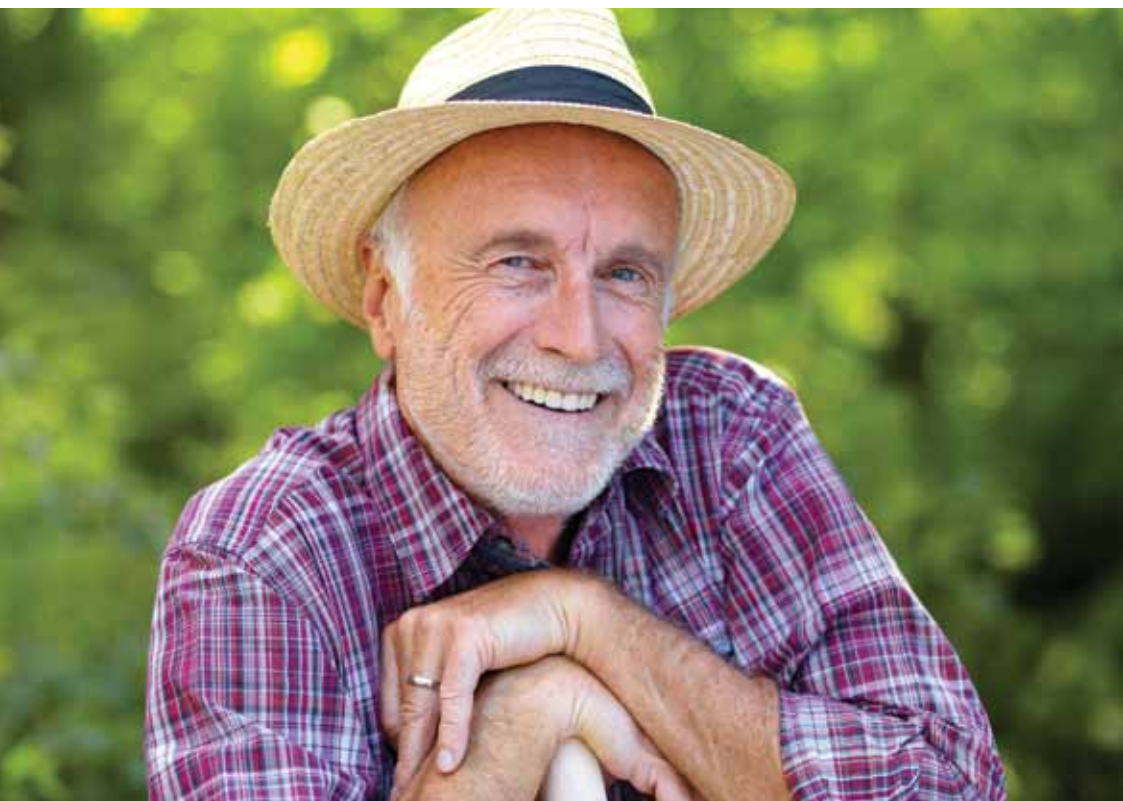


Feelings matter:

Emotional wellbeing and arthritis



ARTHRITIS CARE

Contents

About this booklet	3	Building a good frame of mind	26
Arthritis and your life	6	Accepting help when you need support	36
Common emotions	8	How Arthritis Care can help you	38
Emotions and your symptoms	11	Other useful organisations	40
Your relationships	20		

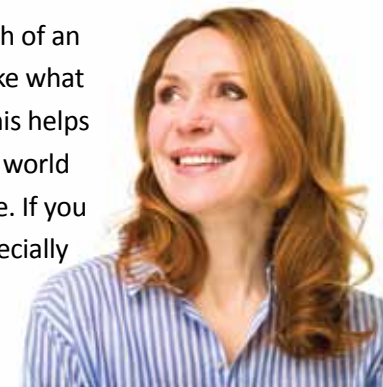
IMAGE CREDITS: Arthritis Care: p.39; 123RF: p.1 Gunter Menzl; p.3 Margarita Borodina; p.4 Karel Miragaya; pp.5, 7, 15, 17, 27, 32 and 43 Cathy Yeulet; p.8 Natalie Board; p.9 Wong Sze Yuen; p.11 Chad Zuber; p.12 Goodluz; p.13 Ruslan Huzau; p.14 Anna Bizon; p.16 Olga Volodina; p.20 auremar; p.22 obencem, pp.23 and 31 Wavebreak Media Ltd.; p.24 brainsil; p.28 Burmakin Andrey; p.29 Michael Heim; p.34 Kenneth Sponsler; p.37 Ian Allenden; p.41 Dmitriy Shironosov

About this booklet

Arthritis is often described as an invisible condition. If you are having a flare-up, it's not always obvious to those around you. It's natural to feel angry and frustrated.

