

# Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program

## What is the Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program?

The **Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program** is a water exercise program designed specifically for people with arthritis. Water exercise is especially good for people with arthritis because it allows participants to exercise without putting excess strain on their joints and muscles. The Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program gives participants the opportunity to do gentle activities in warm water (83° to 88°), with guidance from a trained instructor. The Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program is a recreational program that does not replace a prescribed regimen of therapeutic exercises.

## Who are the Instructors?

All instructors have successfully completed the Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program Leader Training sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation. In addition to the instructor, someone with current lifeguard and/or emergency water safety certification is present in the pool area during classes.

## Does it Work?

The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program has been shown to decrease pain and stiffness and improve daily function.

## Program Goals

The **Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program** is designed to:

- Decrease pain and stiffness;
- Decrease feelings of pain and isolation;
- Improve independence and self-esteem;
- Improve or maintain muscle strength or reduce muscle weakness caused by muscle inactivity;
- Improve balance and coordination;

## Basic Types/Purposes of Exercises

**Range of Motion Exercises**—These exercises help maintain normal joint movement, relieve stiffness or restore flexibility and movement if they have been lost. Normally each joint in the body can be moved a certain amount in various directions by the muscles attached to it. This is called the joint's *range of motion*. People with arthritis should try to move each joint through its complete range of motion daily to prevent loss of motion and deformity and minimize stiffness.

**Strengthening Exercises**—These exercises help maintain or increase the strength of muscles. Weak muscles add to joint problems. Strong muscles provide support and stability to the joint.

**Conditioning/Endurance Exercises**—These exercises are good for overall fitness and stamina. People with systemic forms of arthritis and/or individuals with joint problems should have guidance on which types of endurance exercises are appropriate as well as how to proceed safely with them. Each person's physician or physical therapist should provide this guidance.

## Who Can Participate?

Any person having one of the more than 150 types of arthritis may attend the **Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program**. A spouse, other family member or friend may also attend.

## How Do You Register?

To register for the **Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program** in your area, please contact:

Michael Ramsey  
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651-644-4108 ext. 112 (or 800-333-1380)  
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