 

Becoming a Walk With Ease Program Provider

We appreciate your organization’s willingness to consider this very important leadership role in offering the Walk With Ease program and we value your potential commitment to improving the quality of life for people with arthritis and other chronic conditions.

Enclosed is some general information about the program and the roles and responsibilities of a Program Provider Organization and program leaders. Please take a moment to review these materials to get a sense of what this program, and the leader’s role, are all about.

Arthritis Foundation Leader certification requires two essential steps: successful completion of the approximately three-hour on-line *Walk With Ease* leader training and current CPR certification. If you are interested in offering the program in your community, please review the following enclosed information and then contact the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging, info@wihealthyaging.org to indicate your interest in training.

Individuals who are or become *Walk With Ease* Leaders in Wisconsin will be asked to be affiliated with a WIHA Program Provider Organization (if not already), register with the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging, submit Class Notification Forms to WIHA and administer short pre- and post- downloadable surveys to participants.

For additional information, please see: <http://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/tools-resources/walk-with-ease/>

To register for the on-line Leader Training, visit:
<http://www.afaa.com/courses/arthritis-foundation-walk-with-ease>

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Program Description

The Arthritis Foundation *Walk with Ease* Program is an evidence-based physical activity and self-management education program. It can be done by individuals using the *Walk With Ease* guidebook on their own, or by **groups led by trained leaders**. *Walk With Ease* was specifically **developed for people with arthritis who want to be more physically active but is also appropriate for people without arthritis, particularly those with diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions** who need to be more active. The only **pre-requisite** is the ability to be on your feet for at least 10 minutes without increased pain.

**STRUCTURE**

Both the self-directed, individual format and the group format are **structured as six-week walking programs.** Individuals using the workbook on their own are **encouraged to work up to walking at least three times a week** and to use 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 standardized scripts for the class sessions suggest that the walking time progresses an additional 5 minutes each week, as the group capability allows. **The recommended class size is 12-15 partici-pants per leader. Groups may have more than one leader.**

**CONTENTWhile 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.** All participants receive the *Walk With Ease* guidebook. Both the Guidebook and the class “lecturettes” provide information on arthritis, managing pain and stiffness, tips on proper clothing and equipment, self-monitoring, what to do when exercise hurts, and how to overcome barriers. Participants are also encouraged to do stretching exercises when they walk and strengthening exercises twice a week. The program also features motivational tools including 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.

#### OUTCOMES

*Walk With Ease* was evaluated by the Thurston Arthritis Research Center and Institute on Aging at the University of North Carolina. A rigorous scientific trial with 462 individuals from 31 rural and urban communities found that both the self-directed and group formats were safe and effective.

***Walk with Ease* participants experienced decreased disability; improvements in levels of pain, fatigue, stiffness and self-confidence; and better perceived control over arthritis, balance, strength and walking pace.**

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**Leader Position Description**

**Qualifications**

* Successful completion of the ONLINE (approximately 3 hours) Arthritis Foundation *WWE* Program Leader training workshop through the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (www.afaa.com).
* Agrees to lead at least one class series annually and submit participant data to the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging.
* Current certification in CPR is required; first aid certification is strongly recommended.
* Affiliation with a facility or organization that can provide space for the classes.

**Additional Desirables**

* Empathy toward people with arthritis and related diseases, gained through personal or professional experience.
* Interest in working with groups of people who have arthritis and/or 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.

**Responsibilities**

* Commit to following all WIHA and Arthritis Foundation program policies regarding the Arthritis Foundation *WWE* Program and conduct all class sessions in accordance with the Leader’s Guide without making changes, additions or deletions. Sign a Statement of Understanding to document this commitment.
* Participate in pre-class planning and activities as time and ability allow, including tasks such as: setting class meeting dates and times, publicizing classes to recruit participants, notifying WIHA of class schedules, arranging to register participants, scheduling the use of facilities and obtaining the participant *WWE* workbooks.
* Establish and enforce participant guidelines and monitor safety.
* Submit timely and accurate participant data and release forms from participants as required by WIHA.
* Inform class participants about other Arthritis Foundation resources and activities and other health promotion programs available in their community that may interest them.

**Time Commitment**

* Online leader training workshop (approximately 3 hours).
* Preparation time (approximately 1-2 hours).
* Class time (approximately 18-24 hours per six-week class series that meets three times per week).
* Logistics time (approximately 2-4 hours per six-week class series).

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