



Physical Limitations and Pain Issues

Do you have physical limitations, pain issues, or mobility concerns? Many people struggle with this regularly due to pain. Pain is one of the top reasons people do not exercise on a regular basis.

It's important to remember that every single person can find something they can do for exercise. Focus on finding something you can do, rather than on the things you can't. It's also important to find a balance between doing nothing at all and overdoing it. If you are dealing with arthritis, fibromyalgia, back pain, or torn ligaments, there are forms of exercise for you.

Arthritis is easily the top pain issue many come across on a daily basis. Did you know regular exercise is actually recommended for those with arthritis? Exercise can help lubricate the joints. Often, the longer you are inactive, the stiffer you're going to get. For those with arthritis, it is recommended to move as often as possible throughout the day, breaking exercise up into small sessions. Impact cardio exercise, such as running, can worsen pain due to the repetitive pounding on your joints. Strength training, a lower-impact form of exercise, is often easier to tolerate.

Back pain is the other primary pain issue. Focusing on strengthening your core will better support your back and will likely lessen pain. Weight loss will also decrease back pain, but just being stronger will help too. Having better endurance and posture also reduces pain.

What specific exercises are recommended?

WALKING: The first recommended exercise is walking. Even if you are only able to walk for 5 minutes, it's better than 0 minutes. Walking is relatively low-impact. You're not required to be a runner for it to improve your fitness. Your goal should be to increase your time on your walks, not worrying about speed. Once you're able to walk 30 minutes straight, you can increase speed if desired.

RECUMBENT BIKE: What if you're not able to walk for any length of time? The next best suggestion would be to ride a recumbent bike. A recumbent bike has a bike seat that's similar to sitting in a chair. There's less range of motion than a regular bike, and the seat is generally more comfortable for overweight individuals. Again, start with 5 minutes or less, and build up your time.

Week 5 Fitness



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WATER ACTIVITIES: What about swimming? Water aerobics, swimming laps, and water walking/running, are, in my opinion, the best form of exercise for those with severe pain. If you are able to get a membership to a recreational center or YMCA, they often have warm water arthritis aerobics classes. The pool is a great place for low-impact exercise.

CHAIR EXERCISES: What if you do not have access to a pool or recumbent bike? Your focus should be on chair exercises. There are many free on-line resources and television programs that involve seated exercise routines. Chair exercises will help you improve your strength and endurance and hopefully get you to the point of walking!

Pain is a primary reason for a lack of exercise. However, regular exercise can often help improve mobility and pain. Walking, biking, swimming, and chair exercises are great choices for those with pain issues.