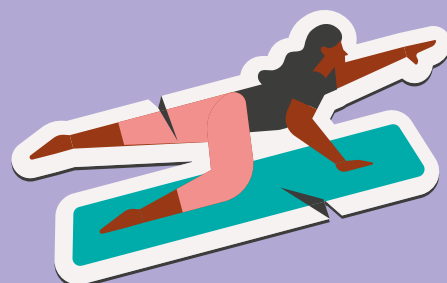


Resources and simple stretches for young people



STRENGTHEN & STRETCH



Young
People &
Families

 ArthritisUK

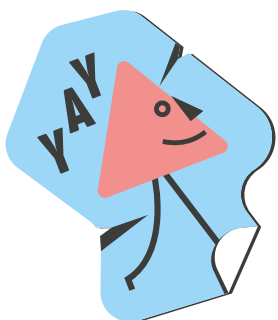
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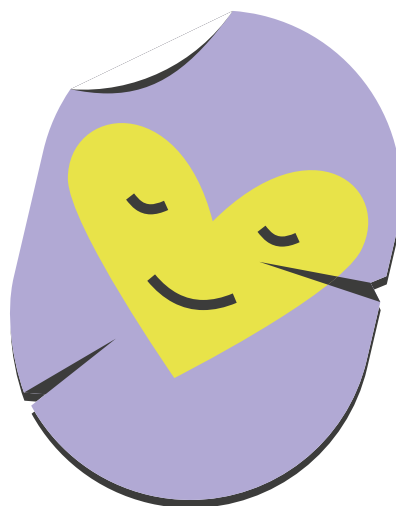
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The Stengthen and Stretch video series for young people with arthritis (or similar conditions) are available to guide you through some exercises. These have been created alongside Noah's Ark Paediatric Rheumatology Team.



We advise that you check in with your team before taking part, and remember that no two days are the same. This booklet also has lots of information to help you do some strengthening and stretching exercises.



Core

This video can help you strengthen your core muscles.

Arms

This video can help you strengthen your arm muscles.



Legs

This video can help you strengthen your leg muscles.

Body

This video can help you strengthen your whole body.

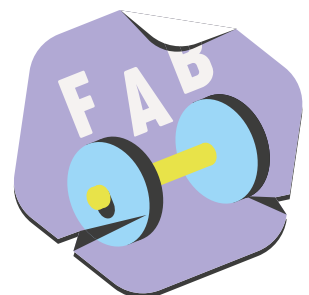


Tough day

This video can help keep you moving on a tough day.

Before bed

This video can help you relax before bed.



WHY IS EXERCISE SO IMPORTANT?

It's important to keep moving when you have arthritis to improve your symptoms, strengthen your muscles and bones and keep your joints supple.

A joint is where two or more bones meet, like in the fingers, knees or shoulders. They're important in helping us move around, but sometimes arthritis can make this difficult. Our joints hold our bones in place and allow them to move freely, but within safe limits. Muscles help us move around and support our joints to keep them stable. Moving helps maintain your range of movement and keeps all the parts of your joints strong.



These exercises are designed to be enjoyed indoors but remember that moving more outdoors is really important too. Whether you head outside to go for a walk, a bike ride or to play games or sports with friends, exercising outdoors will support your joint health, boost your Vitamin D (the sunshine vitamin) and make a positive difference to your mood.



GETTING
READY
NEW

The Strengthen and Stretch exercises are designed for you. They are fully flexible, offering easier and more challenging options, so you can choose what feels right for you on the day.

There are different options within these stretches. If you are not at your best or if you are just starting out, it's better for you to complete the easier options than go for the more challenging poses and not complete them properly. This could cause injury or muscle strain. You can also talk to your hospital team for their recommendations.

If you ever experience intense pain while doing any of the exercises, stop immediately and speak to your doctor or another healthcare professional if you are worried or want some advice.

When you are ready to exercise, there are a few things you'll need to do to prepare yourself and the space around you:

- Make sure you have plenty of space to exercise in and that you've moved any rugs, cords or anything else that could trip you up.
- Wear comfortable clothes. No footwear or socks are needed.
- Make sure you've taken any medication you need and keep any inhalers or other treatments close by in case you need them.
- Have water to hand while you exercise to stay hydrated.
- Have a yoga mat and yoga block ready with you. Or a rug and a pillow/rolled up towel will also work.
- Don't do these exercises on a full stomach. Try not to eat a meal at least 2 hours before (small snacks are okay).
- Remove shoes and socks before starting the exercises - this will help your feet to grip the mat.