This booklet looks at some common experiences of people with arthritis and includes stories from some of them. It is also packed with ideas on how to feel better. It's all about learning to live well with arthritis and what that means for you.

The emotional effects of arthritis can have just as much of an impact as the physical symptoms. It's important to take what steps you can to promote your emotional health, as this helps to find purpose in all that you do and engage with the world around you. This, in turn, can increase your confidence. If you have a long-term condition such as arthritis this is especially important, because maintaining a positive mental attitude can help you cope with change, uncertainty and potentially stressful situations.



What do you think of this booklet?

Email us at reviewing@arthritiscare.org.uk with your thoughts – we would really like to hear from you.



You may be experiencing considerable pain, unrelenting fatigue and low mood. You may feel isolated and detached from your family, friends and local community. You will probably feel angry that aspects of your life have been taken away from you. A sense of loss can set in, because it's not the life you planned.

But it helps to accept your life as it stands in the here and now, and work with the resources you have on any particular day.

Many people with arthritis experience depression, and it is important to seek help and support if you are experiencing this. See page 37 if you think this applies to you.



How can I look after my emotional wellbeing?

- Keep up with activities you enjoy or take up a new one. This could be anything: gardening, reading, walking, cooking. The list is endless!
- Stay connected – to family, friends, the local community. If you're feeling isolated, follow your interests (join a gardening club, book club or singing group, for example). Arthritis Care has local branches and groups all over the UK – many have coffee mornings, activity groups and other social events. There's something to suit everyone.
- Keep active – many people say their arthritis symptoms lessen if they exercise.
- Give back – this could be a small gesture, such as giving someone a compliment, or a larger one, such as volunteering at a charity shop or soup kitchen.

We all need a helping hand sometimes, and there are many places to go and people to talk to in those moments when you need information, understanding and support. See pages 40-41 for details.

Arthritis and your life



Your pain and fatigue can fluctuate. As a result, there may be times when you do not need to modify your routine very much. You may, however, feel that it affects all areas of your life: work and leisure activities, relationships, finances and holidays, to name just a few. It's helpful to have the information and support you need to manage these changes in ways that are right for you. That's why Arthritis Care is here.

Life stages

The emotional impact of arthritis varies from person to person. The experiences and expectations of a young adult, a person in middle age, or an older person can be very different. Whether you are establishing your independence, raising a family, pursuing a career, or are in later life, arthritis can make it harder. Many people with arthritis live alone and this can be difficult, too.

People you can count on

The support you have really matters, and receiving practical help can really make a difference - don't be afraid to ask for it. Having arthritis can put a strain on your relationships, but it can also make them stronger if you engage in two-way communication.

Want to talk?

If you would like to chat about your arthritis, or would just like someone to speak to, call Arthritis Care's free and confidential Helpline on 0808 800 4050. Our friendly and knowledgeable team can be a listening ear – just give us a ring Monday-Friday, 09:30-17:00.

Common emotions



Emotions send us quick, powerful messages about our environment. These then trigger reactions, which often allow us to function effectively in a given situation. Some emotions are automatically signalled – such as happiness, sadness and anger, while others, like guilt or jealousy, are more complex and often have no obvious signals.

One size rarely fits all in any aspect of life. It depends on you and what stage your arthritis is at: whether you're experiencing the first symptoms, have just been diagnosed, are going through your first flare-up, or have been living with a chronic and relapsing condition for some time.

However, people with arthritis do talk about some common experiences. Hearing the diagnosis can be a shock. Some people deny anything is wrong, and try to ignore it. You might feel scared, or relieved to finally know what's wrong.

However, there may be a sense that your body cannot be relied upon or trusted anymore, and the feelings of uncertainty can be hard to adjust to.

At any stage, many people feel angry and frustrated. It's natural to ask "why me?" Anxiety is also common. You may be scared, especially if you have known someone with severe arthritis in the past. It is still very difficult to treat severe, intractable pain.

