

Take Control of Your Arthritis:

# Beyond Exercise from Acupuncture to Zen



## See inside now and learn ...

- Why the sandman may be one of your best friends
- How “mind over arthritis” may work for you
- A gentle way to de-stress and stay mobile
- And more!

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Take Control. We Can Help.™  
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Job Description:  
AF - Premium Booklet #1

Date:  
05.25.11

Job #  
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*There's more than one way to help control arthritis pain and improve your flexibility.*

*We often rely on the medications prescribed by our doctors. And while these drugs can do a tremendous amount of good, many are expensive, and some have uncomfortable side effects.*

*So here are a few safe, simple and effective steps you can take right now to help take control of your arthritis.*

*And they are steps you can take without a trip to the doctor, without swallowing a pill and without spending a penny.*



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### **When in doubt ... move!**

You already know this. In fact, you've probably heard it many times. But it's still important to mention that exercise has been shown to help ease pain and maintain and restore function.

Naturally, however, when you're coping with joint pain and stiffness, sometimes exercise is the last thing you think of doing.

But you don't have to run on the treadmill or bike a marathon. You don't need to be athletic or already fit for movement to be effective exercise.

If you are just starting to exercise, a comfortable walk around the block—or even to the mailbox and back—is a great way to start. Water-based exercises you can do in a pool provide even less impact on your joints as the water provides gentle resistance.

OK ... now that we got that out of the way, turn the page for a few less-typical, fun, and effective ways to take control of your arthritis.



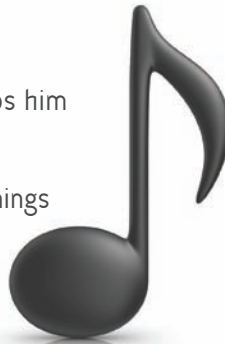
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## A little boogie goes a long way

If music soothes the savage beast, it's dance that keeps him happy and on the move.

Just ask RA patient Tammy Rivera-Tubbs. On some mornings her rheumatoid arthritis was so bad she could barely get out of bed. So when her doctor suggested she work on being more active, she thought he was crazy!



That is, until she learned about Zumba, a high-energy Latin dance fitness class. "Everyone suggested swimming," said Rivera-Tubbs, who is 44, "but this sounded more fun. My arthritis is better ... it gives me something to look forward to ... I feel great because I focus on something that is positive instead of that my ankles or knees are hurting."

Researchers at the Laval University in Quebec have confirmed what people like Tammy already know. People with RA who participated in regular dance classes saw improvements. Not only did they experience less joint pain and more mobility, but they were less likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, fatigue and tension.



## Take a tip from the East

Tai Chi is a flowing, graceful form of gentle exercise that started as a martial art centuries ago.

Not only can it improve balance and flexibility and reduce stress, but a Tufts University study showed that Tai Chi can help reduce both pain and stiffness in people with severe osteoarthritis in their knees.

Best of all, you don't need any special equipment, just comfortable clothing, patience and an open mind.

## Mr. Sandman ... bring me relief!

Although it's often dismissed as too simple, creating good sleep habits is as crucial to your health as exercise and nutrition.

Not only does your body use sleep as a time for healing damage and recharging your energy stores, but a 2006 University of California study showed that sleep deprivation can lead to increased levels of inflammation-causing chemicals in the body.

Unfortunately, pain, some medications and simply growing older can make good sleep habits more difficult. So here are a few tips to help increase your chances of getting a restful, recharging night's sleep:



- Avoid naps.
- Limit alcohol.
- Exercise during the day, even if it's a slow walk.
- Don't eat large meals near bedtime.
- Eliminate caffeine, especially in the afternoon.
- Go to bed and get up at the same times every day.
- If you can't sleep, get up after 20 minutes. Go into another room and read or listen to music until you're sleepy, but don't use bright lights or watch TV.

If you find that nothing helps you get a better night's sleep, you can try speaking to your doctor about taking a natural or over-the-counter sleep aid.



## Release your stress, relieve your joints

Stress can be positive or negative, and too much stress of either kind can be unhealthy. If you have arthritis, your joints know this all too well.

That's because, positive or negative, stress releases chemicals into your body that causes muscles to become tense, increasing pain, fatigue and further limiting your abilities.

So here are a few easy ways to take control and feel better:

- 1 Pinpoint the cause:**  
Simply identifying the cause of your stress can be a relief. Plus it can help you decide how best to adapt.
- 2 Change the situation:**  
Identify and prioritize the elements that can be changed and write down a plan. For those things that can't be changed, perhaps there's a way to see things more positively. Or talk them out with those you trust.
- 3 Reduce the effects of stress on your body:**  
Dealing with stress takes practice and patience. Relaxing can involve things like gentle exercise, slow deep breaths, meditation, guided imagery and visualization. Learn what works best for you and use those methods whenever you're feeling stressed.

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list of stress solutions. So for more information, please visit [arthritis.org](http://arthritis.org) or speak with your health care professional.



## Ancient treatments, modern science

Until recently, alternative treatments like acupuncture, acupressure and reiki were rarely considered in mainstream Western medicine.

But there's a reason the Chinese have been using such practices for over 5,000 years. And now, modern science is getting on board as well.

All of these practices work by manipulating an energy force the Chinese call *qi* (pronounced "chee"). They believe that *qi* flows throughout the body and if it becomes blocked or misdirected, pain and sickness can occur. Treatments like acupuncture or acupressure are done to unblock the flow of *qi*, thus relieving the ailment.

Is it just ancient hocus pocus? Not according to Tim Rhudy, a licensed acupuncturist at Cleveland Clinic in Ohio who believes that acupuncture works by "untying muscular straightjackets—releasing tight, spasmed, shortened muscles to their resting state."

And, not only can acupuncture stimulate the release of your body's natural pain-fighting endorphins, the needle pricks (which are essentially painless) tell the body where to direct its pain-fighting and healing efforts.

What's more, as these alternative forms of treatment become further integrated into the mainstream, more and more insurance policies are willing to cover them!



## Take control—live healthy

Everyone's body is different. So, while we can offer pointers, guidelines and insights to decide the best treatments and exercises for you, discuss them with your doctor first and then listen to your body and do what feels right.

**For more information on exercise and alternative therapies, please visit [arthritis.org](http://arthritis.org).**

### About us

The Arthritis Foundation was founded in 1948 and is the largest nonprofit organization that supports the more than 100 types of arthritis and related conditions.

The Arthritis Foundation offers information and tools to help people live a better life with arthritis. Whether it's advice from medical experts, tips for simple lifestyle adjustments or exercise classes, the Arthritis Foundation has your solution.



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