There are some suggested suggested 5 minute yoga sequences you can follow to work on specific areas of the body. Towards the end of the booklet is an activity tracker where you can log all the exercises you complete at home.





Bird dog



1. Get on your hands and knees with your knees directly under your hips and your hands directly under your shoulders.
2. Your back should be flat and your chin tucked in.
3. Tighten your core muscles slightly, then lift one arm and the opposite leg in line with the hips without allowing your body or pelvis to move or rotate.
4. Try to grab something far away in front of you with your hand and touch an imaginary wall far behind you with your foot instead of just lifting them up.
5. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Lower your leg and arm back to the floor and repeat with the other leg and the opposite arm.

An easier version of this exercise is to lift your leg and arm off the floor, not attempting to get them in line with the hips.



Bridges or Glute Bridges

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent.
2. Contract your buttocks to lift your hips off the ground so your legs and body make a triangle shape.
3. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Slowly return to the initial position and repeat.



Clamshell

1. Lie on your side with both legs slightly bent.
2. Lift your top leg, keeping your pelvis stable, your leg slightly bent and your heels together.
3. Rotate your hip so that your foot and your kneecap are pointing upward during the movement.
4. Return to the initial position and repeat up to 10 times on each side.

Warrior 3



1. Begin in a lunge position with your front knee bent, your back leg straight and your back heel lifted.
2. Your hips and chest should be squared to front of the mat.
3. Raise your arms above your head, as straight as you can.
4. Lean forward until your back leg extends straight back, in line with your hips. Keep your foot flexed and your gaze downward.
5. Make sure your standing leg is strong and straight.
6. Your body should form a T shape.
7. Hold for 10 seconds or longer depending on your balance.

Alternate – Do this pose facing a wall and see how far you can lean forward before needing to touch the wall. If you cannot straighten your arms overhead, then bring them into prayer position (palms together) at heart centre.

Plank (high or low)

High



1. From all fours, press up onto your hands with your arms straight, straightening your whole body and resting on the toes of your feet.
2. Feet need to be close together. Don't let your shoulder blades sink down, press down through your hands.
3. Lower your hips so they are in line with the shoulders, you want a flat back not a triangle shape.
4. Press the heels away from you.
5. Hold for up to 10 seconds, you can increase this to 30 seconds over time.

Low



1. From all fours, drop down onto your elbows.
2. Ensure the elbows are in line with the shoulders, then bring the hands together either with clasped fingers interlaced or your palms laid flat if you prefer.
3. Lift your knees off the floor, keep the hips low and in line with the shoulders.
4. Don't let your shoulder blades sink down.
5. Hold for up to 10 seconds, you can increase this to 30 seconds over time.





HIPS
KNEES
ANKLES

The image features a large, circular graphic with a pink border. Inside the circle is a light pink background with a brick pattern. Overlaid on this is the text 'HIPS', 'KNEES', and 'ANKLES' in a bold, stylized font. 'HIPS' and 'ANKLES' are in a light purple color, while 'KNEES' is in a bright yellow color. All three words have a thick black drop shadow, giving them a 3D appearance. The words are stacked vertically, with 'HIPS' at the top, 'KNEES' in the middle, and 'ANKLES' at the bottom.



Hamstring stretch

1. Sit on the floor with both knees straight out.
2. Try to touch your toes with both hands.
3. Make sure your toes are straight up.
4. Keep your back straight.
5. Hold this position up to 30 seconds.

Warrior 2



1. Start by standing with both feet together.
2. Step back with one foot (so your feet are around one leg length apart).
3. The back foot should rotate in slightly.
4. The heel of the front foot should be in line with the arch of the back.
5. Hips stay in line, so the body is facing to the side, but the head is turned to the front looking at the tips of the fingers.
6. Hold your arms up parallel with the shoulders, with palms of the hands facing down.
7. Hold for up to 30 seconds.



Crescent lunge (high or low)

High

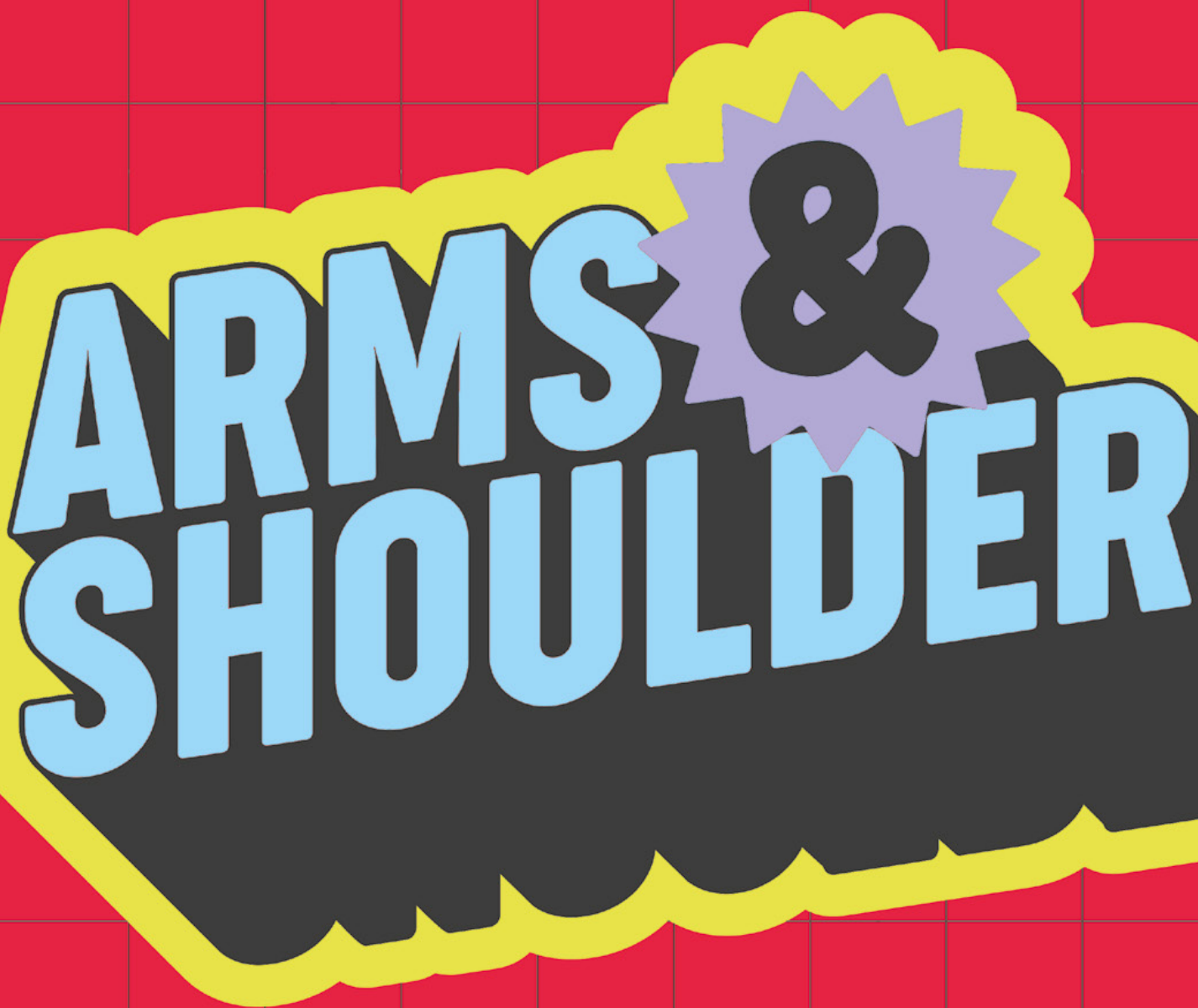
1. From standing, step back into a lunge.
2. With your front knee bent, come up on the toes of the back foot.
3. Reach the arms up to the sky and slowly look up to the ceiling – if this feels comfortable for your neck.
4. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
5. Repeat on other side.

Low

1. From a low lunge, drop your back knee to the mat.
2. If your knee is sensitive, you can place a blanket under your knee or double up your yoga mat for more cushioning.
3. Bring your hands onto your right knee and your right knee directly over your right ankle.
4. Raise your arms above your head, keeping the arms in line with your ears.
5. You may take the upper spine into a backbend if that feels comfortable. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
6. Repeat on other side.







ARMS & SHOULDER



Scapular setting

1. Clasp your hands in front of you.
2. Squeeze your shoulder blades back and down towards your spine.
3. Hold for 30 seconds.



Downward facing dog

1. Come to your hands and knees with the wrists underneath the shoulders and the knees underneath the hips.
2. Curl your toes under and push back through your hands to lift your hips and straighten your legs.
3. Spread your fingers and press down from the forearms into the fingertips.
4. Sink the heels towards the mat - they do not need to touch the floor.
5. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.



Dolphin pose

1. Similar pose to downward facing dog, but with added arm strengthening.
2. Come down onto your hands and knees (all fours).
3. Place your forearms on the floor with your elbows directly under your shoulders.
4. You can either place the palms of your hands down with your forearms parallel to each other or interlace your fingers.
5. Then curl your toes under.
6. Engage your lower belly and lift your knees away from the floor.
7. Straighten your legs and lower the heels towards the floor – they do not need to touch the floor.
8. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

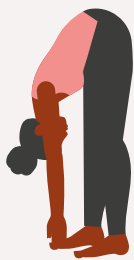


Yoga block lifts

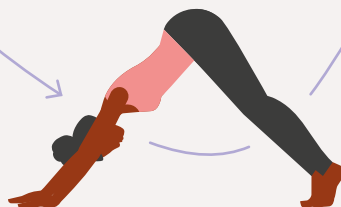
*if you don't have a yoga block you can use an alternative like a rolled up towel

1. Hold a yoga block with both hands, pressing in on it from the shorter sides, palms flat and arms nice and straight, held out at shoulder height.
2. Squeeze and hold for 10 seconds, keep squeezing the block and engaging the arms to lift the block up diagonally in front of you.
3. Hold for another 10 seconds.
4. Finally keep squeezing and lift the block up directly over your head and hold for another 10 seconds.
5. Release down slowly.

02 Forward fold

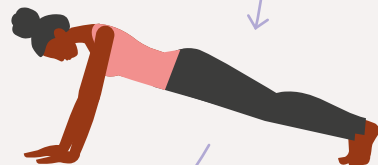


01 Stand stretch

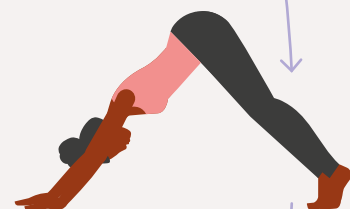


03 Downward dog

04 Plank



Repeat

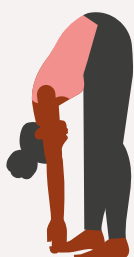


05 Downward dog

07 Dolphin



06 Forward fold



**BACK
BENDS
&
TWISTS**

The title is rendered in a bold, comic book style. The words 'BACK', 'BENDS', and 'TWISTS' are in a teal color with a thick black outline. The ampersand '&' is a solid pink color. The text is set against a yellow, multi-pointed starburst shape. The entire graphic is on a light purple background with a white grid pattern.



Seated back twist

1. Begin by sitting tall, extending both legs in front of you.
2. Bend your right knee and cross it over the left thigh, then bend your left knee (you can keep your left leg straight if necessary).
3. Take your left elbow and place it on the outside of the right knee, then place right hand on the floor behind you, looking over your right shoulder.
4. Hold and breathe deeply for 15 to 30 seconds.
5. Repeat on other side.



Camel pose

1. Begin kneeling on the floor with your knees and feet hip-distance apart.
2. Tuck your toes under.
3. Your pelvis/hips should stay in line with the knees.
4. Lift the head up to the sky and start to bend your upper back, opening the chest, then take your hands to your heels.
5. Your head can now drop back and hang freely.
6. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds each side.
7. Come out of this pose slowly, the head being the last part to return to normal position.

Wheel pose



1. Only attempt this pose if you are confident in camel and have no current neck or back pain.
2. Lie on your back. Bend your knees and set your feet on the floor, heels as close to the sitting bones as possible.
3. Bend your elbows and spread your palms on the floor beside your head, fingers pointing toward your shoulders.
4. Pressing your feet actively into the floor, straighten your arms and push your body up off the floor.
5. Keep your thighs and inner feet parallel.
6. Let your head relax.
7. Hold for 10 seconds and slowly release down to the floor.
8. You can go up onto the toes if you find it more comfortable.