Arthritis can affect or have an effect on your relationships, and leave you feeling isolated. It may knock your confidence, especially when others are not kind or understanding. At times like this, it's good to know that many people, and Arthritis Care, can help. As well as our free Helpline, you can find support through our Online Community, where you can talk to others with arthritis, and share your stories and problems. You can find this at [arthritiscareforum.org.uk](https://www.arthritiscareforum.org.uk)



arthritiscare.org.uk
free Helpline: 0808 800 4050

Barry's story

When Barry was first diagnosed with arthritis, he was training for the London to Paris cycle ride. His first worry was whether he could make the event.

Eventually though, Barry faced bigger problems. Arthritis made it impossible for him to do his job, and he took early retirement without going back to work. "That was a shame," he says. "I wanted to finish properly and say goodbye to people."

"For the first few weeks and months, I was a nightmare to live with," Barry adds. It was really frustrating. It also caused problems with my partner. He could see I was struggling, but I'm not great at expressing my feelings. Even if I was in pain, I would deny it."

Barry says his partner still had to go to work all day. "But he tried to support me as much as possible. He was really good and came home every lunchtime to see that I was OK."

Barry contacted Arthritis Care's helpline and ordered a variety of booklets and factsheets. He also joined the Arthritis Care Online Community, finding it useful to see what other people in the same situation were experiencing.

With this support and effective treatment, Barry could once again enjoy the more active lifestyle that is so important to him.

Emotions and your symptoms

Mind and body

Because your mind and body are so closely linked, the symptoms of arthritis, and the feelings you get, can influence each other. This can be good or bad, depending on how you look at it.

For example, if you are in pain or can't do something, it might make you short-tempered or put you in a low mood. On the other hand, feeling positive about finding a solution or focusing on things you can do makes physical symptoms easier to cope with.

Two principles are important in appreciating how we experience pain:

- Each of us reacts to and manages pain differently.
- How we deal with our pain can affect the way we feel it.





A variety of other factors can determine how your body will react chemically to pain and whether your nerves will transmit or block a potentially painful message to your brain. These factors can include anxiety, fatigue and how you responded to pain while growing up. The pain caused by arthritis can be persistent and sometimes severe, but you can work hard at not letting it dominate your life.

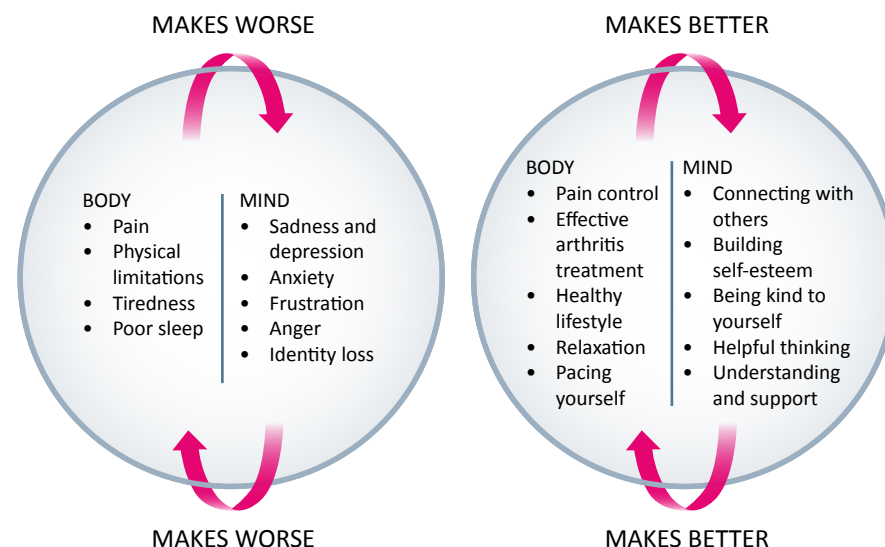
Arthritis drugs

A side effect of some drugs can be mood changes. This can be directly or indirectly, as a knock-on effect, of another side effect, such as insomnia, headaches or dizziness. This, in turn, can cause you to become tired and withdrawn, and could, in the long term, lead to anxiety and depression.

Talk to your doctor or another healthcare professional you trust about the possible drawbacks and benefits of your medication. It is also important to talk to your GP if you feel your medication is affecting your emotions.

