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Leader Training Update Available November 5, 2019

The Arthritis Foundation's Walk With Ease program continues to be an important asset to the Arthritis Foundation. The transition to an exclusive, online training as an AFAA/NASM course has greatly expanded the reach and access to the course. The original video training was recorded more than five years ago. Over time, our branding and program policies have evolved. In addition, collaborating organizations and leaders have shared insightful recommendations. To that end, the Arthritis Foundation updated the video training.

New training course goals include:

- Updating overall look and branding
- Emphasizing the importance of fidelity to the program standards
- Correcting and clarifying important program implementation information
- Improving the final exam
- Providing updated information about next steps and certification

National Organizations Implementing Walk With Ease

CDC currently provides funding to five national organizations for arthritis activities, including Walk With Ease, under two competitively awarded cooperative agreements, DP16-1606 and OT18-1803. Link to organizations and funded activities [Link](#).

State-based Walk With Ease Initiatives

The CDC Arthritis Program funds 13 state programs through the DP18-1803, State Public Health Approaches to Addressing Arthritis, cooperative agreement. The aim of these state arthritis programs is to improve arthritis management and the quality of life of people with arthritis through four strategies.

- Expand the availability and accessibility of arthritis appropriate, evidence-based interventions (AAEBIs), also known as [lifestyle management programs](#), focusing on self-management education or physical activity.
- Increase health care providers' patient counseling about the benefits of physical activity for reducing arthritis pain and limitations; and increase provider referrals of patients with arthritis to evidence-based lifestyle management programs.
- Promote walking as a way to manage arthritis symptoms.
- Raise awareness of the burden of arthritis and ways to manage it.

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What is the Walk With Ease Program?

The Arthritis Foundation Walk With Ease Program is a community-based physical activity and self-management education program. While walking is the central activity, Walk With Ease is a multi-component program that also includes health education, stretching and strengthening exercises, and motivational strategies. It can be done by individuals using the Walk With Ease guidebook on their own, or by groups led by trained leaders. Both the individual and group formats are set up as a structured six-week program. Group sessions include socialization time, pre-walk informational lecturettes, warm up and cool downs and a 10-35 minute walking period.

2. What are the program goals and objectives?

The overall goals of the Walk With Ease Program are threefold:

- To promote education about successful physical activity for people with arthritis
- To promote education about arthritis self-management and walking safely and comfortably
- To encourage participants to continue their walking program and explore other exercise and self-management programs that deliver proven benefits for people with arthritis.

By the end of the six-week program period, participants will:

- Understand the basics about arthritis and the relationship between arthritis, exercise, and pain
- Learn how to exercise safely and comfortably
- Use methods to make walking fun
- Make a doable personal walking plan with realistic goals for improved fitness
- Gather tips, strategies and resources to help them overcome barriers and continue to be physically active
- Learn about other programs and resources that can help maintain walking and other physical activity.

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3. What is the target population?

Walk With Ease was specifically developed for adults with arthritis who want to be more physically active. The program is also appropriate for people without arthritis, particularly those with diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions, who want to get more active. The only pre-requisite is the ability to be on your feet for at least 10 minutes without increased pain.

4. What are the essential program components and activities?

The essential program components are:

- **Walking** (10-35 minutes walking duration)
- **Health education information**
 - All participants receive the Walk With Ease guidebook which is organized in a logical sequence to provide the information needed to help participants get ready to walk, begin walking, and stay motivated to continue walking. Both the guidebook and the corresponding lecturettes conducted during the group sessions provide basic information on arthritis, managing pain and stiffness, tips on proper clothing and equipment, self-monitoring for physical problems, what to do when exercise hurts, and how to anticipate and overcome barriers to being physically active.
- **Stretching and Strengthening Exercises**
 - Both the individual and the group participants are encouraged to do stretching exercises when they walk and strengthening exercises twice a week. The Walk With Ease guidebook includes directions for the stretching and strengthening exercises. Individuals can also access video demonstrations of these exercises on the Arthritis Foundation's Walk With Ease website (www.arthritis.org/wwe).
 - During the group classes:

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- Stretching exercises are incorporated into the warm up and cool down periods.
 - Strengthening exercises are demonstrated once during the group class and participants are encouraged to do these at home.
- **Motivational Tips and Tools**
 - The Walk With Ease guidebook includes self-tests, a six-week contract and walking diary forms to help participants identify their needs and interests, to set goals and rewards, and to track progress. Each guidebook chapter also contains motivational tips.
 - The group classes review these tools and encourage their use throughout the program.
 - An online support component is also available to individual and group participants. The Arthritis Foundation's Walk With Ease website (www.arthritis.org/wwe) provides several resources:
 - Tools (including the webtool) from the Walk With Ease guidebook are located online. Participants can complete their contract, take the starting point and ending point self-tests online and easily compare scores from one test to another. Participants can also log, update and refer back to their goals via the online contract.
 - Video instruction for the stretching and strengthening exercises

