

# ARTHRITIS

## NEWS FOR YOU

SUMMER 2011

ST. JOHN'S ARTHRITIS CENTER

## Creating a Comfortable Work Environment

In our electronic age, we enjoy great conveniences and, on the flip side, tremendous aggravations when our gadgetry isn't working. Sometimes computer use can be a pain. For people with arthritis the aggravation and pain can be literal. A 2009 study of 315 people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA), fibromyalgia, and/or osteoarthritis revealed that an average of 80 percent reported discomfort from using computer equipment.

Complaints and concerns ranged from fatigue to problems finding and maintaining a comfortable position. Respondents also mentioned the occasional inability to manipulate equipment. If nothing else, these conditions slow or hinder people's work.

According to *Arthritis Today*, you can make your workstation more comfortable.

- **Chair**

Adjust the chair's height so that thighs are roughly parallel to the

floor. The seat should be at least an inch wider than hips on either side and short enough so that you can easily sit back.

- **Monitor**

Position the monitor at arm's length in front of you. Eyes should align with a point 2-3 inches below the top of the screen.

- **Keyboard**

Keep it below the elbows and close to the body. Unless you frequently use the numerical keys on the right side of the keyboard, center the "B" key in line with your body (and the monitor).

- **Mouse**

The key to comfort is a natural arm position that doesn't cause an

awkward—and potentially painful—bend in your wrists or fingers.

- **Copy holder**

If you're doing data entry of any kind, invest in a paper stand, which may resemble a clipboard. It keeps your reference materials and loose pages at roughly the same height as your computer monitor. Using a copy holder will help you avoid the neck strain of constantly looking down at papers and then back up at



your monitor.

These tips won't keep your computer from crashing, but it will make your workday relatively pain free.

Source: Jill Tyler, "Computer Errors," May/June 2010 issue of *Arthritis Today*

## Ask Margaret

*I love to be outdoors in the spring and summer. But, I was recently diagnosed with lupus. My rheumatologist cautioned against sun exposure, as it could contribute to skin irritations like my pesky butterfly rash. Also, he warned that my medication could also make me increasingly sensitive to the sun. Any suggestions for still enjoying the outdoors during my favorite seasons?*

You're right; frequent exposure to sunlight can cause a rash to flare up. Be sure to report any skin sensitivity to your physician immediately. Follow just a few, common sense reminders and have a carefree, relaxing summer in the outdoors.

Both eyes and skin can be harmed by high energy ultraviolet rays. Most of us forget the risk to eyes from the sun. Make sure sunglasses have the proper UV block coating needed to protect our eyes. While this is especially needed in summer, sun glasses also provide protection year round. Most optical outlets will check existing sunglasses and advise you if they are doing the job or not.

In addition to the eyes, the lips and nose are also especially sensitive to sun exposure. A wide brimmed hat can help protect all parts of the face. An opaque sun block, such as one containing zinc oxide, is recommended for the face.

Other protective clothing, such as long sleeves is a good idea. Some stores now carry a line of clothing with built in sunscreen.

While covering up and applying sunscreen are essential, it is also important to simply minimize sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest. Do indoor activities during this time period, whenever possible.

No matter what time of day is spent outside, ALWAYS wear sunscreen. Put the sun block on at least 30 minutes before going out. Remember to reapply often, especially if you are perspiring heavily or swimming. The rule is to apply sunscreen frequently and generously. Make sure that the sunscreen is new this year; it does not last forever. The rule of thumb is **THROW AWAY LAST YEAR'S SUN SCREEN**. When buying the new, make sure the product contains paraminobenzoic acid (PABA) with a minimum sun protection factor of at least 30. The higher the number, the better the protection.

Even if it is cloudy or shady, UV rays can still reach you under water or inside a building or a car. Stay protected.