Take charge of the symptom cycle

When one aspect of your health is not going well, the other parts suffer as well. The good news is, each positive step can have a number of positive effects, which can halt a negative cycle – or even prevent one starting. A single positive step can bring long-term benefits to your emotional wellbeing.





Managing your condition

When your symptoms are being managed, life gets easier. So it makes sense to take good care of your body by:

- Eating a healthy, balanced diet
- Drinking enough fluids: dehydration makes your brain fuzzy
- Getting enough sleep (see page 17)
- Staying active and getting exercise (see page 18).

These steps will also help you to maintain a healthy weight, which is important for your bones and joints.

Best arthritis care

Work with your healthcare team to optimise your treatment to the best it can possibly be. Together, you can find the right combination of exercise, therapy and medication. This can be difficult, however, if you lack the confidence or the knowledge to have a meaningful, two-way discussion. Here are a few suggestions on how to build your confidence in these situations:

- Take someone with you to consultations.
- Ring our Helpline for advice on the right questions to ask.
- Write a list of things you want to discuss or tell your doctor. Take these with you on the day and tick off each point during your appointment.
- Attend a self-management course or workshop, which can help to build your confidence in the long term.



Stay up to date

Stick to your treatment plan to get the most benefit. If it's not working for you at any time, talk to your doctor, nurse or therapist about making adjustments. Don't be afraid to ask questions about your treatment and the alternatives.



Rest and relaxation

When you feel threatened, your body goes into ‘fight or flight’ mode. This stress response releases chemicals that affects your heart, breathing, muscles, nerves, gut and brain.

Learning to relax

There are lots of different ways to relax. Some people find that mindfulness helps them (see page 30). Others find meditation, yoga, or listening to relaxing music beneficial. Another technique you could try is Autogenic Training – this is a relaxation process that addresses the imbalance in mind and body.

Pace yourself

Fatigue can be a big problem for many people with arthritis. Build extra time into your schedule so you can rest between periods of activity, without having to rush.



Sleep is vital

Some people with arthritis struggle to get a good night’s sleep – this can be due to pain, or worrying about the knock-on effects of your condition. Lack of sleep can make your pain worse, leave you grumpy or low, and can affect your concentration.

Stick to a calm routine, with a regular bedtime. Switch off your mobile phone, computer and TV. A comfortable temperature will help you drift off. If it’s not working, ask your GP for advice.

Check your mattress – sometimes a softer one is better for your back than a harder one.

Staying active

You don't have to go to the gym – staying active is about keeping moving, in a way that feels comfortable for you. Being physically active helps to alleviate arthritis symptoms, and is the key to staying mobile and independent.

Benefits for arthritis

The right kind of exercise keeps your bones strong. It also strengthens the muscles that support your joints. It eases stiffness, pain and tiredness, too.

Lifting your mood

Exercise is great for mental health. It reduces stress, helps with sleep, sharpens your thinking, and gets your body to release its natural feel-good chemicals.

What exercise is right for me?

Choose something you like to do, so it's easier to stick with it. Exercise can be a way to have fun and meet people. Absolutely everyone can benefit.

You'll find lots of ideas on our website and our Exercise and Arthritis booklet – even exercises you can do in your chair. To find out what's safe for your joints, have a chat with your doctor, nurse or therapist before you start.

Elaine's story

Elaine has always been a positive person, who sees the glass as half full. In her eighties, she's also very active. Her story shows how looking after your physical wellbeing can help you feel more cheerful, too.

Elaine has osteoarthritis in her hips and shoulders. She's had one hip replaced and was on crutches for three weeks after the operation. "There is no denying that arthritis is a difficult condition and it is never going to get any better," she says. "But it doesn't do to dwell on these things".

She finds the best way to manage her symptoms is through regular exercise and diet. "If I didn't keep moving, I'd seize up," Elaine says. "It does hurt sometimes, so it's always best to take things gently."

A decade ago, while in her seventies and long after her arthritis diagnosis, she became an exercise instructor. Now she uses her experience to benefit others, teaching chair-based exercise classes for people with arthritis and other limiting health conditions. "I get as much out of it as they do, I'm sure," Elaine says.

Her advice is to keep moving, manage your weight, keep warm, and enjoy your five portions of fruit and vegetables every day. "Call the Arthritis Care Helpline for any further advice, as they are very helpful," she adds. "Speak to one of the team and they'll be able to tell you how to help yourself to best manage your arthritis."

