

**Mary Pack Arthritis Program
Occupational Therapy**

JOINT PROTECTION PRINCIPLES

Principle

Application

- | Principle | | Application |
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| 1. Respect your pain. | How? | Time and / or effort spent doing an activity should be reduced if pain occurs and lasts for more than two hours after the activity has been discontinued. Try to avoid activities that aggravate pain or change the way you perform them. |
| 2. Balance between rest and work. | How? | Take frequent short breaks during an activity. Try to rest before you are tired. |
| 3. Reduce the amount of effort needed to do the job. | How? | Use adaptive methods or equipment. Splints, braces, canes, supportive footwear, adapted furniture and equipment will help to reduce strain on your joints. |
| 4. Avoid holding or staying in one position for prolonged periods of time. | How? | Change position frequently to avoid joint stiffness and muscle fatigue that can occur when you stay in one position for too long. It is recommended that you change position or stretch every 20 minutes or so. |
| 5. Avoid activities that cannot be stopped immediately if they become too stressful | How? | Be realistic of your abilities and energy level and plan ahead. For example, if you go for a walk, plan a rest stop along your route. |

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| 6. Reduce stress on your joints while sleeping. | How? | Use a firm mattress for the best support. Sleeping on your back is the best position for keeping your hips and knees straight. If you prefer to lie on your side, place a pillow between your knees and lie on the least painful side. |
| 7. Maintain muscle strength and joint range of motion | How? | Do your prescribed strengthening and range of motion exercises regularly. Strong muscles help to support a joint and reduce stress on it. |
| 8. Use a well-planned work space. | How? | Organize your workspace so that your work surfaces and materials are at a convenient height for you and within close reach, to ensure good body mechanics. |