

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF JOINT PROTECTION

1. Avoid position of joint deformity - This can be caused by external stress, such as opening jars in the direction of your little finger, or by internal stress, such as poor posture. Try to avoid putting extra weight on your body, ie. heavy coats, parcels, extra fat
2. Use your strongest joints to do the job - elbow and shoulder versus wrist and fingers.
3. Avoid maintained or static position - this can stretch your muscles and cause poor circulation
4. Do not attempt anything you would not be able to stop in the middle of
5. Have respect for pain - you must expect some discomfort, however, if you feel real pain your body is sending you a danger signal and you should discontinue what you are doing.

WORK SIMPLIFICATION

1. Plan Ahead - Before beginning an activity sit down and think it through. You should try to do things the most efficient way using the least energy. Break the activity down into several basic steps and plan to rest for five to ten minutes between each step.
2. Be sensitive to signs of fatigue - Don't push yourself! Stop activity at first sign of fatigue. A tired person tends to be careless and use his joints in a poor way.
3. Combine steps - Wear pockets to carry supplies from room to room
4. Organize your kitchen so things are stored where they are most used

SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS TO THE HOMEMAKER WITH ARTHRITIS

- * use a pencil held parallel to your joints to dial a phone
- use a push cart to gather ingredients before preparing a meal
- Keep a large supply of food on hand to cut down on shopping trips
- Lift with two hands
- Use bottled lemon juice to eliminate squeezing
- Always open and close jars going in the direction of your thumb
- Use an electrical can opener
- Open cans and do everything else possible before sitting down
- Instead of pushing in a tab, cut box open
- Keep a raised stool in the kitchen to rest on when doing activities that will take longer than ten minutes
- Enlarge handles of mixing spoons etcetera by wrapping washclothes around them to prevent prolonged tight grasp
- Use ladle to transfer liquids
- Use a large sponge to keep fingers in an extended position
- Use a bookrest to avoid static holding
- Teflon pans make cleaning easier
- Distribute work evenly between both arms
- Cut bags with knife - no scissors!
- Use preseasoned convenience foods to prevent unnecessary measuring
- Control weight through nutrition
- Use cutting board with nails in it for stabilizing vegetables