Your relationships

Good relationships are central to our emotional wellbeing. All relationships go through happy times and difficult times, and having a long-term condition such as arthritis can present challenges. However, being honest and upfront with the people you are close to, and spending time listening to each other, helps both you and them.

Changing roles

Arthritis means asking for extra help, and it's not always easy. You may have to rely more on your spouse, partner or family, and you may not be comfortable with this. You can read more about accepting help on page 36.

You might worry about doing your fair share at work, or keeping the respect and friendship of colleagues. Some people stop going out as much, or give up their hobbies, and see their social life drifting away.

Relationships and emotions

Many of the emotions that come with arthritis are linked to our relationships. Worrying about being a burden and feeling misunderstood are two examples. Anger, frustration and sadness are also hard on the people we care about.

Growing stronger

Later in this booklet, you'll find practical ideas to protect and build your relationships. There are tips on good communication, staying connected and involved, and meeting new people.

Some people say that having a long-term condition makes them think more about what's important in life, making them determined to enjoy time with people they love. Facing difficulties together can draw people closer and, ultimately, lead to a deeper bond.

Intimacy and sex

Arthritis may change your energy levels and how you see yourself. Pain, physical discomfort, side effects from medication, or tiredness can lower your interest in sex or make it difficult. As always, the key is honest, two-way communication.

Arthritis Research UK has information on sex, relationships and arthritis, including how arthritis could affect your sex life and positions that could work for you and your partner. See arthritisresearchuk.org for more information.





For family and friends

If someone you care about has arthritis, you want to be there for them. But it's not always easy.

Perhaps you are helping with appointments, transport, or tasks at home. Maybe you provide personal care, like washing and dressing. You might have money worries too, which compound these problems.

Many people worry that caring is changing their relationship. You can try our communication tips on the next page to work on this.

If you're caring for someone with a long-term condition, you can become depressed, isolated, anxious and/or stressed. It's important to look after your own wellbeing. Try some of the tips in this booklet for yourself. Let your GP know you are a carer, and ask your local council* for a carer's assessment, which can open the door to benefits and services.

You can also turn to Arthritis Care, and other organisations listed on pages 40-41, for information and support.

** In Northern Ireland, ask the local social services department.*



Communication

The key to good relationships is trust, which depends on open communication. If something is bothering you, try to talk about it. To keep the conversation calm:

- Introduce the subject gently – use 'I' statements to 'own' your feelings
- Be aware of body language
- Focus on the problem, not on blame - talk about how things make you feel and what would help you
- Calmly explain your feelings
- Ask how they feel
- Listen without judging.

Small talk matters, too. Those chats about everyday life can improve and build your relationships.

The organisations listed at the back of this booklet can help if you want counselling or more support.

[arthritiscare.org.uk](https://www.arthritiscare.org.uk)
free Helpline: 0808 800 4050



Staying connected

Many people with arthritis feel isolated. This can be due to stopping paid employment, not carrying on with the activities you enjoy, and generally being less active.

Research tells us that feeling connected to other people is essential for our emotional health and wellbeing, so it's a priority. Here are some ideas:

- Look for new ways to stay in touch with family and friends. Can you talk on the phone, or online?
- Plan ahead and manage your arthritis, so you can carry on doing the things that matter to you. An occupational therapist can suggest adjustments, so ask your GP or social worker for a referral.
- Consider volunteering. Everyone has something to offer, and helping others is rewarding.

You can also join a support group or talk to us at Arthritis Care – see page 38 for details.

Sarah's story

Sarah was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis at 28, when she was starting a very successful career in IT and enjoying London's social scene.

But the years that followed were a rollercoaster of debilitating pain, emotional life events and the return of her symptoms.

Eventually, Sarah could no longer cope with commuting and long working hours, so she resigned from a contract.

Then she came across the Arthritis Care Helpline, finding the people so helpful that she wanted to spread the word. Sarah found a new lease of life by helping others and now spends some time each day supporting other people on the Arthritis Care Online Community.

She has also launched a new business called Case Study Ninja – a software tool that helps organisations get their case studies out into the world. Work has always been important to Sarah, and she is loving every minute of her new career.

Building a good frame of mind



Self-confidence

Living with a long-term condition can knock your self-confidence in many ways. You may not be able to socialise as much as you used to, or need help with certain tasks, and you may not be comfortable asking for help. You may also have experienced changes to your appearance, which can affect how you see yourself and what you feel capable of doing.