*Margaret Lindsey, R.N., is an Arthritis Educator with St. John's Regional Arthritis Center. Questions for her column should be addressed to Ask Margaret/Arthritis News for You, St. John's Hospital, 1235 East Cherokee, Springfield, MO, 65804*

**ARTHRITIS INFORMATION LINE**  
**417-820-3665 or 1-800-835-5197**  
**7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Monday-Friday**

## Good Idea!



### Extended Reacher

This handy device has range and a powerful grasp. Rather than stooping, bending, or stretching, use the extendable reacher to collect items (such as the aluminum can pictured) from above or below your reach. All items are available at the St. John's Medical Supply Store. Call (417) 820-7115.

## How do you get your News?

**Update your address or receive the newsletter via email.**



If you have recently moved or are planning to relocate, please call us with your change of address... (417) 820-3665 or 1-800-835-5197. If you'd like to receive *Arthritis News* via email (rather than a hard copy by U.S. Mail), please let us know. An email version will allow you to forward copies to friends, print only pertinent reminders, etc. If you'd like to remove your name from our physical mailing list and be added to our electronic distribution list, please contact the Regional Arthritis Center at [margaret.lindsey@mercy.net](mailto:margaret.lindsey@mercy.net) or [heather.scott2@mercy.net](mailto:heather.scott2@mercy.net) or call 1-800-835-5197.

**New website!**

OUR NEW WEBSITE IS EVEN EASIER TO FIND AND USE! Take a look and forward the link to friends. We're at [www.moarthrititis.org](http://www.moarthrititis.org). You can click on Southwest Missouri or SW RAC!

**Fibromyalgia Support Groups**

**Springfield:** The group has temporarily suspended regular meetings due to illness. People with Fibromyalgia in need of information and support may call the Regional Arthritis Center at (417) 820-3446 or 1-800-835-5197.

**Aurora:** Meetings are the third Tuesday of the month at a new location—1 p.m. at St. John's Aurora Hospital, PDR. Call Coralie Exter at (417) 678-3580 or Marilyn Carey at (417) 678-2666.

**Lebanon:** Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at Breech-St. John's. Call Evaleen Rogers at (417) 588-9783 or Dana McGaughy at (417) 533-3275.

**Mt. Vernon:** Quarterly meetings are held at MO Rehab. Call Jane Nelson at (417) 461-5490.

**Joplin:** Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at St. John's Medical Center at 7 p.m. Call Pam Baack at (417) 781-6225.

**Marshfield:** Meetings are the second Monday of the month from 1-2:30 p.m. and the fourth Monday of the month from 6:30-8 p.m. at Marshfield First Baptist Church. Call Martina Plavnick at (417) 468-2765.

**Speakers' Bureau**

The Southwest Missouri Regional Arthritis Center is pleased to provide speakers to any community group or civic organization wishing to learn more about arthritis. Our education programs are available free of charge. Call the Arthritis Information Line at 1-800-835-5197 or 417-820-3665.

**Ozark Area Arthritis Club (OAAC) Program Schedule**

The OAAC meets the second Tuesday of each month at Cedar's Restaurant at 3322 S. Campbell at 11:30 a.m. For information, contact the Arthritis Information Line at (417) 820-3665 or 1-800-835-5197.

**MAY 10, 2011**

*Nutritional Needs for Aging Adults: Nutritional Supplements and Drug Interactions*

Jan Long, MS, RD  
St. John's Hospital

**June 14, 2011**

*Arthritis Medications*  
Terri Hampton, Pharm.D.  
St. John's Hospital

**July 12, 2011**

*Living Healthy with Chronic Conditions*

Margaret Lindsey, RN,C  
Director, Arthritis Center

**August 9, 2011**

*Indoor Picnic*  
Registration Required

**Arthritis/Fibromyalgia Self-Management Course**

The free, six week class covers self-management of pain and stress, exercise, and medications. Registration is required. Call the Arthritis Information Line at 417- 820-3665 or 1-800-835-5197 for info on upcoming classes in Southwest Missouri.



