



## Living With Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)



### Overview

If you've been diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, you may be facing some new challenges. But you can live a full life with RA. You can do many of the things you enjoy. You just have to take steps to manage your condition properly.

### Medical treatment

First, follow all of your doctor's advice. Go to all of your appointments, and take your medications as directed. Speak up if your care plan isn't working.

### Diet

It's possible that a healthy diet rich in whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables may help you. If certain foods or drinks make your symptoms worse, you may want to avoid them. But you shouldn't cut out lots of foods or whole food groups without talking to your doctor first.

### Exercise

It's important to maintain a healthy weight and to get regular exercise. You'll want to do low impact activities, like water aerobics or walking. This shouldn't be painful, and you should stop any activity that hurts you. After exercise, you can use a heating pad or a warm bath to soothe stiff joints and tired muscles. An ice pack can help reduce inflammation. And if you overdo it, make sure you allow enough time to rest and recover.

### Maintain your emotional well-being

Take care of your emotional well-being, too. A diagnosis of RA can cause fear and anxiety. It can trigger depression. So reach out to others, especially to friends and loved ones who understand your situation. Find a local support group. If you're still having trouble, talk to a professional therapist.

### Conclusion

If you take an active role in your care and follow your doctor's advice, you can learn to manage your RA successfully.