This can be especially difficult to deal with if you don't have a support network, through friends, family or within communities. Connecting with others is a crucial part of looking after your emotional wellbeing. It can make you feel happier and more positive about yourself and the world around you.

If you would like to talk to someone about your arthritis, you can call Arthritis Care's free Helpline Monday-Friday, 09:30-17:00. Our friendly team can talk to you about any aspect of the condition, and your call is confidential. There are many other organisations you can contact for help and support as well; see pages 40-41 for more information.

The methods you use to build your self-confidence are unique. What works for someone else, might not help you. If you would like to try building your self-confidence up slowly, why not try one or more of the following?

- Learning how to manage your arthritis.
- Setting small goals. These should be manageable and enjoyable. Why not try a new recipe, learn a few words of a foreign language, or say hello to a new person today?
- Being assertive – question the health professionals treating you, about medication and other treatment options you are offered (or not offered). Don't be scared to question any aspect of your care and treatment.
- Check how you are talking to yourself about yourself throughout the day. Would you speak to a friend like that? We can be very hard on ourselves sometimes.



Body image

The change in body image that may come with arthritis can knock self-confidence at first. In particular, many people find they are no longer able to wear certain shoes, but there are many ways to keep your feet happy and stylish. Here are a few tips from Arthritis Care's Online Community:

@Starburst: Go to a proper shoe shop where they fit and measure. Walk around in them in the shop lots. If you're not sure, sit down or go elsewhere and come back.

@ouchpotato: I bling my footwear! I wear Vans or Converse, flat and well-made but still 'in', and style them up - whether that is with clashing coloured laces, glitter, sequins, or whatever I can lay my hands on.

@Starburst: Don't buy uncomfortable shoes because they look nice. Life is too short. There's no point in your shoes looking nice sitting at the bottom of your wardrobe.



Be kind to yourself

One way to cope with life's ups and downs is to encourage a frame of mind called 'self-compassion', which means being kind to yourself when life is hard. Learning self-compassion can make symptoms and limitations easier to live with.

Think about how you would talk to a friend or family member, if they had a problem with arthritis. Chances are you would be understanding and encouraging, but we are often much harder on ourselves.

Instead of criticising yourself, focus on the things you can do, not the things you can't.

If you want to develop more self-compassion, mindfulness can be an effective tool to use (see page 30).

arthritiscare.org.uk
free Helpline: 0808 800 4050

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is an increasingly popular way to improve wellbeing. It's about living in the moment, and paying close attention to what's happening in your body and mind, and in the world around you. You don't make any judgements – you just become aware.

As a result of what you notice, you might decide to change the way you think about or react to problems and situations.

If you have a mental health condition, please talk to your health professional first, to make sure mindfulness is right for you.

Benefits of mindfulness

Studies suggest that mindfulness can help reduce depression, anxiety and pain. The technique can improve sleep and may help people adjust to living with a long-term health condition.

Quick mindfulness tips

You can try these tips to be mindful in your everyday life:

- Take a moment to notice your senses as you do something routine. What do you hear, see, smell, taste and feel?
- Focus on your breathing for a few minutes.
- Ask yourself how you are feeling at any given moment. Are you happy, sad, anxious, angry, calm?
- Close your eyes and mentally scan your body, to see how each part is feeling.



Learn more

You can try more structured ways to practice mindfulness if you want to. The Mental Health Foundation has a good range of exercises and information at bemindful.co.uk

The mental health charity Mind also has information; visit mind.org.uk and search for “mindfulness”.

Get support

Many counsellors and psychologists now use a form of mindfulness therapy to help people improve their mental health. You can ask about this if you are already getting professional support, or talk to your doctor or nurse if you think this kind of counselling would help you.

arthritiscare.org.uk
free Helpline: 0808 800 4050



Bouncing back

In psychology, the ability to move forward with your life in spite of setbacks is known as 'resilience'. It doesn't mean that you ignore problems, or avoid emotionally painful experiences – resilience helps you get through them. Times might be tough, but you bounce back.

Having supportive relationships is one thing that makes us more resilient.

You can also see resilience as a skill that can be built up - for example, by:

- Learning practical ways to get around arthritis
- Trying to keep problems in perspective
- Keeping a balance in your life: not letting one aspect, such as a health condition, take over everything
- Aiming for a flexible and hopeful outlook. Focus on looking forward and not dwelling on the past or things you can't do anymore.

