

# Exercise improves pain, physical function in adults with arthritis

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A study by researchers in the West Virginia University School of Medicine and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that exercise improves pain and physical function in adults with arthritis and other rheumatic diseases.

George A. Kelley, D.A. and Kristi S. Kelley, M.Ed., researchers in the WVU Department of Community Medicine, Dina Jones, Ph.D., WVU Department of Orthopaedics, and Jennifer Hootman, Ph.D., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, studied the effects of community-deliverable exercise on [pain](#) and physical function in adults with [arthritis](#) and other rheumatic diseases.

Community-deliverable exercise is that which can be performed in a community setting – such as recreation or senior centers, in the home or in the neighborhood – without the need for a special facility beyond a community room or warm pool for aquatic exercise. The leader of these exercises does not need an academic degree. Cost of participation should be minimal, and the equipment needed should be inexpensive.

For this study, the researchers pooled the results from multiple studies that included 3,180 men and women with rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis or fibromyalgia. Exercise included aerobic exercise (for example, walking), weight training or both approximately three times per week. Improvements of up to 18 percent were found for pain and 15 percent for physical function.

“It is well established that adults with arthritis and other [rheumatic diseases](#) suffer from increased pain as well as reduced physical function as a result of their condition,” Dr. Kelley said. “Our findings suggest that community-deliverable [exercise](#) can be an important option for improving pain and physical function in adults with these diseases.”

According to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 49 million adults in the United States have self-reported doctor-diagnosed arthritis.

Provided by West Virginia University

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