

NUTRIFAX[©]

2008

ARTHRITIS

TIPS TO REDUCE ARTHRITIS PAIN

How to approach housework when you have arthritis pain:

- **Organize your tasks** – clean one area or floor at a time.
- **Prioritize what's important** – decide which tasks are the most important and focus on them.
- **Break big jobs into smaller parts** – to ease the strain, do a load of laundry every other day instead of all in one day. Set time limits for yourself.
- **Alternate tasks to avoid repetitive stress:**
 - **Light tasks and medium tasks.** Alternate light tasks with medium tasks and plan on taking a break after completing each task.
 - **Standing tasks and sitting tasks.** Sit down, when you can, while preparing a meal and other chores such as folding laundry.
- **Pace yourself** – take regular rest breaks. Length of rest varies person by person – listen to your body.
- **Delegate tasks to others** – ask for assistance or hire someone to help you with strenuous activities.
- **Purchase extra household supplies for around the house.** For example, keep a toilet brush and cleanser in each bathroom.

TIPS BY LOCATION IN YOUR HOME

In your kitchen:

- ♦ **Use electric appliances** – use a food processor to do your chopping.
- ♦ **Buy prepared foods and convenience items** – buy salad mix that is pre-washed and shredded.
- ♦ **Use scissors** – cut open a package instead of tearing it open with your hands.
- ♦ **Ask for groceries in a paper bag** – you can carry paper bags which avoid the hand strain from using plastic bags.

- ♦ **Modify your mixing technique** – place your mixing bowl on a damp cloth in the sink while you stir or use an electric mixer.
- ♦ **Ease cleanup** – use nonstick sprays, foil and disposable baking pans to make cleaning up easier.
- ♦ **Lighten your load** – use lightweight pots, pans, bowls and dishes.

Around the house:

- ♦ **Organize closets and cabinets** so heavy and most frequently used objects are easy to reach.
- ♦ **Create easy access** by leaving frequently used items on the counter in the kitchen and bathroom. Use long-handled tools for reaching.
- ♦ **Be realistic** and limit yourself to one major cleaning task a day.

Outside the house:

- ♦ **Be efficient.** Gather your tools together in a wheelbarrow so that you're not making several trips back and forth. Leave the hose in the yard instead of dragging it out.
- ♦ **Create easy access.** Do your gardening in small containers or use raised beds.
- ♦ **Use tools that minimize joint stress.** Try ergonomic rakes and shovels.
- ♦ **Time it right.** Weed after it rains. Soft soil means less tugging.

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Food and Nutrition Services can assist in providing nutrition information. Call 703-813-4800 and ask for a Registered Dietitian.