Bow pose



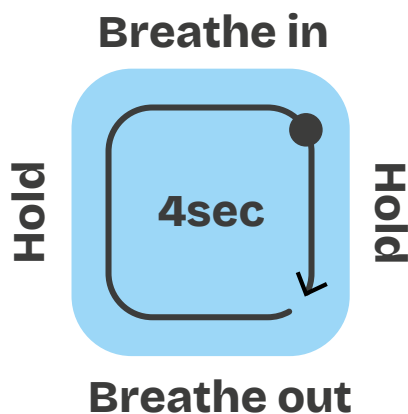
1. Only attempt this pose if you are confident in camel and have no current neck or back pain.
2. Lie on your belly with your hands alongside your torso, palms up.
3. Bend your knees, bringing your heels as close as you can to your buttocks.
4. Reach back with your hands and take hold of your ankles (but not the tops of the feet).
5. Lift your heels away from your buttocks and, at the same time, lift your thighs away from the floor.
6. Draw the tops of the shoulders away from your ears.



BREATHING



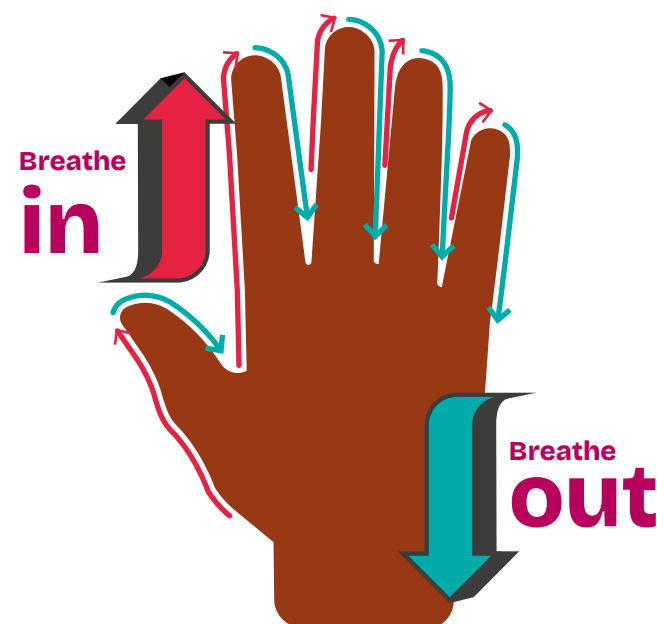
Breathing exercises are a great way to relax and de-stress. You can do these exercises anywhere, but we'd recommend trying them after you do some physical exercises at home.



Square or box breathing

1. Sit comfortably with an upright posture or alternatively lay down with your arms and legs relaxed.
2. Breathe in for a count of four nice and deeply, hold for a count of four, breathe out slowly for a count of four and then hold for a count of four.
3. Repeat this for several minutes and then return to normal breathing.

Five finger breathing



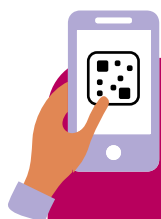
1. Sit comfortably with an upright posture, either on a chair with a back to support you or against a wall.
2. Put up one hand, palm facing out and fingers spread apart.
3. Place the index finger of your other hand at the base of your thumb and breathe in while you move your finger up one side of your thumb.
4. Move your finger down the other side of your thumb and breathe out.
5. Keep going until you have done the same with every finger then work your way back.
6. Repeat this for several minutes and then return to normal breathing.



WEBSITES & APPS

TO EXPLORE

Link to
My Arthritis
App info and
download



Ask your parents to
help you scan the
QR code, if you don't
have a smartphone.



Link to our
wellbeing
padlet

There are lots of different of yoga and strengthening videos available online. You might want to try a few to see which work best for you. Your Healthcare Team will be able to help. If you are interested in finding out more about meditation, yoga and other ways to manage your symptoms, take a look at the following resources:

- 🌐 **Our website** – features lots of useful information, links and real life stories
- 🌐 **Strengthen and Stretch videos** – see page 4 for links to all accompanying videos
- 🌐 **Wellbeing padlet** - a collection of mental health and wellbeing resources for young people living with a rheumatic condition
- 🌐 **My Arthritis** – an app to record symptoms of your condition
- 🌐 **Young Minds** – website offering mental health support
- 🌐 **Meic 24/7** – (Wales only) website offering mental health support
- 🌐 **Headspace, Balance and Down Dog** – apps focusing on meditation or yoga (requires in app purchases, but sometimes offer free trials)
- 🌐 **Yoga with Adrienne on YouTube** – live yoga sessions for all abilities
- 🌐 **Childline Calm Zone** – different tools to explore ways to feel calm



Contact details

If you want to chat to us about the exercises or resources in this booklet, or if you are worried and need some advice please contact us by email at ypfsuk@arthritis-uk.org or scan the QR code.

For more information about the service:
arthritis-uk.org/young-people-and-families
or scan the QR code.



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