Taking good care of yourself with a healthy lifestyle, and making some time for fun and relaxation, are other steps that build your resilience.

Yolande's story

Yolande overcame setbacks and took charge, by focusing on her health and on changes that suit her lifestyle, values and priorities.

Like many people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA), it took a while for the cause of her painful symptoms to be identified. When it came, the news left Yolande feeling old before her time. So did the symptoms, which made it painful to walk, and impossible to keep up her hobby of snowboarding. The pain and fatigue also made it difficult to continue her 12-hour shifts as an emergency nurse practitioner.

Alongside her medical treatment, Yolande decided to get serious about nutrition as part of her strategy to manage RA. She now has stacks of cookbooks and as an added benefit, Yolande has discovered a world of healthy eating. She's also started working 12-hour shifts at the job she has trained for and loves. She's taken up motorcycle riding, enjoying the liberation, the fashion statement (biker boots are more wearable than high heels!), and some beautiful journeys.



Rumination

Rumination is dwelling on difficulties and things that distress us. This could be repeatedly thinking about events from our past, or becoming preoccupied with something and not being able to get it out of your mind.

This sort of rumination (or overthinking) is driven by anxiety and tends to focus on causes and consequences, instead of solutions: “Why me? What did I do to deserve this?” and “Will my life ever get better?” It’s more helpful to ask “What will actually make my life better?”

People with long-term health conditions can become so concerned about their situation that they get locked into constant rumination as part of their thinking pattern. A key part of emotional wellbeing is avoiding any preoccupation with ‘what’s wrong’ and finding things you can change.

Here are some ideas that people with arthritis have identified as helpful:

- Learn to avoid the triggers – for example, if spending time with a particular friend leads to overthinking, limit the time you spend with them.
- Let go of unrealistic goals – learn to assess whether your goals are realistic. If they are not, redefining them into goals that can be accomplished realistically can free you from overthinking. For more on setting goals, see page 27.
- Indulge yourself in different ways – instead of going into ruminative thought when you feel stressed, do something else. This could be exercise, taking a bubble bath, talking with a trusted friend, nature walks, prayer, or meditation.
- Review your life – seeing it in a new, whole and meaningful way can provide insights and different perspectives during times of stress. Doing this with a therapist can lead to a permanent change in how you handle life’s challenges.
- Expand your range of activities – rumination is more likely when our lives are limited. If work or your home routine has taken over your life, for example, try volunteering or take up a hobby in a completely different setting.
- Reviewing your life and seeing it in a new, whole and meaningful way – this can provide insights and different perspectives during times of stress. Develop a balanced and realistic perspective, looking at both the positives and negatives.

Accepting help when you need support

Asking other people for help is not always easy, especially if you take pride in being independent. You might be worried about being a burden, or about wasting someone's time.

We all need help

The truth is, everyone needs help at some point in life. It's part of being human. And most people do want to help. In fact, there are many organisations that have been set up for that very purpose. Their aim is to help you stay independent and live the life you want.

When to ask and where to go

If you are struggling with the with the physical and psychological impact of arthritis, it's time to take action. It's even better to do this early on, before small problems grow bigger. You can talk to your GP, nurse or therapist, or you can contact some of the groups listed from page 40-41.

We are always here for you at Arthritis Care, for information or when you simply need someone to talk to. You can find out how to get in touch, and hear about the services we offer, on page 38.

When it's too much

Problems like depression and anxiety can really get on top of you, and they are common in people with arthritis.

Warning signs

Depression is different from feeling low for a while: it goes on for weeks, and interferes with your daily life. You can lose your motivation and sense of enjoyment. It can leave you feeling hopeless, helpless, tearful or irritable. Having no energy and not sleeping well are other signs.

Anxiety can happen on its own or alongside other conditions like depression. It's a feeling of being worried or frightened all the time, which gets in the way of everyday life.

Who can help

If you're having a hard time with emotions or thoughts, talk to someone who can help. You'll find a list of organisations who are ready to listen to you from page 40 onwards. You can also talk to your GP, and they can help you find counselling, if you want it.

What to do in a crisis

If the feelings are so bad that you feel on the verge of harming yourself, or someone else, this is an emergency that needs medical help. Talk to your GP immediately, call 999 or go to your local hospital's A&E department. They will understand and are trained to help.





