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Gardening with Arthritis

Nearly 1 in 4 American adults report arthritis symptoms, in rural communities, nearly 1 in 3 adults are impacted by arthritis. The highest rates of arthritis are found among women, older adults, smokers, adults with less education, higher body mass index, and those who are less physically active.

Of those affected by arthritis, nearly half report arthritis limits activity. Physical activity can decrease pain and improve physical function by up to 40%, but it may be intimidating for people with chronic pain.

What is an alternative to traditional exercise?

Gardening.

Gardening with Arthritis is an educational program developed by the Ohio AgrAbility Project to educate people about ways to continue working on their garden or farm if they have arthritis or another limitation.

Benefits of gardening

- Stress management
- Gets you in touch with nature
- Gardening community - there is always something to talk about in the garden! (replaces the weather)
- Multi-generational activity
- Vegetable Victory Gardens



Tips for Gardening with Arthritis

- Stretch and warm up before gardening
- Switch tasks often, going from bending jobs to reaching jobs
- Wear a knee brace or knee pads (if needed), and wear comfortable shoes
- Carry items close to your body, make frequent trips with small loads
- Store tools and equipment in or near the garden



Raised garden beds allow easy access for gardeners in wheelchairs or mobility devices, or those who have difficulty bending or stooping

Use the right tools

- Tools with "spring action design" can reduce hand strain
- Ergonomic tools fit the hand, and are comfortable to use and hold
- Tool handles can be made softer and more comfortable to use by wrapping the handle with pipe insulation



Smooth wide paths are easy to navigate for people with limited mobility, or mobility devices.

Ohio AgrAbility Program

- Ohio AgrAbility is a partnership between The Ohio State University - College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, and Easter Seals Greater Cincinnati.
- Ohio AgrAbility's mission is to promote success in agriculture for Ohio's farmers and farm families who are coping with disability or a long-term health condition.

Interested in learning more about Gardening with Arthritis?

- Contact Ohio AgrAbility to schedule a Gardening with Arthritis presentation
- Handouts and webinars available at ohioagrability.osu.edu/resources

REFERENCES

Boring MA, Hootman JM, Liu Y, et al. Prevalence of Arthritis and Arthritis-Attributable Activity Limitation by Urban-Rural County Classification — United States, 2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Journal*;66:527–532.
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