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**Steps to Offering**

**The Arthritis**

**Self-Help Program**

**in Your Community**

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These materials were developed by the Minnesota Department of Health's Arthritis Program in support of the programs of the Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter.

Revised April 2006



# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

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For more information on **Arthritis Foundation** programs, please contact:

Program Coordinator  
Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter  
1902 Minnehaha Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-644-4108  
800-333-1380

For more information about these materials, please contact:

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# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

## About the Arthritis Foundation

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The mission of the Arthritis Foundation is to improve lives through leadership in the prevention, control and cure of arthritis and related diseases.

The Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter serves Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. The Arthritis Foundation is able to support you with:

- Information about arthritis (brochures, books, newsletters, magazines)
- Educational and support programs and services for adults and children
- Physician referral list
- Conferences, public forums and events
- Membership and volunteer opportunities
- Speakers bureau

For more information about the Arthritis Foundation, contact:

Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter  
1902 Minnehaha Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55104  
800-333-1380  
[www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)

## Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

### Slide Presentation: Living Well with Arthritis

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The slide presentation found at the link below is suitable for a community audience. It gives an overview of arthritis and how to manage it. It also provides information about the Arthritis Foundation.

Hopefully, the presentation will serve to encourage people with arthritis, fibromyalgia or chronic joint pain to learn more about self-management and exercise for arthritis.

The slide presentation can be found at:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/arthritis/text/pdfs/livingwellwitharthritis.pdf>

# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

## Program Goals

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The Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program is a 6-week course is for anyone with any type of arthritis, fibromyalgia, or chronic joint pain. It is designed to help participants learn how to manage symptoms that keep them from doing daily activities and/or things they enjoy.

Over the 6 sessions, participants learn about:

- Arthritis and fibromyalgia
- pain management techniques
- problem-solving
- fatigue and energy conservation
- exercise
- depression
- medications
- healthy eating
- getting a good night's sleep and
- working with their health care provider

Participants develop an action plan each week and report back to the group on their level of success the next week. In this way, they learn how to build their own self-management program and gain the confidence to carry it out.

The Arthritis Self-Help Program has been proven to reduce arthritis-related pain by 20% and decrease doctor visits by 43%. Participants increase their levels of exercise, relaxation, confidence, and knowledge about their arthritis.

## Funding

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The Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter is able to offer this course for \$5 per participant, thanks to funding from the Centers for Disease Control and the Minnesota Department of Health. As always, family or caregivers may participate for free. Participants will be lent a copy *The Arthritis Helpbook*. At the conclusion of the course, they may choose to purchase the book for it's cover price, or return it to the leader.

Also, \$5 scholarships are available from the Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter Office. It is the Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter's policy to honor all requests for scholarships. Please do not turn away any participant for lack of ability to pay. Request scholarship forms from the Arthritis Foundation.

# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

## Identify Leaders

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The Arthritis Self-Help Program is taught by leaders who have completed the 2-day Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Leader Training.

The program is designed to be taught by two leaders, one or both of whom have arthritis. It is more difficult and may be less effective when taught with only one leader or when taught by only health professionals as leaders.

### Qualifications to become an Arthritis Self-Help Program leader:

1. Successful completion of Leader Training
2. Empathy towards people with arthritis
3. Ability to present factual information in a clear, concise, and objective manner
4. Interest in working with groups and ability in group-process skills
5. Belief in the value of encouraging people with arthritis to assume responsibility for their self-management
6. Belief in the value of encouraging group sharing of problems and solutions
7. Acceptance that the role of a Self-Help Program leader is that of a facilitator of active group interaction; not simply an instructor
8. Ability to be culturally sensitive
9. Flexibility to give the message at several learning levels

### Time Commitment:

1. Attendance at a 2-day training. Approximately 16 hours.
2. Co-lead one full 6-week program each year. Twelve to twenty hours (6 week program x 2 hours, plus preparation and travel time).

If you have not already identified a trained leader or co-leader to teach the course in your community, contact the Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter. They maintain a list of leaders and trainers. If there is not a leader available in your area, perhaps you can help the Arthritis Foundation identify someone to participate in an upcoming Leader Training.

# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

## Choose a Site

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Possible locations in your community might include: the YMCA/YWCA, a community center, library, church, hospital, worksite, senior housing site, assisted living facility, hotel, motel, college or school classroom or other community space.

- 1) The building, parking, meeting room and restrooms must be accessible to people with various levels of mobility.
- 2) Be sure the meeting room is available for all six 2-hour class sessions, (and an additional 30 minutes before and after the scheduled class time).
- 3) The meeting room must be able to seat 12-15 participants; the ideal size for a group. The group size should climb no higher than 20.
- 4) The meeting room should be able to be maintained at a comfortable temperature. Chairs with armrests and tables are desirable. These will help those with illnesses that cause fatigue.
- 5) The meeting room must allow for confidentiality.
- 6) Ask if the site has an overhead projector, a screen, and an easel and flipchart for your use. Otherwise, make arrangements to provide your own.
- 7) It may be desirable for you to have a place on site to store your materials between classes.
- 8) Ask if you or they can place signs up on the days of the course to help make finding the meeting room easy.

Send a map with your correspondence to program participants. Include information about parking and building accessibility.

# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

## Contact the Arthritis Foundation

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Be sure to notify your region's Community Development Coordinator at the Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter (800-333-1380) about the class **three weeks prior to the first class**. This will provide them time to help promote the class through their communications, and to send the leader the class materials. (If you're not sure who is the Community Development Coordinator for your area, please ask when you contact the Arthritis Foundation.)

You will need to inform the Arthritis Foundation of the beginning date and time, location of the class, who the contact person will be and how many participants are expected.

Once contacted, the Arthritis Foundation will send the program leaders class materials, including:

- *The Arthritis Helpbooks* (new and loaner books)
- Registration forms
- Attendance roster
- Teaching handouts
- Teaching overheads (upon request)
- Questionnaires and instructions (for pre- and post-tests)
- Volunteer time and expense report

The Arthritis Foundation can send the class materials directly to the site. You will need to arrange this with both the Arthritis Foundation and the site.

## Recruit Participants

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The course is most effective when there are between 10-16 participants. The maximum in the course should be 20 participants. If there are more than 20 interested in the course, it may be best to split the class in half, or start a waiting list for the next program.

The following few pages contain sample news releases, a community ed. announcement and a flyer. Edit them with information specific to your program. Add photos and quotes of your own. Or, simply use these samples as suggestions for writing your own materials.

Don't forget the effectiveness of word-of-mouth, inviting friends and acquaintances to participate.



# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

## News Releases

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News releases announcing an Arthritis Self-Help Program may be of interest to: community newspapers and calendars; church bulletins; and newsletters of worksite, housing facilities, YMCAs, hospitals and clinics, physical therapy and occupational therapy clinics, public health agencies, home care agencies, and food coops.

You may use one of the following two news releases and add information pertaining to your course, or create a news release of your own.

## For Immediate Release

(Release Date)

Contact:

Organization:

Phone:

### **Arthritis Self-Help Program Helps Reduce Arthritis Pain**

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The \_\_ (name of your organization) \_\_\_\_, with the Arthritis Foundation, North Central Chapter, will offer a course that runs for six weeks and is designed to give people with arthritis, fibromyalgia, or lupus the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to take a more active part in their arthritis care.

The Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program will be offered from \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm to \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm on (day and date) at the (location and address). The course is taught by trained leaders, many of whom have arthritis themselves and want to help other people learn to gain control of their condition.

Participants will learn strategies for decreasing pain, ways to relax and deal with stress, tips on good nutrition, methods for increasing physical activity, facts about arthritis medications, and will practice problem-solving techniques. All materials will be provided including the book, *The Arthritis Helpbook*.

The Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program is designed to reduce the impact arthritis can have on people's lives and encourage a positive approach to self-management. It will complement, not replace, professional health care services. Pre-registration is required and enrollment is limited. The Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program is being offered (free of charge) or for (\$) for a limited time. To register for the program or for more information please call (contact person) at (phone number).

