

Muscle and Joint Pain in Sjögren's

The SSF thanks Alan Baer, MD for authoring this Patient Education Sheet. Dr. Baer is an Associate Professor of Medicine, Director, Jerome L. Green Sjogren's Center, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Joint and muscle pain in Sjogren's syndrome may result from a variety of causes including inflammation, fibromyalgia, age-related osteoarthritis, vitamin D deficiency, hypothyroidism etc. Work with your rheumatologist to identify the specific cause(s) of your pain and find the best treatment regimen for you. Maintain a positive attitude and be an active partner in the management of your pain. The tips below will also help.

▶ **Become knowledgeable about your medications.**

▶ **Get a good night's sleep.**

- Maintain a regular sleep schedule.
- Set aside an hour before bedtime for relaxation. Listen to soothing music. Consider taking a warm bath before going to bed.
- Make your bedroom as quiet and comfortable as possible.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol late in the day.
- Avoid long naps during the day.

▶ **Exercise regularly with the goals of improving your overall fitness and keeping your joints moving, the muscles around your joints strong and your bones strong and healthy.**

- A physical therapist, occupational therapist, or your health-care provider can prescribe an exercise regimen appropriate for your joint or muscle problem.
- Start with a few exercises and slowly add more.
- Make your exercise program enjoyable. Do it with your spouse or a friend. Include recreational activities, such as dancing, walking, and miniature golf.
- Try different forms of exercise, such as Tai chi, yoga and water aerobics.

▶ **Balance rest and activity.**

- Pace yourself during the day, alternating heavy and light activities and taking short breaks to rest.

▶ **Control your weight.**

▶ **Protect your joints and muscles.**

- Use proper methods for bending, lifting, and reaching.
- Use assistive devices, such as jar openers, reach extenders and kitchen and garden tools with large rubber grips that put less stress on affected joints.

▶ **Use various therapeutic modalities that can relieve joint and muscle pain.**

- Use heat (heating pads, warm shower or bath, paraffin wax) to relax your muscles and relieve joint stiffness.
- Use cold packs to numb sore joints and muscles and reduce inflammation and swelling of a joint
- Consider massage therapy.
- Practice relaxation techniques, such as guided imagery, prayer, and self-hypnosis.