



Evidence-Based Community Programs

Help Your Patients Take Charge

Walk With Ease (WWE) Group and Self-Directed

The Arthritis Foundation developed WWE as a group walking program to encourage people with arthritis to start walking and stay active. A self-directed version of the program is also available. WWE is designed to be a safe, relaxing, and enjoyable way for people to develop and sustain a personal plan to make walking part of their physical activity regimen. **Encourage your patients to sign up at a location nearby or to use the self-directed version.**

Who is it for?

- WWE is for people with arthritis who want to increase their physical activity levels and are able to be on their feet for at least 10 minutes without increased pain.
- The program may also benefit people with other health conditions that limit their mobility.
- People who use assistive devices can participate in the program.

How are the group and self-directed programs conducted?

- The 6-week instructor-led **group program** meets three times a week in groups of up to 15 people. Each session includes a health education discussion, warm-up and cool-down exercises, and a 10–35 minute walk.
- Participants receive WWE educational materials and tools to supplement the group classes.
- Participants may also use the educational materials to follow the WWE curriculum on their own. Like the group program, participants who do the **self-directed program** walk three times a week for 6 weeks, working up to at least 30 minute walks per session. The WWE guidebook provides a walking diary and step-by-step instructions for doing the warm-up and cool-down exercises.
- Topics covered in the group discussions and educational materials include pain management, stretching and strengthening to support the walking program, monitoring for problems, overcoming barriers to exercise, and staying motivated.
- Optional online support tools include video instruction, a message board, and an automated e-mail service alerting participants when milestones are reached.

What are the qualifications of the instructors?

- One or two leaders supervise each group discussion and walking session.
- WWE program leaders must complete a 3–4 hour online training workshop.
- Leaders are required to have CPR certification; first aid certification is recommended.

What are the benefits?

- Studies show that benefits for the group and self-directed programs are similar.
- CDC-funded research has found that both the group and self-directed versions of WWE can help people:
 - Reduce arthritis symptoms such as pain, stiffness, and fatigue
 - Improve strength, balance, and walking pace
 - Reduce disability
 - Feel more confident they can manage arthritis
- No safety concerns have been reported in the literature.

Summary of the Evidence

Author, Year	Design	Participants	Outcomes
Callahan LF, Shreffler J, Altpeter M, et al. (2011)	Quasi-experimental pretest-posttest evaluation of group and self-directed formats Performance and self-reported outcomes at baseline and 6 weeks Self-reported outcomes at 1 year	468 participants from urban and rural communities	No difference in group vs. self-directed formats at 6 weeks: ↓ pain, stiffness, fatigue ↓ disability ↑ strength, balance, walking pace ↑ confidence in ability to manage arthritis More benefits sustained at 1 year with self-directed format
Nyrop KA, Cleveland R, Callahan LF (2014)	Secondary data analysis of quasi-experimental evaluation of group and self-directed formats Self-report measures of minutes walked per week at baseline, 6 weeks, and 1 year	462 participants from rural and urban communities	After 1 year, group and self-directed participants had similar self-reported walking outcomes Group participants were more likely than self-directed to do recommended stretching and warm-up/cool-down exercises
Wyatt B, Mingo CA, Waterman MB, et al. (2014)	Secondary data analysis of quasi-experimental evaluation of group and self-directed formats Arthritis-related symptoms assessed at baseline, 6 weeks, and 1 year	117 African American participants from the larger 2011 study	At 6 weeks, both group and self-directed participants reported decreased pain, stiffness, and fatigue At 1 year, both groups reported decreased pain and stiffness Overall, participants were satisfied with both program formats Younger, more educated individuals chose the self-directed format

Selected References

Callahan LF, Shreffler J, Altpeter M, et al. Evaluation of group and self-directed formats of the Arthritis Foundation's Walk With Ease Program. *Arthritis Care & Research*. 2011;63(8):1098–1107.

Nyrop KA, Cleveland R, Callahan LF. Achievement of exercise objectives and satisfaction with the Walk With Ease program: group and self-directed participants. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. 2014;28(4):228–230.

Wyatt B, Mingo CA, Waterman MB, et al. Impact of the Arthritis Foundation's Walk With Ease Program on arthritis symptoms in African Americans. *Preventing Chronic Disease*. 2014;11:E199.

Fees and Location

WWE is a low-cost program. Fees for the group program may vary by location. Check www.apta.org/Arthritis to find current locations.

A guidebook for the self-directed program can be ordered from the Arthritis Foundation Web site.

For More Information

Arthritis Foundation

www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/tools-resources/walk-with-ease

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions