



# Helping People with Osteoarthritis

## Thrive:

# Implementing the Walk With Ease Program

The Arthritis Foundation's *Walk With Ease* program is an evidence-based program that reduces the pain of arthritis and improves overall health. Whether a person with osteoarthritis (OA) needs relief from pain or just wants to be more active, *Walk With Ease* can help. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has approved *Walk With Ease* as an arthritis intervention that helps participants learn how to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives, safely and effectively. While designed for individuals with arthritis, this program will benefit anyone over 18 who suffers from chronic pain and wishes to become more active. Studies show that *Walk With Ease*:<sup>1</sup>

- Reduces the pain and discomfort of arthritis
- Increases balance, strength and walking pace
- Builds participants' confidence in the ability to be physically active
- Improves overall health

*"My Walk With Ease buddy encouraged me to go because I was having a little trouble with my back. She thought that walking would be good for it, and it really turned out to be true. She's been a great inspiration."*

- *Walk With Ease Participant*



### The Program

We are presenting the Self-Directed *Walk with Ease* six week program. This program includes a step-by-step workbook with:

- Motivational tools
- Strategies to set and monitor realistic goals for improving fitness
- Tips for arthritis symptom management
- Appropriate stretching and strengthening exercises to protect joints and minimize pain

***Walk With Ease* Is an Affordable and Effective Option for Your Community. Raise your community profile by coordinating a *Walk With Ease* program!**

*Walk With Ease* is low-cost and can be integrated into an existing wellness program, or it can provide the foundation for a new wellness program. Local aging services providers, senior centers, adult education programs, parks and recreation, employers, health departments and faith-based organizations are well-positioned to provide *Walk With Ease* within their communities. This is an excellent opportunity for physical therapists to promote their profession and clinics. The IPTF will provide the workbooks and data collection support. You provide the initial recruitment and motivational follow up with participants.

### Getting Started:

**Want to coordinate a *Walk With Ease* program in your community? Contact: Linda Griffith at [lgriffith@ipta.org](mailto:lgriffith@ipta.org) for program details and promotional materials.**





## Self-Guided Format

A recommended schedule of readings and activities is provided in the Workbook. The IPTF will provide the workbooks and all promotional materials. Required data is minimal and is coordinated by the IPTF.

Funding for this program is supported through a grant from the NACDD and the CDC.

## Tools, Mobile App, Videos and Materials

Walk With Ease (WWE) Online Tools are available at [www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/tools-resources/walk-with-ease/online-tool/](http://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/tools-resources/walk-with-ease/online-tool/). Other WWE program materials <http://www.afstore.org> and [www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/tools-resources/walk-with-ease/](http://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/tools-resources/walk-with-ease/).

Other excellent resources are available at the Website for the OA Action Alliance (OAAA), housed at UNC Chapel Hill, which has some great WWE materials that we are welcome to use: <http://oaaction.unc.edu/resource-library/for-community-partners/>

Specifically look at the WWE materials (slides and script)and the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYu7PFIZXYQ>

## Know the Facts

More than **27 million adults** of all ages, races, and ethnicities have Osteoarthritis (OA).

OA is:

- The most common form of arthritis
- A **leading cause of disability**
- An under-recognized public health crisis.
- Increasing dramatically, due to two important OA risk factors: the aging of 78.2 million Baby Boomers, the obesity epidemic.

Although no cures for OA exist, there are effective treatments for disease management, including:

- 1) Weight management
- 2) Injury prevention to prevent the onset
- 3) **Physical activity and self-management education for those with OA to improve symptom management and physical function.**<sup>3</sup>

### References

1. Callahan, L., Shreffler, J., Altpeter, M., Schoster, B., Hootman, J., Houenou, L., Martin, K., & Schwartz, T. (2011). Evaluation of Group and Self-Directed Formats of the Arthritis Foundation's (AF) Walk with Ease (WWE) Program, *Arthritis Care & Research*, 63(8): 1098–1107. doi: 10.1002/acr.20490.
2. Callahan, L.F., Rivadeneira, A., Altpeter, M., Vilen, L., Hackney, B., Cleveland, R.J., Sepulveda, V., Reuland, D., & Rojas, C. (2016). Evaluation of the Arthritis Foundation's Camine Con Gusto Program for Hispanic Adults with Arthritis in North Carolina. *Hispanic Health Care International*, 14(3), 132-140. DOI: 10.1177/1540415316665202
3. Lubar D, White PH, Callahan LF, Chang RW, Helmick CG, Lappin DR, et al. A National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis 2010. *Semin Arthritis Rheum* 2010;39(5):323-6.

