

Managing a chronic disease can be complex and frustrating—for you and your patients. Give them the tools they need to improve their health. Recommend a self-management education or physical activity intervention and help your patients take charge.

Current medical treatment options may not always give your patients the relief they're looking for, or they may have trouble following your treatment recommendations. Evidence suggests that nonpharmacological treatments are an important part of chronic disease management.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Arthritis Program has identified a number of **self-management education** and **physical activity** interventions proven effective for people with chronic conditions, including arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease. These interventions can reduce symptoms, give your patients the confidence to manage their condition, and improve their quality of life.

Why Use These Interventions?

The self-management education and physical activity interventions supported by the CDC Arthritis Program are:

- **Credible.** They were designed by reputable organizations like Stanford University, the University of Washington, and the Arthritis Foundation. Classes are taught by trained and certified instructors.
- **Low-cost.** Self-management education courses typically cost about \$25–\$40. Physical activity classes cost \$1–\$4 per session.
- **Convenient.** Classes are offered at convenient locations in your community. Self-management education courses require about a 2–2½ hour time commitment per week for 6–8 weeks. Physical activity classes meet one to three times per week for 8–12 weeks or on an ongoing basis.



Quick Facts

- Almost **1 out of every 2 adults** in the U.S. has at least one chronic disease.¹ More than **1 in 4 adults** have two or more chronic diseases.²
- For about **one-fourth** of these people, their condition limits their daily activities.¹
- The leading cause of disability is arthritis. More than **50 million American adults** have doctor-diagnosed arthritis.³
- Your recommendation is important. People **are more than 18 times as likely** to participate in a self-management education intervention if their health care provider recommends it.⁴

¹www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview

²www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=50968

³www.cdc.gov/arthritis/media/quickstats.htm

⁴*Arthritis and Rheumatism*. 2007;56(9):S307–308.

What Should I Know About These Interventions?

Self-Management Education Workshops	Physical Activity Classes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide instruction on day-to-day strategies for managing and coping with chronic health conditions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techniques to deal with pain, fatigue, and physical limitations • Appropriate exercise and medication use • Effective communication with family, friends, and physicians • Proper nutrition ✓ Are offered in English and Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teach a range of exercises that can be modified for different skill and disability levels, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing and stretching techniques • Endurance and strength training • Low-impact aerobics ✓ Are designed to improve flexibility, joint range of motion, balance, endurance, and strength ✓ May also teach behavioral skills like goal-setting, problem-solving, and overcoming barriers

For More Information

- Brady TJ, Jernick SL, Hootman JM, et al. Public health interventions for arthritis: expanding the toolbox of evidence-based interventions. *Journal of Women's Health.* 2009;18(12):1905–1917.
- Quick stats on arthritis: www.cdc.gov/arthritis/media/quickstats.htm
- Descriptions of specific interventions: www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions.htm
- CDC publications by topic: www.cdc.gov/arthritis/publications/topics.htm

How Can They Help My Patients?

Evidence from clinical trials and program evaluations shows that the self-management education and physical activity interventions supported by the CDC Arthritis Program can:

- Reduce pain and fatigue
- Improve self-rated health
- Improve range of motion
- Increase physical activity
- Elevate mood
- Improve psychological well-being
- Increase participants' confidence in their ability to manage their health

Studies have found that the effects of these interventions last well after the last class—up to 12 months or more. Improvements in symptoms and quality of life can help your patients be more effective partners in their health care.