

Arthritis Flare-Up Action Plan

A practical checklist for managing difficult arthritis days

How to Use This Plan

Arthritis symptoms can change from day to day. This action plan is designed to help you recognize changes, decide what may need to be adjusted, and keep track of the strategies that are useful for you.

Keep this checklist somewhere easy to access. You can complete the personal sections before a flare-up occurs so the information is ready when you need it.

1. Early Warning Signs

Check any changes you notice.

- ☐ Increased joint stiffness
- ☐ Swelling or warmth in one or more joints
- ☐ Pain that is different from or lasting longer than usual
- ☐ Increased fatigue or lower energy
- ☐ Reduced grip strength or mobility
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating or feeling unusually foggy

Other changes I notice:

2. Activities to Pause or Modify

Consider slowing down, shortening, or changing activities that are making the day harder.

- ☐ Heavy lifting or carrying
- ☐ Repetitive hand movements
- ☐ Long periods of standing or walking
- ☐ Tight gripping or twisting
- ☐ Fast or high-impact movements
- ☐ Non-essential chores or errands

Tasks I can delay, modify, or ask for help with:

3. Comfort & Support

Consider strategies that you already know are appropriate and helpful for you.

Heat — if helpful for you

- ☐ Heating pad
- ☐ Warm shower or bath
- ☐ Heated gloves or socks

Cold — if helpful for you

- ☐ Cold pack
- ☐ Gel wrap

Joint & Mobility Support

- ☐ Braces or compression supports
- ☐ Cushions or joint supports
- ☐ Cane, walker, or other mobility aid

Other strategies that work for me:

4. Gentle Self-Care & Pacing

Focus on reducing unnecessary demands and allowing time to recover.

- ☐ Take short rest breaks
- ☐ Break tasks into smaller steps
- ☐ Use gentle movement that feels appropriate for me
- ☐ Drink water regularly
- ☐ Choose simple or prepared meals
- ☐ Go to bed earlier if needed
- ☐ Alternate activity with rest

Gentle activities or routines that feel appropriate for me:

5. Planning & Communication

A difficult day may be easier when you decide in advance what can wait and who can help.

People I may be able to ask for help:

Tasks I can postpone or delegate:

Appointments or plans I may need to discuss or reschedule:

What others should know when I am having a difficult day:

6. Personal Notes

What tends to make my symptoms worse:

What usually helps me feel more comfortable:

Signs that I am beginning to recover:

Other notes:

Remember

Every arthritis flare-up is different. Use this plan as a flexible reminder to slow down, modify activities, and use strategies that are appropriate for you.

If symptoms are new, unusually severe, persistent, or concerning, contact an appropriate healthcare professional rather than relying on this checklist alone.

Disclaimer

This checklist is for general planning and personal support only. It does not replace medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always follow guidance from your healthcare professional.

About This Resource

Provided by **Arthritis Wares**

Practical tools. No hype.