

# Exercises for Rheumatoid Arthritis

## A Guide For Patients/Families



**Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Services**



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## **What is Arthritis?**

Arthritis is a degenerative joint disease and the leading cause of physical disabilities. Arthritis is a Greek word which means joint inflammation. It is a condition where damage is caused to the bone and joints resulting inflammation, painful movements and swelling. The bones and joints also become sensitive to weather changes.

In Rheumatoid Arthritis the small joints are affected while in Osteoarthritis, large joints (weight bearing) are commonly affected. Arthritis can also be caused by strains and injuries from repetitive motion, overexertion and falls. Osteoarthritis results from degeneration of Joint cartilage.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

Pain is the general feature, which is usually aggravated in the early morning hours and subsides with the passage of time. X-rays can show changes in the joint.

## **Types of Arthritis:**

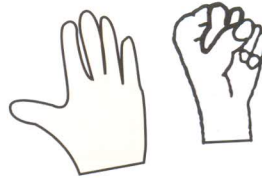
- Septic Arthritis
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- OsteoArthritis
- Juvenile Arthritis
- Ankylosing Spondylosis

## **Treatment**

There are numerous treatment options available for Arthritis depending on the precise condition but the following exercises will help to reduce pain and to strengthen the joint and allow free movement.

  
**Hands:-**

Clench your hands as hard as possible with your thumb outside. Then unclench it and stretch the fingers.



Push the tip of your thumb with your finger tips making a "O".



Place your forearms on table. Lift your hands as high as possible and stretch your wrists.



Stretch your thumb as far away from other fingers then try to touch the base of your little finger.

**Elbows:-**

Bend your elbows as much as you can, then straighten and stretch as much as possible.



**Shoulders:-**

Stretch your arms above your head with the palms facing each other and arms touching your ears.



Put one arm as far behind your back as you can and put the other hand behind your back and try to touch both hands.



Bend your elbows, stretch your shoulders out as much as you can. Make circles with your elbows, clock-wise, then anti-clockwise.



**Neck:-**

Stand against the wall and look to the right shoulder, then look to the left shoulder, as far behind as you can.



Lying on your back, straighten and stretch your legs while pressing your heels down on the floor.





Lying on your back, bend one hip and knee towards your chest, then straighten. Repeat with other leg.



Lie on your back with your legs straight and little apart. Roll your legs inwards and then outwards



Lie on your back with your legs straight and tighten your hips and thighs simultaneously.



Lie on your back with your legs straight. A part your legs as far as you can while keeping the knees straight.



### **Hip:-**

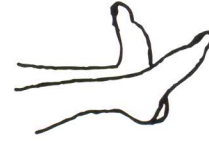
Lie flat on a firm surface, press the knee down towards the ground. Lift one leg up straight, while keeping the other knee straight. Repeat with other leg.



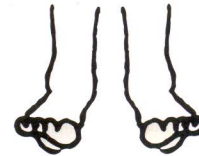


**Ankles:-**

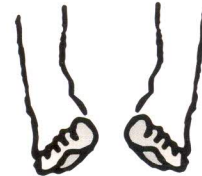
Sit with the knees bent pull the toes and foot upwards as hard as possible, then stretch the foot downwards.



Turn the soles of your feet away from each other, while keeping the heels in the same place.



Turn the soles of your feet towards each other, while keeping the heels on the same place.



**Note / Important:**

- Apply heat or cold as instructed by your physiotherapist.
- When joints are swollen, hot or painful, do only those exercises, which are advised by your doctor or physiotherapist.

**For more information please contact**

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