5. What is the length/ timeframe of the program?

- Both the individual and the group format are structured as six-week programs.
- Individuals using the workbook on their own are encouraged to work up to walking at least three times a week and to utilize all of the resources in the workbook over a six-week period.
- The group format classes meet three times a week for six weeks (a total of 18 sessions).
- Depending on the physical capabilities of the group and the amount of time they spend socializing before and after classes, the average class session length may last as little as 45 minutes in the beginning weeks of the program but may increase to an hour or more as the group improves their fitness level. The

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standardized scripts for the class sessions suggest that the walking time progresses an additional 5 minutes each week, as the group capability allows.

6. What is the recommended class size?

The recommended class size is 12-15 participants per leader. Groups may have more than one trained leader.

7. What evaluation data is available?

Walk with Ease's information and strategies are based on research and tested programs in exercise science, behavior change, and arthritis management. Evaluated by the Thurston Arthritis Research Center and the Institute on Aging at the University of North Carolina, the program has shown to increase balance, strength and walking pace, as well as reduce pain for participants. The revised Walk with Ease program decreases disability and improves arthritis symptoms, self-efficacy, and perceived control, balance, strength, and walking pace in individuals with arthritis, regardless of whether they are taking a group class or doing the program as self-directed walkers. At one year, some benefits are maintained, particularly among the self-directed. This is a safe, easy, and inexpensive program to promote community-based physical activity.

The Walk With Ease Program is considered by the CDC to be an evidence-based program both for the program's proven effectiveness and for its scalability into the community. <https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions/index.htm>

8. What are the leader requirements?

When recruiting individuals to undergo the Walk With Ease leader training, look for applicants with the following characteristics:

- Current certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is required. The CPR certification course must include a live skills training. (Online-only courses are not acceptable.) First aid certification is strongly recommended. Although not required as a pre-requisite, first aid certification is strongly recommended because of the danger of falls or other injuries, especially when the program is conducted outdoors.

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- Professional liability insurance coverage with an aggregate/single occurrence limit not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) for personal injury or property damage, unless covered by host facility's comprehensive or professional liability insurance policy.
- Other desirable abilities include:
 - Empathy toward people with arthritis and related diseases, gained through personal or professional experience.
 - Interest in working with groups of people with arthritis and related diseases.
 - Experience in teaching physical activity classes and skill in group process and instructional techniques.
 - Desire and ability to help others.
 - Strong belief in the value of regular physical activity.

9. How do leaders get trained?

- The newly updated Walk With Ease Leader Training is available as a 2-hour. **Training link** - <https://www.afaq.com/courses/arthritis-foundation-walk-with-ease>
- The videos include:
 - Program goals
 - Target audience
 - Importance of program fidelity
 - Session by session overview of program
 - Exercise demonstrations Program logistics
 - Certification

Leaders trained prior to the update do NOT need to take the updated training. However, leaders certified in the last year, will have access to the new training videos and can audit them at no additional cost.

10. Will the Arthritis Foundation provide a Walk With Ease leader certification?

Yes. Certification as an Arthritis Foundation Walk With Ease Program Leader requires:

- Successful completion of an Arthritis Foundation Walk With Ease Program Leader Training Workshop online workshop.

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- Application for Certification is available on the online training portal.

Leaders remain certified as long as they remain CPR certified and continue to teach at least one class series per year.

11. What are the program costs?

- For the remainder of 2019, the instructor training course fee is \$89. Included in the fee is a downloadable Instructor's Manual and Lecturette posters. Due to the proprietary content, the training video course can not be shared without purchasing the course.
- All participants must have a guidebook to complete the course. Each guidebook retails for \$11.95. (Discounts may be available.)

12. What are the facility requirements?

Any host agencies offering the group classes should provide:

- An accessible site for the program consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and any reasonable accommodation that may be necessary to ensure that the program is accessible to people with disabilities.
- A safe and accessible place to walk either inside (e.g. indoor track, gymnasium, mall, etc.) or outside (e.g., neighborhood, walking trail, etc.)

13. Are the Spanish-language materials available?

Yes. The participant book Camino Con Gusto is available as for the self-directed version of the class. Spanish language leader training is not available.

14. What promotion tools/templates are available?

Contact the Arthritis Foundation for template flyers and class listing(s) on www.arthritis.org.