

# Arthritis in Oregon and the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program

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## Prevalance

Based on the 2009 Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 26% of adult Oregonians (about 700,000 people) suffer from arthritis. In addition to those with clinically diagnosed arthritis, there are over 500,000 Oregonians with chronic joint symptoms, but no formal arthritis diagnosis. Those two groups combined represent almost half of the adult population in Oregon. Arthritis limits the activities and productivity of many Oregonians affected by the disease. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report that arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States, as arthritis is associated with substantial activity limitation, work disability, reduced quality of life, and high health-care costs.

## The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program

The *Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program* (AFEP) is an evidence-based program that has been shown to decrease pain and improve function and self-efficacy in people with arthritis. The program was created to keep joints flexible, maintain muscle strength and reduce the pain and stiffness associated with arthritis. In addition to those with arthritis, AFEP is beneficial to adults who suffer from limited mobility due to other chronic disease such as heart disease, stroke, obesity or diabetes. The program is generally offered 2-3 times a week for 8 weeks or can be offered as an ongoing class. Class levels can be modified to accommodate the different capabilities of people with various chronic conditions. An advanced level may contain more aerobic conditioning activities. To accommodate different group needs, instructors select from over 100 different exercises performed while participants are seated, standing, or lying on the floor. Courses include a variety of range-of-motion exercises, balance and coordination activities, relaxation exercises, health education and other activities to promote self-care.

## Evidence Base

The AFEP was originally developed in 1987 and revised in 1999, 2005 and 2009. Several evaluation studies have been conducted utilizing non-randomized groups and a pretest-post test design. Studies showed a significant decrease in depression level, increased functional ability and a 13% decrease in usage of emergency rooms. A 2005 CDC trial showed decreases in depression, pain and fatigue, increased self-efficacy and improvements in balance, upper extremity strength and expectations about exercise outcomes.

## **Become trained as a leader**

The Arthritis Foundation generally holds at least two AFEP trainings per year throughout Oregon. Any person who meets the general requirements can take the training and become certified as an instructor. Instructor candidates must be CPR certified, linked to a host organization (for example, a community or senior center) and offer the class three times per week for six weeks. Scholarships are available to offset the \$100 registration fee. There are no licensing costs and CEU credits are available. Trainings for 2011-12 include the Salem area and Roseburg area. For more information on Walk With Ease, contact Cindy Bishop, Programs and Services Coordinator, Arthritis Foundation – Great West Region at 503-245-5695 or [cbishop@arthritis.org](mailto:cbishop@arthritis.org).

## **Arthritis Foundation Support**

The Arthritis Foundation currently hosts AFEP classes in over 17 areas around the state in 23 community settings. The Arthritis Foundation, with support from the Oregon Public Health Division, offers AFEP instructor trainings around the state, provides technical assistance to instructors and host organizations, and offers resources and support to people with arthritis. Additional Arthritis Foundation programs include Aquatics, Tai Chi, the Self-Help Program and Walk With Ease. An Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program class may be found by calling **503-245-5695** or toll free 888-845-5695 or visiting [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org).

**For more information about Arthritis Foundation programs, contact Cindy Bishop, Programs and Services Coordinator, Arthritis Foundation – Great West Region at 503-245-5695 or [cbishop@arthritis.org](mailto:cbishop@arthritis.org) or April Rautio at the Oregon Arthritis Program at [april.l.rautio@state.or.us](mailto:april.l.rautio@state.or.us) or 971-673-0984,.**