

Exercise and Self-management



Exercise

Exercise is something that is strongly recommended for all patients with RA.

- Walking
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Elliptical
- Resistance training

PT and OT

Therapists assist newly diagnosed patients in learning how to manage chronic disease and how to incorporate self-management principles in accordance with their roles and lifestyle.

- **PT:** Range of motion, strengthening, gait
- **OT:** Activities of daily living

Self-management

Even patients who are responding well to medical management will benefit from learning principles of self-management, starting an exercise routine and being evaluated for assistive devices.

Techniques

Self-management techniques addressed in OT and PT include, but are not limited to:

- Exercise
- Joint protection
- Energy conservation
- Activities of daily living
- Assistive devices
- Hand orthotics

Assistive devices

Assistive devices allow activities to be performed independently with less stress to the joints and promote prevention of deformities.

Referrals

Because RA is a chronic disease, one that is managed and not cured, consider referring your patients periodically throughout their lives.

Support a Healthy Lifestyle

- Recommend a healthy diet such as the Mediterranean diet.
- Encourage using stress reduction techniques such as mindfulness techniques, and Tai Chi. There are many free apps available.
- Promote good sleep hygiene.
- Support smoking cessation.
- Recommend appropriate vaccines .
- Consider a symptom diary.

Resources

2022 American College of Rheumatology Guideline for Exercise, Rehabilitation, Diet, and Additional Integrative Interventions for Rheumatoid Arthritis in Arthritis & Rheumatology has the following publication status: Published online

Occupational Therapy Is a Vital Member of the Interprofessional Team-Based Approach for the Management of Rheumatoid Arthritis: Applying the 2022 American College of Rheumatology Guideline for Exercise, Rehabilitation, Diet, and Additional Integrative Interventions for Rheumatoid Arthritis in Arthritis Care & Research has the following publication status: Published online