—end—

## For Immediate Release

(Release Date)

Contact:

Organization:

Phone:

### **Arthritis Self-Help Program: How much is your time worth?**

Stop for a moment to consider the time you spend during each visit to your doctor, time traveling, off the job, in the waiting room, or having a prescription filled. Calculate those hours over the next four years. Research shows that participants of the Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program see their physician 40% less than those who have never participated in a self-help program. Graduates maintain greater mobility, are able to do more activities of daily living and experience less pain. These benefits continue more than four years after completing the course. Add an estimated savings of money to the time saved and you will recoup your investment many times over.

The Arthritis Self-Help Program is a six-week program that will help you make decisions and take actions to manage your arthritis on a day-to-day basis. Just a small investment of time and money will improve your quality of life for decades to come if you continue to utilize the self-management tools you will learn during this course. The cost is \$25. Persons in support roles are encouraged to attend at no additional charge.

A six-week class will be offered on (day of week) from (time to time) at the (location). The class will run from (starting date) through (ending date). Space is limited. To register or learn more, contact (name and phone number).

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# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

## Program Description for Bulletins

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Below, please find a sample program description, should you wish to conduct the Arthritis Self-Help Course through a Community Education program, a church program, or elsewhere.

## Arthritis Self-Help Program

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Learn how to reduce pain and manage the symptoms of arthritis. The Arthritis Self-Help Program meets 6 times for 2 hours each. It is for anyone with arthritis, fibromyalgia, or chronic joint pain. Topics include pain management, stress reduction, fatigue, exercise, depression, healthy eating, medication and working with your doctor. Volunteers trained by the Arthritis Foundation lead the course.

Day(s)/Date:

Time:

Location:

Number of Sessions: 6

Instructor: Arthritis Foundation

Fee: \$25, pays for program materials.

(Please ask the instructor about a full or partial scholarships if needed.)

*To register, call (name and phone #)*

# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

## Flyer

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The following flyer is available for you to use in your community. You may use it in its present format and simply fill in the blank, or use the suggested information to develop your own flyer.

You may use this flyer to solicit calls from people who may be interested in a future course, and plan a course when you have enough interested people identified. Or, use the flyer to promote a course you already have planned. In that case, you may want to add more information about the date, time and place.

If possible, add photographs of people from your own community. The Arthritis Foundation logo must be displayed on all promotional materials. Some pictures, as well as the Arthritis Foundation logo, can be clipped from (to be arranged).

Place flyers on bulletin boards at the YMCA, community centers, churches, worksites, libraries, housing units, hospitals and rehabilitation centers, public health agencies, bowling alleys, hair salons, hobby and craft stores, grocery stores and other community bulletin boards.

\_\_\_\_\_(name of your organization)\_\_\_\_\_ and the Arthritis Foundation present:

# A Self-Help Program for People with Arthritis

Get the information, confidence, and skills  
to take control of your arthritis.

## LEARN:

- ✧ Basic information about arthritis
- ✧ Ways to decrease pain
- ✧ Ways to relax and deal with stress
- ✧ Healthy eating
- ✧ The importance of gentle exercise
- ✧ Facts about arthritis medications
- ✧ Strategies for dealing with depression
- ✧ Fatigue and energy conservation

**CLASS SIZE IS LIMITED AND PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!**

To register for the next class, or for more information, call

\_\_\_\_(contact name)\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_ (phone number)\_\_\_\_\_



(Name)
(Address)
(Telephone number)
(Name)
(Address)
(Telephone number)
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(Name)
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(Telephone number)
(Name)
(Address)
(Telephone number)

# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

## After the Program

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At the end of the Self-Help Program, the Program Coordinator at the Arthritis Foundation needs:

- attendance roster
- leaders' timesheets and expense reports
- participant registration forms
- payments (\$25 per participant, \$0 for each support person who participates.)
- participant questionnaires (pre- and post-tests)
- loaner books and unused materials
- Certification Application Form (only if this is a leader's first course)

### **Please send these materials to:**

Programs and Services  
Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter  
1902 Minnehaha Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55104

# Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

## Arthritis "Tip of the Week"

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Here are 14 tips that you might want to use in any number of ways. You may submit them daily or weekly to a newspaper, church bulletin or other newsletter. You may send them as a series of e-mails as part of a worksite wellness campaign. Use them as you wish. They are from *The Arthritis Foundation's Tips for Good Living with Arthritis*, 2002.