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**Springfield's St. John's Hospital Private Dining Room 3**, September 6-October 19, 2011, 10 a.m.-12 noon, call 800-835-5197 or 417-820-3446 to register.

**Branson First Baptist Church, Branson**, call Mary Chase at 417-334-3897 for information.

**Scleroderma Support Group of the Ozarks**

All people with Scleroderma and their families are invited to a dinner presentation by Margaret Lindsey, RN,C, on "Living with a Chronic Condition" on June 6, 2011. Dinner is at 5:30 p.m. with a program at 6 p.m. at St. John's C.H. "Chub" O'Reilly Cancer Center Auditorium, 2nd Floor, 2055 S. Fremont, Springfield, MO. Registration is required. Please call 417-820-3665 or 1-800-835-5197. The next regular meeting will be September 12, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. at Cox South, Meeting Room A.

**Fibromyalgia Education**



Fibromyalgia education will be offered at Cox Walnut Lawn (Administrative Classroom) Springfield July

14-August 18, 2011, 6:30-8:30 p.m. and October 13-November 17, 2011, 1-3 p.m.

Registration is required. Call Cox Info at (417) 269-4636.

**Sjogren's Syndrome Support Group**

The group meets July 18, 2011, at noon at St. John's Hospital, Private Dining Room 4. **PLEASE ASK FOR DIRECTIONS AT THE INFORMATION DESK AND NOTE THE PERMANENT ROOM CHANGE.** Call Una Lewis, (417) 827-3190 or 1-800-835-5197.

# Seven Tips for Managing Arthritis

By Deborah Kukal, PhD, ABPP

Having a medical condition can make us feel powerless. Our body stops doing what it should, and starts doing things it shouldn't. We get frustrated when no one can fix the problem. And underneath it all, it's scary.

You can't totally control your body, that's for sure. But more and more, research is discovering ways that you can have a strong and powerful impact—for better or for worse—

on your own health. And it's true even when you have a very real disease.



For instance, a recent study of women with breast cancer found that those with lower levels of stress biochemicals had less pain, less fatigue and less depression. Now you may say "But it would be stressful to have breast cancer!" And of course you'd be right. But all the women had breast cancer... yet not all the women had the same levels of stress biochemicals. How they managed their stress made the difference.

Stress biochemicals increase pain, depression, fatigue, inflammation, and cause problems with sleep.

Perhaps most worrisome of all, stress biochemicals destroy actual pathways in the brain. Do you sometimes feel you can't remember like you used to? You may be right! Brain scans show that even two weeks of stress can result in loss of brain pathways that carry memory and concentration.

You can make a difference. Taking control of the things you CAN

control, discovering what you can do to make healthy, affirming choices makes a difference in the ac-

tual biochemicals in your body. Decreasing stress biochemicals, and increasing the biochemicals that help you heal, can protect and enrich your brain and your body.

What can you do? Here are seven tips to help you manage stress, decrease pain and improve mood.

**Join a group.** Whether it's the church you love, the support group you have grown so close to, or the extended family you enjoy so often, the experience of belonging to a group is powerful. Individuals who belong to a group where they

feel supported and accepted show positive physical effects, and the research shows positive impact even when we have other not-so-healthy habits!

**Practice meditation/guided imagery.** The research is clear—whether you call it meditation, guided imagery or deep relaxation, it's good for your brain and your body! You can reduce stress and pain while you increase positive mood and healthy sleep. Don't know how? Try a guided imagery recording. Recordings that add alpha waves may help your brain relax even more deeply and richly.

**Get some hugs.** We all need to be touched—our skin is hungry for it! Touch comforts, releases well-being biochemicals and can even help us live longer. And hugs can comfort our caregivers as much as they comfort us!

