

## **Cold Weather and Arthritis**

Weather affects different people differently. With many people who suffer from rheumatoid arthritis they will be stiffer in the morning and it can take them longer to get up and loosen up and loosen their joints and get going. There's very little research showing that cold weather directly causes arthritis or alters its course. So why does the cold seem to make arthritis feel worse? As the weather changes, so can the pressure in your joints.

Do what you can to keep warm!

- Bundle up from head to toe in several layers
- Preheat the car before getting into it
- Make sure your home or apartment is kept warm
- Sleep under an electric blanket
- Warm clothing in dryer before dressing
- Drinking warm or hot drinks
- Try wearing Spandex gloves at night to try to keep fluid out of the joints

It is also very important to keep moving!

- Try exercising the affecting joints before going out in the cold weather.
- Maintain a regular exercise program year around. Exercise will not only loosen stiff joints but help prevent winter weight gain that places more stress on painful joints.
- Physical Therapy—working with a pro who is knowledgeable about rheumatoid arthritis and can set a program designed just for you and your specific needs.
- Adopt a no excuse policy for exercising. Even when having a bad day start off with a smaller type exercises to get you started and progress throughout the day to complete what you can.
- Include aerobic exercises in your program. Pair up with a friend and take an aquatic program, tai chi, yoga, or walking activities.

All of these can keep the cold from affecting your joints through the winter months and keep you moving all winter long.

Rebecca McFalls

Sources Cited:

Newsinhealth.nih.gov/2009//January/feature/htm

[www.webmd.com/pain-management/features/weather\\_and\\_pain](http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/features/weather_and_pain)