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #1

**Be a successful self-manager.** To protect your joints, you will need to occasionally ask for help, use assistive devices, adapt your activities and respect your limits.

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #2

**Avoid staying in the same position too long.** Whether working, sewing, fishing or watching a movie, take frequent breaks to reduce joint stiffness and pain.

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #3

**Stay, or get, physically fit.** Yes, at times of flare-ups, exercise may be the last thing you want to do. Yet, strong, fit muscles support joints more effectively, protect joints from undue strain and injury, and help you perform everyday tasks more efficiently and with less pain. And don't forget the benefit of those endorphins—you'll feel better about yourself.

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #4

**Choose clothing and footwear that will be comfortable and practical for all of your day's plans.** Changing clothes for various activities and weather conditions throughout the day can become difficult. Plan ahead to avoid it!

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #5

**Loop a scarf, kitchen towel or bandanna through your refrigerator and other handles to make them easier to open.** Open the door or drawer by sticking your arm through the loop and pulling with your forearm.

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #6

**Try to not schedule appointments for early in the morning.** Leave yourself time for grooming, dressing and eating breakfast without being rushed. Frequently a warm shower or bath in the morning can relieve arthritis pain. Schedule appointments at the time of day you feel your best (or worst—who wants a dental appointment when they feel great?)

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #7

**If you have trouble grasping a steering wheel, cushion it** with a leather or vinyl steering-wheel cover, or use golf, baseball or weight lifting gloves when you drive.



## Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #8

**Carry things in your arms not with your hands**, to shift the weight to your larger joints and protect your more delicate hands, fingers and wrists. When you need to grasp, don't grasp too tightly. Grasp only as tightly as necessary. Use wide-grip pens, utensils and tools. Buy them that way or build up grips with tape, rubber or foam (like those nice pink hair rollers!)

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #9

**Buy pre-printed gift and holiday cards, and address labels.** Have your children or grandchildren stick the address labels on envelopes to add a nice, shall we say artistic touch.

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #10

**Try using a heat treatment, such as a paraffin bath, on your hands before you begin your handicraft work.** When working, take frequent breaks to stretch your hands, fingers, (head, shoulders, knees and toes).

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #11

**To fill a large pot with water, use both hands to place the pot on the stove, then fill a small pitcher or measuring cup with water to pour into the large pot.**

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #12

**To open a jar**, stabilize it first on a rubber mat or squeezed in a shallow drawer. Use a jar opener. Or place a rubber jar grip or a piece of non-stick drawer liner on top of the jar. Place one hand on the side of the jar and the heel of your other hand on top and twist the lid open. Use a butter knife to lift a ring tab off a can.

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #13

**Use a pizza cutter or a rocking knife to cut sandwiches, chicken breast, hamburgers, lasagna and all the other things you love to cook.**

### Arthritis Good Living Tip #14

**Power tools are a girl's best friend.** Use assistive devices to help you with everyday activities and hobbies, such as an electric knife, electric can opener, electric toothbrush and electric razor. Try an automatic card shuffler and wide-handled cooking utensils and gardening tools.

### Bonus Arthritis Good Living Tip

**Tired of knick-knack gifts?** Suggest to your family and friends assistive devices you might like to have. Some ideas are: playing card shuffler (\$20) and holders, a paraffin wax bath (\$20), gloves with good grip (\$20), ergonomic gardening tools, gift certificates for massages, pool exercise or yoga classes, or offers to help with shopping, cleaning, raking and other chores (priceless).

## **Steps to Offering the Arthritis Self-Help Program in Your Community**

### **Thank You**

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The Arthritis Program at the Minnesota Department of Health, and the Arthritis Foundation North Central Chapter would like to sincerely thank you for your commitment to offering this course in your community.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you have suggestions to improve these supporting materials.