



## Being Active with Physical Limitations

*Remember to check with your doctor before starting a physical activity program.*

### **Don't let arthritis slow you down.**

- To help joint movement and make your joints feel less stiff, do stretching exercises almost daily.
- Stretches and exercises are best done when your muscles and joints are warm. Try stretching after doing the dishes, taking a warm bath or after a walk.

### **Take care of numb or tingly feet or hands.**

- Never walk barefoot.
- Keep your feet and hands warm.
- Use tools with thicker grips to help you hold them easily.

### **Manage breathing problems.**

- Break your activity into 5- and 10-minute blocks of time. Rest in between if you need to, then try to do a few minutes more.
- Wait an hour after eating before you exercise.
- Try being active soon after taking your breathing medicine.

## **Preventing falls**

- Be sure that stairwells and halls are well lit.
- Take your time on steps and curbs. Look at the steps.
- On icy days, walk with a friend or do indoor activities.
- Put nonskid backing on rugs.
- If reaching makes you dizzy, put things on low shelves.
- Strength training and stretching exercises will help your balance. Walking and strength training will strengthen your bones.

## **Work on upper body stretches.**

- Upper body stretches can make it easier to do everyday activities like reaching for things, getting dressed, and doing household chores.
- Do upper body exercises.

## **Work on neck flexibility.**

- Neck flexibility makes it easier to do everyday activities like turning your head.
- Do gentle neck exercises.

## **Get a grip!**

- Squeeze a soft ball to improve the strength of your grip.
- Use special equipment to help open jars or grasp things.
- Use foam rubber and tape to build up handles on your tools.

## **Protect your back and leg muscles.**

- Good leg and lower back flexibility can help you prevent back injuries and reduce muscle soreness.
- Use raised garden beds or long-handled tools.
- Bend your knees and not your back when lifting.
- Try back stretches.

## **Do exercises that slowly increase your strength.**

- Strong muscles can help prevent pain and injury.
- Use a stretch band looped around a heavy object like a table leg.
- Climb stairs, a few at a time, to increase leg strength.

## **Move a little more every day.**

- Movement gets oxygen to your muscles.
- Do activities that use large muscles—try walking or vacuuming.
- Build up! Start with 5-10 minutes of walking at one time, and increase by 2-3 minutes every few days, until you can comfortably do 30 minutes.