**Exercise.** I know—you don't have time, it's too cold or too hot, it hurts too much—we all have reasons to avoid exercise. But though you may hurt when you exercise—you'll hurt even more if you don't! Exercise lubricates joints, strengthens bones, and releases healing biochemicals that help protect, repair and even renew brain cells. So get going! Ask your doctor to refer you to a physical therapist if you're afraid to start on your own. They'll help you

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# Juvenile Arthritis News

## Improving Communication and Strengthening the Sibling Bond



Sibling rivalry and ribbing are a natural, normal part of childhood. Jockeying between siblings can range from divvying up chores to vying for parental time and attention. Those typical conflicts can multiply and carry additional emotional undertones when one of the children involved has been diagnosed with a chronic disease like juvenile arthritis.

The child with arthritis might garner more of the family's time and attention during certain stretches such as shortly after diagnosis or during a flare. For siblings, this can mean disrupted schedules, hours spent in physician waiting rooms, the sense of walking on eggshells, and the loss of parental attention.

It's important to keep communication open and effective so that stress, tension, and hurt feelings do not undermine family dynamics and healthy functioning.

Maintaining a sense of normalcy can be difficult, but it's important to strive for it even during the rigors of arthritis treatment. A child with arthri-



tis may not be able to handle all of the same physical chores as siblings, but keep responsibilities as even as possible.

Know that hurt feelings can snowball. Experts advise speaking directly to each other in a respectful way. This is better than dancing around issues or performing "triangulation." In the latter scenarios, a parent might ask a child to wash the dishes. If the child isn't feeling well, he or she might ask the brother to do it. The brother might complain to the parents, thus forming a triangle. What's initially said can be misconstrued as it's relayed through several people.

Improving communication means making subtle, but important, changes.

- Don't deny someone's feeling. That's how someone feels.
- Steer clear of "eye for an eye" or "tit for tat" exchanges. Just because your sister didn't help you yesterday, that's not a reason to walk away today.
- Avoid absolute statements such as, "My brother never helps around the house!" Instead, offer specific examples.
- Last, and most important, no name calling and no yelling.

Treat each other with respect even when there is conflict.

Sometimes it's okay to step away from the situation and cool off. The best way for parents to teach

this more proactive communication is to model it themselves—with children and with each other.

Source: "Strengthening Sibling Bonds" by Charlotte Huff, *The Arthritis Foundation's Kids Get Arthritis, Too*, Volume 11, Issue 5.

### JA Fun Event & Clinics

Join other children with JA and their parents for **JA FUN DAY, Tuesday, July 12, 5:15 p.m. at Incredible Pizza Company**. Parents will have a Q&A session with Dr. Andrew Lasky, Pediatric Rheumatologist. Children will enjoy "Show Me Wildlife" presented by Wonders of Wildlife. Children will take a trip through Missouri's diverse habitats and discover some of the wildlife that make their home in the Show Me State. Animals to see up close and personal include snakes, blind cavefish, turtles, and owls.

Parents and children come together at 6:30 p.m. for pizza, drinks, desert buffet, and the great game room. **Reservation required by calling 417-820-3665 or 1-800-835-5197** for an evening of info and fun! **The event is only for children with juvenile arthritis and their immediate family, please.**

Dr. Lasky is seeing area children at St. John's Specialty Clinic by appointment on the second Tuesday of each quarter: July 12 and October 11, 2011. Please call 417-820-3446 or 1-800-835-5197 to schedule an appointment.

## Seven Tips for Managing Arthritis

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find a plan that will work for your body.

**Set goals.** Did you know that thinking about your values, and choosing what matters to you, changes the actual biochemicals in your brain? Setting goals gets you started, and helps you make the healthy choices you need now. Make your goals attainable. Be clear about the first step, and the next step, and the one after that. You can't jump to the end—but step by step you can make a powerful difference.

### Learn how to sleep well.

Yes, learn how! You can help your body learn to sleep deeply and naturally—and healthy sleep is necessary for physical health as well as emotional well-being.

### Discover your spiritual home.

Individuals with a strong spiritual source of comfort and strength deal with stress more easily. What is your spiritual source? Are you

in touch with all your spiritual life has to offer?

