

Living with Arthritis #3

(Driving, Community Access, Employment and Recreation/Leisure)

Arthritis may cause difficulties with many daily activities including domestic tasks, eating and drinking, personal hygiene, general mobility within the home and community, employment tasks, driving and recreation activities. There are numerous ways to manage arthritis such as medication, diet, exercise and joint protection techniques. It is also useful to consider any gadgets that may make tasks easier, and may enable participation in your chosen roles and activities.



DRIVING

Driving a car with an automatic transmission, cruise control, and power steering should be easier as these features reduce the force and upper limb strength required to drive the vehicle.



If a person is having difficulty holding the steering wheel, consider a steering wheel knob. A hand brake release and T-bar release enables easier release of the handbrake or the T-bar lever on an automatic transmission.

Most vehicle modifications will need to be approved by Queensland transport. For advice regarding vehicle modifications please contact the Queensland Transport Vehicle Modifications Resource Person on 3252 4851 or 3253 4700.

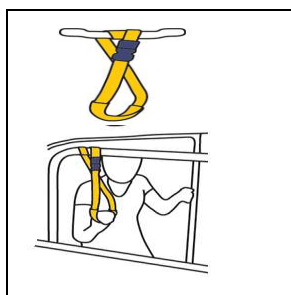
If getting in and out of a car is a problem there are many vehicle transfer aids that could be of assistance. These include handy bars, car seat slide pads turn table seat pads, roller sheets, and straps that attach to the internal grip handle situated above the inside of the car door.



COMMUNITY ACCESS

Some useful hints for public transport access can be obtained from the Transport Options and Access Information Line (3253 0532 or 3891 1755)

Wheelchair accessible taxis can be ordered by ringing – Black and White Cabs 131 008 or Yellow Cabs 131 924.



People whose mobility has been affected may find a walking stick, walking frame, or seat walker useful for walking outdoors. Please seek advice from a Physiotherapist when choosing one of these for yourself.

A scooter may enable a person who no longer drives to access the community. It is recommended to seek the advice of an Occupational Therapist to assess safety and to assist in determining what type would be most suitable for your individual needs.

There is a range of different styles of scooters, including:

- Front and rear wheel drive scooters – Front drive is better for indoors and over level surfaces. Rear wheel drive provides better traction and thus is better for outdoor use.
- Heavy terrain – If the person lives in an area with steep and rough terrain this style may be more suitable.



LifeTec Queensland

Email: mail@lifetec.org.au
www.lifetec.org.au

Independent Living Centre
Association of Queensland
Incorporated trading as LifeTec
Queensland ABN 25 773 960 273

TOWNSVILLE

Shop G-3A, Domain Central
103 Duckworth Street
(PO Box 8280), Garbutt, Townsville Qld 4814
Phone: 07 4759 5600
Facsimile: 07 4759 5688

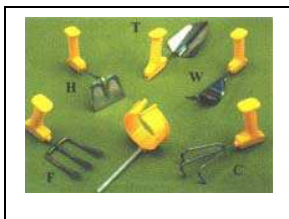
BRISBANE
Level One, Reading Newmarket
Cnr Newmarket & Enoggera Roads
(PO Box 3241), Newmarket Qld 4051
Phone: 07 3552 9000 or 1300 885 886
Facsimile: 07 3552 9088

- Three and Four wheel scooters – Three wheels are more manoeuvrable and accurate with steering. They can be better suited for indoor use. Four wheels provide more stability and generally perform better over uneven or outdoor terrain.
- Operating features – There are different hand controls suitable for individual needs. (There is a separate fact sheet discussing scooter selection in more detail – contact us)



EMPLOYMENT

In a office setting there are numerous products that are commercially available such as wrist supports adjustable office chairs and document holders that may assist those with arthritis. It is advised that individuals experiencing difficulties at work, seek a workstation assessment from a Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist. Therapists will be able to give advise regarding appropriate equipment and techniques/exercises. Generally the idea is to rest the painful joints and avoid repetitive tasks where possible. For example, the “Ergorest forearm supports” is designed to give forearm support whilst undertaking repetitive tasks. Other products such as sloped writing surfaces will promote correct posture. Speak to your employer if you are experiencing any problems at work.



RECREATION/LEISURE

Gardening:

- Hand tools that have large grip handles set at right angles to the tool are easier to use. This grip is called a power grip and is a more efficient way of utilising your hand power. There are also a range of secateurs designed, with a ratchet mechanism, so that minimal effort is required for operation.
- Long-handled equipment allows you to sit or stand while gardening.
- Use of a garden kneeler and/or seat around the garden may reduce fatigue.



Sewing/Knitting/Crocheting/Embroidery:

Needle threaders are available to assist with hand and machine sewing. Larger knitting needles and crochet hooks are easier to hold for people with painful hand joints.

Cards:

Card holders hold your cards in place without the strain of using your hands. There are also electric card shufflers.

Lawn Bowls:

A bowling are enables you to bowl without bending. A ferrule that fits the bottom of a crutch or walking stick can be used to prevent damage to the green.

NEED TO KNOW MORE? Telephone, fax or e-mail your enquiry to obtain further information from one of the therapists about products. Alternatively, you can make an appointment to trial the equipment at our display centres or through our outreach service. Please phone LifeTec for further details.

Last Updated: March 2009

BRISBANE
Level One, Reading Newmarket
Cnr Newmarket & Enoggera Roads
(PO Box 3241), Newmarket Qld 4051
Phone: 07 3552 9000 or 1300 885 886
Facsimile: 07 3552 9088

LifeTec Queensland
Email: mail@lifetec.org.au
www.lifetec.org.au
Independent Living Centre
Association of Queensland
Incorporated trading as LifeTec
Queensland ABN 25 773 960 273

TOWNSVILLE
Shop G-3A, Domain Central
103 Duckworth Street
(PO Box 8280), Garbutt, Townsville Qld 4814
Phone: 07 4759 5600
Facsimile: 07 4759 5688

