



1. What is the Walk with Ease Program?

The Arthritis Foundation *Walk with Ease* Program is an evidence-based physical activity and self-management education program. It can be done by individuals using the *Walk with Ease* workbook on their own, or by groups led by trained leaders. Both the individual and group formats are set up as a structured six-week program. While walking is the central activity, *Walk with Ease* is a multi-component program that also includes health education, stretching and strengthening exercises, and motivational strategies. Group sessions include socialization time, pre-walk informational lecturettes, warm up and cool downs and a 10-35 minute walking period.

2. What are the program benefits/research, goals and objectives?

Research indicates the *Walk With Ease* Program can:

- Reduce the pain and discomfort of arthritis
- Increase balance, strength, and walking pace
- Build confidence to be physically active
- Improve overall health

The overall goals of the *Walk With Ease* Program are threefold:

- to promote education about successful physical activity for people with arthritis
- to promote education about arthritis self-management and walking safely and comfortably
- to encourage participants to continue their walking program and explore other exercise and self-management programs that deliver proven benefits for people with arthritis.

By the end of the six-week program period, participants will:

- Understand the basics about arthritis and the relationship between arthritis, exercise, and pain
- Learn how to exercise safely and comfortably
- Use methods to make walking fun
- Make a doable personal walking plan with realistic goals for improved fitness
- Gather tips, strategies and resources to help them overcome barriers and continue to be physically active
- Learn about other programs and resources that can help maintain walking and other physical activity.

3. What is the target population?

Walk with Ease was specifically developed for adults with arthritis who want to be more physically active. The program is also appropriate for people without arthritis, particularly those with diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions, who want to get more active. The only pre-requisite is the ability to be on your feet for at least 10 minutes without increased pain.

4. What are the essential program components and activities?

The essential program components are:

- **Walking** (10-35 minutes walking duration)
- **Health education information**
 - All participants receive the *Walk With Ease* workbook which is organized in a logical sequence to provide the information needed to help participants get ready to walk, begin walking, and stay motivated to continue walking. Both the Workbook and the corresponding lecturettes conducted during the group sessions provide basic information on arthritis, managing pain and stiffness, tips on proper clothing and equipment, self-monitoring for physical problems, what to do when exercise hurts, and how to anticipate and overcome barriers to being physically active.
- **Stretching and Strengthening Exercises**
 - Both the individual and the group participants are encouraged to do stretching exercises when they walk and strengthening exercises twice a week. The *Walk With Ease* workbook includes directions for the stretching and strengthening exercises. Individuals can also access video demonstrations of these exercises on the Arthritis Foundation's *Let's Move Together* website (www.letsmovetogether.org)
 - During the group classes:
 - Stretching exercises are incorporated into the warm up and cool down periods.
 - Strengthening exercises are demonstrated once during the group class and participants are encouraged to do these at home.
- **Motivational Tips and Tools**
 - The *Walk With Ease* workbook includes self-tests, a six week contract and walking diary forms to help participants identify their needs and interests, to set goals and rewards, and to track progress. Each workbook chapter also contains motivational tips.
 - The group classes review these tools and encourage their use throughout the program.
 - An online support component is also available to individual and group participants. The Arthritis Foundation's *Let's Move Together* website (www.letsmovetogether.org) provides several resources:
 - A Movement Tracker to track amount of time spent walking
 - Copies of the self-tests and motivational worksheets in the *Walk With Ease* workbook
 - Video instruction for the stretching and strengthening exercises
 - A message board where participants can share their experiences

5. What is the length/ timeframe of the program?

- The group format classes meet **two OR three** times a week for six weeks (a total of 12 OR 18 sessions).
- Depending on the physical capabilities of the group and the amount of time they spend socializing before and after classes, the average class session length may last as little as 45 minutes in the beginning weeks of the program but may increase to an hour or more as the group improves their fitness level. The standardized scripts for the class sessions suggest that the walking time progresses an additional 5 minutes each week, as the group capability allows.

6. What is the recommended class size?

The recommended class size is 12-15 participants per leader. Groups may have more than one leader.

7. What are the leader requirements?

When recruiting individuals to undergo the *Walk with Ease* leader training, look for applicants with the following characteristics:

- Current certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is required; first aid certification is strongly recommended.
- We would like each facility to hold a **MINIMUM of 2 classes per YEAR**.
- Affiliation with a facility or organization that can provide space for the classes and insurance coverage for the program is desirable.
- Other desirable abilities include:
 - Empathy toward people with arthritis and related diseases, gained through personal or professional experience.
 - Interest in working with groups of people with arthritis and related diseases.
 - Experience in teaching physical activity classes and skill in group process and instructional techniques.
 - Desire and ability to help others.
 - Strong belief in the value of regular physical activity.

Existing Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program instructors are ideal candidates to become *Walk With Ease* leaders as there are many similarities in the two programs' health education and exercise components.

8. How do leaders get trained?

There are two options for training:

- The in-person training is a 3-4 hour workshop (**highly recommended for someone with NO previous experience teaching an Arthritis Foundation program**).
- An online training module will be available. Please contact Alison Eschweiler at the Arthritis Foundation Upper Midwest Region.

9. Will the Arthritis Foundation provide a Walk with Ease leader certification?

Yes. Certification as an Arthritis Foundation *Walk With Ease* Program Leader requires:

- Successful completion of an Arthritis Foundation *Walk With Ease* Program Leader Training Workshop online or in-person training workshop.
- Teaching at least one six-week Arthritis Foundation *Walk With Ease* Program class series **within six months** of completing the Leader Training Workshop and submitting participant data (release forms and program information form) to the Arthritis Foundation.
- Teaching at least one class series annually and submitting participant data to the Arthritis Foundation.

Leaders remain certified as long as they continue to teach at least one class series per year and send in their participant data to the Arthritis Foundation.

10. What are the program costs?

The program costs depend upon the number of classes offered and leaders trained. Below are some typical costs to get the program started:

- Costs to train leaders (can choose either online OR in-person training):
 - In-person and online training—registration fee is \$50, includes Leader binder, laminated posters, Walk With Ease participant workbook, & bag
 - The Arthritis Foundation will help with marketing and advertising
- Participant/class costs:
 - Walk with Ease participant workbooks: \$5 each (chapter cost)
 - Optional costs for group classes: any leader or facility fees

11. What are the facility requirements?

Any host agencies offering the group classes should provide:

- An accessible site for the program consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and any reasonable accommodation that may be necessary to ensure that the program is accessible to people with disabilities.
- A safe and accessible place to walk either inside (e.g. indoor track, gymnasium, mall, etc.) or outside (e.g., neighborhood, walking trail, etc.)
- Adequate general liability insurance (industry standard is \$1 million)
- A signed program co-sponsorship form, documenting their understanding of their responsibilities

For more information or to attend a training, please contact:

Alison Eschweiler
Health Promotion Coordinator
Arthritis Foundation Upper Midwest Region
1650 S. 108th Street
West Allis, WI 53214
414-329-4603 ext. 223
aeschweiler@arthritis.org