Now is the time to take the power and control that's available to you. You can help your body be as healthy as you can be now. You have a powerful role in your health. It's how you're made!

Deborah Kukal, PhD, ABPP is a licensed psychologist, board



certified in Health Psychology. She has been helping patients manage their chronic pain at St. John's Center for Pain Management for more than 15 years. To learn more about self-management, and to try guided imagery, visit her website, The Home in Your Heart, at [www.thehomeinyourheart.com](http://www.thehomeinyourheart.com).

## Health Management Class

*Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions*

This six week chronic disease self-management class is for people with diabetes, asthma, heart disease, arthritis, lupus, stroke, bronchitis, emphysema, and any other chronic condition. Learn skills for *living a healthy life with a chronic condition*.

Classes meet Thursdays, July 7-August 11, 2011, from 10 a.m.-12 noon at **St. John's Health Plans Building at 3265 S. National Ave., Springfield, MO, in the Community Conference Room (2nd floor)**. The class is free. Call (417) 820-3446 or 1-800-835-5197

**West Plains Senior Center**, Wednesdays, July 20-August 24, 2011, 9 a.m.-11:30 a.m., call (417) 256-4055

**Central Crossing Senior Center—Shell Knob**, Tuesdays, July 12-Aug. 16, 2011, 12:30 p.m.-3 p.m. Call (417) 858-6952

**Dade County Senior Center—Greenfield**, Wednesdays, June 8– July 13, 2011, at 8:30 a.m. Call (417) 637-2626 for time and registration

**Heritage Harmony House—Aurora** Tuesdays, May 17-June 21, 2011, 12:30 p.m.-3 p.m. Call (417) 678-5383

**Polk County Senior Center—Bolivar**, Mondays, May 16-June 27, 2011, 1-3:30 p.m. Call (417) 256-5570

*Please call 1-800-835-5197 for classes in towns throughout Southwest Missouri.*

## Arthritis Toolkit...Check It Out!

*The Arthritis Toolkit* contains information and tips that help many people with arthritis and fibromyalgia live happier, healthier, more comfortable lives!



Check out *The Arthritis Toolkit* today. Call (417) 820-3446 or 1-800-835-5197.

### Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program Area Classes (Formerly PACE)

Classes use gentle activities to help increase overall stamina, flexibility, and strength. It is not a substitute for a prescribed exercise program.

**Republic Parks and Recreation**, call Allison Davis (417) 732-6780; **Cox Monett Hospital**, call Lauren Holland (417) 354-1410; **Warsaw Area**, call Billie Mowry (660) 438-7569; **Branson First Baptist Church**, call Mary Chase (417) 334-3897; **Mt. Vernon**, call Sonny Poe (417) 461-5351 at MO Rehab; **Bolivar CMH Senior Health** (417) 777-7171; **Buffalo-Dallas County Area YMCA**, call Kay Morris (417) 345-1116; **Greenfield/Dade County**, call Charity Bayless (417) 637-2345; **Dade County Senior Center—Greenfield**, call (417) 637-2626; **Lamar Senior Citizens Center**, call Roberta Braxdale (417) 682-5809; **Lincoln Community Center**, call Billie Mowry (660) 438-7569; **Ellett Memorial Hospital, Appleton City**, call Kelly Tindall (660) 476-2111; **Strafford Senior Center** (417) 736-9898; **Willard Fitness Center**, call (417) 742-2262; **Republic Wellness Center** (417) 732-7672; **United Methodist Church, Fair Grove**, call Evelyn Sheppard (417) 759-2755; **McCarty Senior Center**, call Mark at (417) 282-6100; **Korth Senior Center Stockton**, call 417-276-5306; **Nixa Senior Center**, call (417) 725-2322; **Redbud Village, Ava**, call (417) 683-4033; **Summersville Senior Center**, call (417) 932-4044; and **Pierce City Senior Center**, call (417) 476-5006; **Rogersville Senior Center**, call (417) 753-7800; **Pineville United Methodist Church**, call (417) 223-4723; **Pleasant Valley Manor, West Plains**, call Lenora Martin (417) 257-0179; and **St. Francis Hospital**, call (417) 934-7153.

### Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program (Formerly PACE) Springfield Classes

Classes meet at **St. John's Fitness Center**; cost is \$10. Two classes are offered, 1:15-2:15 and 2:30-3:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Call the Arthritis Information Line at 417-820-3665 or 1-800-835-5197 or The Professionals at 417-820-8888 or 1-800-909-8326. Classes are held at the following locations:

**Springfield Southside Seniors Center** (call 890-1313)

**Campbell United Methodist Church** (call Margaret Williams at 881-2018)

**Cox Senior Health** (call Sonnie Noble at 269-3915)

**Cox Fitness Center Meyer Wellness & Rehab Center** (call 269-3282)

**Wesley United Methodist Church** (call 883-1021)

**Covenant Presbyterian Church** (call 881-4449)

**NEW—Baptist Temple** (call 831-2631)

**NEW—Noble Hill Church** (call 425-0824)

**NEW—Cox North** (269-8882)

### Bothered by Arthritis? Concerned about Heart Disease?

We are conducting a research study of 3 approved medications commonly used to treat pain due to osteoarthritis (OA) or rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in people who also have or are at high risk for heart disease. Qualified participants will receive study-related medical care, regular study check ups, and study medication at no charge

#### To qualify you must...

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Have had OA or RA for at least 6 months
- Have been prescribed regular medication for your pain for at least 6 months
- Have or be at high risk for heart disease, which includes a history of heart attack, stroke, or diabetes.

For more information, call St. John's Medical Research Institute at (417) 841-0250 or toll free 866-207-0167.

### Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Exercise (Formerly Aquatics Programs)

**Springfield: Hammons Heart Institute**, call 417-820-2169

**Ward YMCA**, call 417-862-7456

**Meyers Wellness & Rehab**, call 417-269-3282

**Chesterfield Family Center**, call 417-891-1616

**Joplin: Joplin Family Y**, call 417-623-4597 or 417-625-2502

**West Plains: West Plains Civic Center**, call 417-256-8087

**Lebanon: Cowan Civic Center**, call 417-532-4642

**Monett: Lowry & Associates, Physical Therapy**, call 417-235-8770

**Nevada: Vernon County Health Department**, call 417-667-7418

**Nevada Regional Medical Center**, call 417-448-3622

**Lamar: Lamar Aquatic Park**, call 417-682-5383

**El Dorado Springs: Cedar County Memorial Hospital**, call Sandy Whitaker at 417-876-2511

**Bolivar: Citizens Memorial Hospital**, call 417-326-0453

**Citizens Memorial Hospital Senior Health**, call 417-777-7171

### Tai Chi for Arthritis

Tai Chi for Arthritis was developed for people with a rheumatic condition and consists of fluid circular movements that are slow in tempo. Benefits include improvements in flexibility, strength, overall fitness, and posture. New classes are forming. For information, please call Heather Scott at (417) 820-3665 or 1-800-835-5197. Classes are also forming at the **Ward YMCA**. Call 862-7456 for info.



## St. John's Health System

1235 E. Cherokee  
Springfield, MO 65804  
[www.stjohns.com](http://www.stjohns.com)



## THE ARTHRITIS TOOLKIT

People with arthritis can live a healthy life by actively managing the physical and emotional problems that come with their disease. Most types of arthritis cannot be cured. Living a healthy life with a chronic disease is possible with good self-management.

*The Arthritis Toolkit* contains information and tips that help many people with arthritis and fibromyalgia live happier, healthier, more comfortable lives! It contains information and suggested skills that will help you live a healthy life.



**Contact the SW Missouri Regional Arthritis Center  
to check out *The Arthritis Toolkit* today.**

**(417) 820-3446 or 1-800-835-5197  
[margaret.lindsey@mercy.net](mailto:margaret.lindsey@mercy.net)**

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