exercise is so important. Making your physical activities fun can help you stay motivated.



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Tip from the community

“Keeping motivated and finding the energy is the hardest part. I have to be extremely careful to eat right and get enough sleep. I found the best thing I ever did was finding a good physiotherapist to work with me to work out what helps and what causes a flare.”



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Tip from the community

“I have a dog who needs walking, a horse that needs working and riding and a farm that I have to work on for my accommodation. Needs must but I am very glad for all of these things.”



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Tips from the community

“I work full time. I’m out of the house from around 7.45 am to 6.45 pm. So I can’t make myself even think about exercise, even though I’m fully aware of the benefits.

“Between work, kids and after school activities, and trying to balance getting enough rest, finding the time for exercise is hard. I do feel so much better for the exercise though and it does help my rheumatoid arthritis. I do barre classes when they fit my timetable.”

Tip from Arthritis New Zealand

Some people add in exercise in short bite-sized chunks, such as walking for ten minutes at lunch time. You could get off the bus a few stops early going to and from work - it all adds up. Exercise does not have to be done in big chunks, pacing is better.

Caring for the kids, doing housework, getting out in the garden are also forms of physical activity.



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Tip from the community

“Over the last nine months I have gone back to cycling. I needed to take some control over my mental and physical well-being. I started very slowly and two weeks ago I completed a 70km road ride and I’m now targeting the 160km Round Taupo in November. It hasn’t been without trial and tribulations, but I am doing it. Cycling is low impact on my joints and the muscle strength I have gained has made a massive difference to my general rheumatoid arthritis. I still have flares and times I can’t ride, but wow! Do I ever feel better! At 61, I have had rheumatoid arthritis for 11 years but I feel the best I’ve felt in all that time.”



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Tip from Arthritis New Zealand

If we pace ourselves and break up tasks in order to rest our joints, then we can reduce overstraining the joint supporting tissues, while still doing activities that are important to us. There's lots of gadgets and devices for hands.

These make many tasks easier. Even a non-slip grip mat for turning handles and undoing lids can help. You can find these products on mobility centre websites.



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Tip from the community

“I gave up knitting prior to diagnosis because it hurt my shoulders and elbows. With treatment and circular knitting needles, I’m loving knitting again. The circular needles distribute the weight of your work better and the shorter needle shank is easier on the hands.”



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Tip from the community

“What’s kept me motivated is I don’t feel so stiff and can move better by continued exercise, I believe in the saying ‘move it or lose it’. I’m in my late 50s and still work as an early childhood teacher. So I have to be able to move fast and be fit. I have older members in my family who could have benefited from having an exercise plan at my age. It’s these things that keep me motivated with exercising. Sometimes If I have only gone to gym or pool twice that week, I don’t feel guilty and try for three the next week. Getting going can be hard if I’m tired or sore. However I know I’ll feel a lot better afterwards.”



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Tip from Arthritis New Zealand

Cost can be a challenge. Green Prescription, obtained from your GP is a free exercise referral support service, which can also provide discounts to amenities, information about exercise options in your local area, and nutrition support.

The Disability Allowance includes an allowance for gym and swimming costs to be claimed for therapeutic reasons. There is also provision to claim for assistance with transport costs.

Thank you to the Arthritis Facebook community for your comments.



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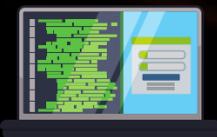
Good luck with getting active!



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