

Health NEWS YOU CAN USE

11 Steps To Limit The Impact Of Arthritis

(NAPSA)—As Americans age and become more overweight and less active, the number of people with arthritis continues to grow, affecting one in three adults and nearly 300,000 children. Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States, but its impact may be minimized.

“Arthritis has reached epidemic levels in America,” said Arthritis Foundation president and CEO, John H. Klippel, M.D. “The Arthritis Foundation has identified 11 simple steps that everyone can take to improve health and quality of life for those at risk or living with this disease.”

The Arthritis Foundation is urging Americans to take action to limit the impact of arthritis on their lives by following 11 simple steps.

1. Don't Ignore Joint Pain. Studies show joint damage occurs early in some forms of arthritis, often within the first two years.

2. Get a Specific Diagnosis. With more than 100 forms of arthritis, each requiring a different treatment, getting a specific diagnosis from your doctor is important.

3. Shed Excess Weight. The more you weigh, the more stress you put on your joints, especially your knees, hips, back and feet.

4. Get Active. Regular exercise protects joints by strengthening the muscles around them, lessens pain, increases range of movement and reduces fatigue.

For more strategies to limit the impact of arthritis, contact the Arthritis Foundation at www.arthritis.org or 1-800-283-7800 for a free copy of *Simple Strategies for Change.* 

5. Maintain a Healthy Diet. For optimal health, it's important to eat a balanced, healthy diet. Recent research points to the importance of vitamin C and other antioxidants in reducing the risk of osteoarthritis.

6. Think Big. To protect your joints, always use the largest and strongest joint possible to complete the task.

7. Play Smart. Protect yourself from joint injury during physical activities by warming up properly and varying use of muscle groups.

8. Modify Job Tasks. Repetitive motion has been shown to increase the risk of developing arthritis.

9. Relax. Stress is a common trigger of joint pain and fatigue.

10. Quit Smoking. Smoking can reduce bone mass, leading to osteoporosis and a greater risk of fractures.

11. Take Control. Making even the smallest changes can result in big payoffs in preventing or controlling arthritis.