



Timely Information for Personal Success

Don't Let Arthritis Slow You Down in 2014

By *Tim Lencki*

One half of all arthritis sufferers don't think anything can be done to help them with their pain. In fact, people with arthritis believe that exercise will make it worse. The truth is that gentle range of motion (stretching) and low-impact exercise can *reduce* arthritic pain.

There *may be* exercises that someone with arthritis needs to stay away from due to potential for further joint damage. The amount and type of exercise may vary depending on several conditions: type of arthritis, the joint affected, level of inflammation, joint replacements, and other physical limitations. When starting an exercise program, be sure to contact a health care provider to discuss the best options.

The exercise program should consist of three components – range of motion (stretching), strengthening, and aerobic exercises.

❖ **Range of motion exercises** will keep joints mobile, therefore maintaining normal joint function. It also may be helpful in preventing stiffness. Incorporate a variety of stretching exercises into the program. It is important to stretch all the major muscle groups including the calves, thighs, hips, back, shoulders, chest and arms. It may also be a good idea to emphasize stretching muscles that have a *decreased* range of motion.

❖ **Strengthening exercises** increase muscle strength and endurance, improve balance, and enhance independence. Use a variety of exercises

that work each of the major muscle groups. This can be accomplished with bodyweight, dumbbells, barbells, resistance tubing, machines and others. The number of repetitions may vary depending on fitness level and/or level of arthritis pain. Consider starting with 2 sets of 6-10 repetitions using a light weight.

❖ **Aerobic exercise**, when combined with a healthy diet, is fundamental for controlling weight. This is important for people with arthritis since it reduces excess pressure on affected joints and for improving overall health. Options to include are walking, water exercise, bicycling, paddling, and various other low-impact recreational activities.

The benefits of exercise as part of a treatment program for managing arthritis are well known. Start today by making healthy lifestyle choices. ■

Tim Lencki, MS, CSCS, is a strength and conditioning specialist, author, and speaker. He can be reached at tim@personalfitpros.com or visit www.personalfitpros.com.





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Healthy Recipe: Chicken & White Bean Soup

INGREDIENTS:

- Two teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Two leeks, white and light green parts only, cut into 1/4-inch rounds
- One tablespoon chopped fresh sage, or 1/4 teaspoon dried
- Two 14-ounce cans reduced-sodium chicken broth
- Two cups water
- One 15-ounce can cannellini beans, rinsed
- One 2-pound roasted chicken, skin discarded, meat removed from bones and shredded (4 cups)

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 172
- Carbohydrates: 10 g.
- Protein: 24 g.
- Fat: 4 g.
- Fiber: 3 g.

➊ Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add leeks and cook, stirring often, until soft, about 3 minutes.

➋ Stir in sage and continue cooking until aromatic, about 30 seconds. Stir in broth and water, increase heat to high, cover and bring to a boil.

➌ Add beans, chicken and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until heated through, about 3 minutes. Serve hot.

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Questions and Answers

Ditch that Diet Soda

Q: *Can your diet soda do more harm than good?*

A: Yes. Research suggests that artificial-sweetener consumption can cause weight gain. The possible cause is that the artificial sweetener actually increases sugar cravings. The theory is that our bodies sense the sweetness of the food and expect calories. So, when you consume the sweetener without the calories, your body continues to crave the calories so you end up eating more later on.

Another possibility is the impact that high amounts of sweets have on how much we need to feel satisfied. Sweeteners are much sweeter than regular sugar, so repeated exposure to flavor trains flavor preferences. Think about when you cut back on salt for fatty foods and how over the course of time, your craving for them diminishes. When you cut back on sugar and replace it with artificial sweetener, you never really get the chance to get used to consuming less of the taste. Therefore, you find other ways to satisfy your sweet tooth.

The solution is to limit sweetener intake. When you need a little sweet fix, choose natural sweeteners such as stevia or unprocessed honey.

- Tim Lencki

Exercise Consistently by taking it Outdoors

Finding consistency in an exercise program can be very challenging at times. This is especially true when exercising indoors. Knowing you have to hop on that treadmill or elliptical again isn't very exciting. When this happens, consider exercising outdoors.

For example, let's take the option of using a treadmill versus the same activity outdoors. It is much more interesting to hike through the woods experiencing the fresh air, wildlife, and constantly changing scenery. In addition, the unevenness of the terrain (i.e., uphill, downhill, stepping over rocks and tree limbs) gives your body a better workout. If you live in an area where it snows, strap on a pair of snowshoes and see what a difference that makes!

Or, consider biking outdoors as opposed to indoors. While indoors, the environment is stable with no wind or changes in elevation. But when you bike outside, you may experience wind drag that results in a much greater energy demand and more calories burned. Also, the various inclines, declines and turns you will experience stimulate the body to a greater degree resulting in more positive change.

Consider other outdoor activities such as XC-skiing, paddling, mountain biking, or ice-skating. ❖

- Tim Lencki