

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

Walk Toward Relief: How Walking Can Ease Arthritis Pain

As we get older, we are more likely to experience arthritis pain. Arthritis is a condition that affects the joints, causing inflammation and pain. Over 100 conditions affecting the joints are considered Arthritis, including osteoarthritis (the most common), rheumatoid Arthritis, and fibromyalgia. Some risk factors for Arthritis include aging, being female, being overweight, previous injury, and muscle weakness. Exercising with Arthritis can be challenging. Many people with Arthritis avoid exercise because of the pain; however, this can make joints stiffer and less flexible.

Walking with Arthritis may be a solution to help reduce pain and manage symptoms. Walking is gentle on the joints and helps lubricate and keep them flexible. The benefits of walking are hard to ignore. Walking is safe and puts less stress on the body than other forms of aerobic exercise, so it is excellent for people with Arthritis. Walking helps strengthen the muscles surrounding the joints, particularly in the knees and hips. Walking promotes synovial fluid circulation, which helps nourish the cartilage and maintain joint flexibility.

Remember to always talk with your healthcare provider before starting any exercise program. Be sure to warm up before you exercise with slow, gentle stretches, and cool down slowly after your walk by slowing your pace and stretching afterwards. Start your new routine slowly and add minutes gradually with time. Select a good pair of shoes with good insoles that absorb shock. Track your activity using a fitness tracker or by keeping an exercise journal.

If you don't have a walking routine, K-State Extension-Meadowlark District has the perfect program to help you start. Beginning August 4, 2025, the district and the Delaware Township Library in Valley Falls will offer the Arthritis Foundation Walk with Ease program. This program will help you learn how to walk safely with your Arthritis. The program's goals are to understand the basics of Arthritis, learn how to exercise safely and comfortably, and learn tips and strategies to help you "stick with it". Each participant who signs up will receive a Walk with Ease guidebook.

If you want to participate in the Walk with Ease Program, please get in touch with Jeri with the Delaware Township Library at 785-224-9811 or email lajeclark@yahoo.com. For more information about the Walk with Ease Program, contact Teresa Hatfield with K-State Extension Meadowlark District at 785-364-4124 or email thatfield@ksu.edu.