

## Welcome to **Arthritis Track**

Welcome to **Sportsclub's p.r.e.p.** – your introduction to exercise and lifestyle change. Your physician has identified you as a person who would benefit from instruction in a safe exercise program to help improve your arthritis symptoms and to help delay or stop the progression of your arthritis. Many people mistakenly believe that regular exercise, particularly resistance training and weight bearing activity, is bad for their arthritis. In point of fact, research has shown the exact opposite to be true. A well designed program of regular aerobic activity and resistance training can (if performed properly) actually lead to decreased symptoms, improved function, and delay the progression of your arthritis.

Our program is based on the guidelines proposed by the *American College of Sports Medicine* for exercising with arthritis. It will include the recommended aerobic conditioning (30-60 minutes, 5 days a week), resistance training (one set for each major muscle group twice weekly), and flexibility activities. We may recommend modifications to your program based on the type and severity of your arthritis as well as your doctor's specific recommendations and restrictions.

If you have a systemic, or inflammatory type of arthritis, your immune system is affected by the disease and possibly by your medications. This may lead to the need for more frequent rest during your exercise periods. We generally recommend low impact cardio activities such as brisk walking, cycling, or elliptical training to reduce joint impact. Many arthritis patients are able to jog for cardio, but we recommend discussing this with your physician.

### ***Specific recommendations for all arthritis patients:***

- Consider starting slowly with 2-3 short cardio sessions in a day to help with conditioning and acclimation without increasing your joint pain.
- Always exercise in good shoes and use any prescribed braces or splints for support. When resistance training, avoid explosive or uncontrolled movements. Keep your speed even and smooth throughout your repetitions.
- If machine exercises consistently cause joint symptoms, ask your trainer to help you substitute body weight exercises.

- When doing flexibility exercises, remember to stretch gently without bouncing. If your arthritic joint is unstable, ensure that you do not go beyond the “normal” range for that joint.
- Consider some of our low impact class options that incorporate all exercise components (cardio, strength, and flexibility), such as yoga, therapeutic yoga, or water classes.
- Make sure you warm up and cool down properly. Start with small, slow movements and increase the range and intensity as you warm up. Doing range of motion exercise prior to aerobic or resistance training is a good way to get the joints ready for heavier activity.
- Consider using heat on your joints prior to exercise to help warm up the joints and cool packs following exercise to minimize any inflammation.
- It is important to be self-aware and listen to your body. It is okay to exercise in the face of a mild flare – just decrease the intensity accordingly.
- Remember that some soreness and aching are normal byproducts of good exercise but sharp pain or swelling are indicators that you are doing too much.
- The most important thing to remember is that you will only see the benefits of this exercise program if you are consistent with your routine.
- Please remember that our team is here to help and guide you. If you have questions or concerns (even on days when you are not doing a “scheduled session”) don’t hesitate to seek out your p.r.e.p. team.
- We also cannot emphasize enough that we would like you to take advantage of all our facility has to offer outside of p.r.e.p. Group classes include yoga and aquatic exercise, which would be excellent choices for an arthritis patient.

Finally, please bear in mind that proper nutrition is a critical part of any program and weight control is especially important in helping decrease stress on the joints. Please take advantage of our nutritional counseling and educational videos to help enrich your program experience.