ARTHRITIS CARE

How Arthritis Care can help you

Want to talk to someone about your arthritis?
Or read more about the condition?

Call our free, confidential Helpline on 0808 800 4050 for information and support. We're open weekdays from 09:30 to 17:00 – we'd really like to hear from you.

We have over 40 free booklets and factsheets on various aspects of arthritis, from diet and surgery, to managing pain and fatigue. These can be sent to you in the post – just ask our helpline staff for details.

Go online

You can download all our booklets and factsheets as PDFs from arthritiscare.org.uk/information
We also have an Online Community, where you can chat to others with arthritis, and can be reached at arthritisforum.org.uk

Talk to others

There are Arthritis Care branches and groups all over the country, where you can chat to other people with arthritis, in a social setting. Call the helpline or visit arthritiscare.org.uk to find your nearest branch or group.

Share your experience

Want to share your story to help others live well with arthritis? If you would like to get your story heard, contact Kim Deasy on 020 7380 6562 or email kimd@arthritiscare.org.uk

Raise awareness

Could you help us raise awareness of arthritis? Whether it's putting up posters in your local supermarket, handing out leaflets or organising a bake sale, we would really appreciate your time.

Donate

Help us to help the 10 million people in the UK living with arthritis. Every donation, big or small, makes life better for those with the condition.

Just visit arthritiscare.org.uk/donate or call us on 020 7380 6540

Leave a gift in your will

Gifts in Wills help us reach over half the people we support.

For more information about remembering Arthritis Care in your will, visit arthritiscare.org.uk/wills or call 0330 2002 0311



Become a member of Arthritis Care and receive *Inspire*, our quarterly magazine on how to live well with arthritis.

Other useful organisations



In addition to support from Arthritis Care, there are many organisations out there to help with emotional issues, mental health and relationships.

Arthritis Research UK

arthritisresearchuk.org/

More information and support for people affected by arthritis.

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

bacp.co.uk/

Find a qualified counsellor.

British Psychological Society

bps.org.uk/

Find a qualified counsellor.

Information about mental health.

Carers UK

carersuk.org

Adviceline: 0808 808 7777

Support and information when you are caring for someone.

Disability, Pregnancy and Parenthood

disabledparent.org.uk/

Online information and forum.

Family Lives

familylives.org.uk/

Helpline: 0808 800 2222

Support and information for parents.

Marriage Care

marriagecare.org.uk/

Information and counselling for all couples, married or not. Fees may apply for some services.

Mental Health Foundation

mentalhealth.org.uk/

Information on mental health.

Be Mindful

bemindful.co.uk/

Information on mindfulness and how to do it.

MIND

mind.org.uk/

0300 123 3393

Information about mental health, phone infoline.

OnePlusOne

oneplusone.org.uk/

For online information about relationship issues.

Relate

relate.org.uk/

0300 100 1234 to book an appointment.

Information about relationships (including families), counselling.

Fees may apply for some services.

Royal College of Psychiatrists

rcpsych.ac.uk/

Information about mental health.



Special thanks

Arthritis Care would like to thank the following people for their help in producing this booklet:

Dr David Walton

Dr Catriona Irvine

Anne Quinn

Maura McCarron

Janet Marshall

Mary Cowern

Sharon Kilty

Louise Sanders and Jeremy Sanders

Tricia Bowers

Colleen Shannon

Caroline Edmonds

Arthritis Care Helpline Team

Sheffield Branch of Arthritis Care



ARTHRITIS CARE

We believe there is always something you can do to reduce the impact of arthritis. Call our free and confidential Helpline. Talking about arthritis, sharing your concerns and how you feel, can really help.

There are free publications that you can find on our website or order by post. Or you may prefer to visit our Online Community where you can chat to others about the things that matter to you.

To find out more about arthritis and Arthritis Care call:

0808 800 4050

(open weekdays 09:30-17:00)

arthritiscare.org.uk

Arthritis Care, Floor 4, Linen Court, London N1 6AD
Registered Charity Nos. 206563 and SC038693

Last reviewed in 2016. Next review due in 2019.
ISBN 978-0-9955657-4-6

Please check our website for up-to-date information
and reference sources or call 020 7380 6577.



Arthritis Care is a certified member of The Information Standard. This means that you can be confident that Arthritis Care is a reliable and trustworthy source of health and social care information