

Inside:

Traveling Right



Summer 2016

THRIVE



ARTHRITIS
INTROSPECTIVE

Take 4 Minutes to Help Support Reasonable
Step Therapy Legislation Across the US!



[Click here to take the survey now or read more about it on Page 2](#)

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ARTHRITIS
INTROSPECTIVE

A Proud Member of the
Arthritis Foundation Family



Take 4 Minutes to Help Support Reasonable Step Therapy Legislation Across the US!



“Step therapy,” sometimes referred to as “fail first,” is an important issue in many state legislatures because it can have significant and far-reaching consequences for people living with arthritis. Step therapy is a practice used by insurers that requires patients to try lower-cost medications before permitting more expensive treatments, even when the doctor wants to prescribe them.

Step therapy procedures need to be reasonable and consistent with the judgment of the doctor. That’s why we want to make sure lawmakers fully understand what step therapy is and how it affects access to care for people with arthritis.

We want to know if you’ve had to repeat step therapy because of a change in insurers; how many medications you had to try before getting the one your doctor first ordered for you; and any adverse events that occurred because you couldn’t get that originally prescribed medication. The Arthritis Foundation regularly advocates for safe and reasonable step therapy practices for all people with arthritis, **but we need your input to change the laws.**

Please help us by completing this short, 16-question survey. Your responses will be shared with lawmakers, but your identity will remain anonymous.

It only takes 4 minutes! Click here to participate. Act today to have your voice heard. The survey closes August 11, 2016.

Let’s Jingle for a Cure!



Come together to fight arthritis! Arthritis Introspective invites everyone to rally your family, friends and coworkers to join their local Jingle Bell Run as part of Team Arthritis Introspective!

STEP 1: Form a team

Visit www.jbr.org, select your city, click the green register button and follow the prompts. Choose either ‘start a team’ or ‘join a team’. When you see the ‘select a group’ prompt choose ‘Arthritis Introspective’ from the dropdown menu and continue to complete your registration. If there is not an event in your local community join our [AI Virtual Jinglers](#) fundraising team.

For those of us who cannot do the walking, we can still be a Champion of Yes by joining a [local team](#) or joining our [virtual team](#) to fundraise.

If you already have a team and wish to connect it to Team Arthritis Introspective, email jinglebell@arthritis.org with your name, team name and which event you are registered for and we’ll work our magic.

STEP 2: Raise Funds

Help fight arthritis pain by raising funds to support vital arthritis research and education programs. [Learn more](#)

STEP 3: Get Festive

Get in the spirit by wearing holiday-themed costumes and tying jingle bells to your shoelaces.

Committee Corner

Join a committee and help make your event the best it can be! Connect with other event volunteers to share ideas and make this the best Jingle Bell Run ever!

Coping and Thriving with Rheumatic Conditions

By Sri Ramakumar

Part Six: Traveling with Rheumatic Conditions



Sri Ramakumar is a freelance writer with a Master of Science (MS) in Family Studies & Human Development and a Master of Social Work (MSW). Ms. Ramakumar will be conducting an ongoing series of articles related to

coping and thriving with the social and emotional side of rheumatic and arthritis related conditions. By following this series, readers can learn about the social and emotional impact of the disease along with learning the necessary tools to help deal with the often overlooked aspects of these condition.

We travel not to escape life, but for life not to escape us. ~Anonymous

Traveling enriches us, as we experience things that are different and new. It can also be tiring and challenging, especially when traveling with a rheumatic condition. But it doesn't have to be impossible—all it takes is planning. Below are strategies to help make traveling easier with a rheumatic disease.

Step 1: Get Ready to Travel

Make an appointment with your doctor 4-6 weeks before your trip. At this visit, you should:

- Go over all medications and ask for prescriptions and refills.
- Discuss any vaccines needed for your trip, and whether some vaccines may be contra-indicated.
- Discuss additional medications you can take that may ease your symptoms during travel.
- Schedule any key treatments you need before you leave.
- Get a doctor's note for medications that require needles to give to airport security.
- Review health insurance coverage. Find out what is covered while traveling, including emergency transport. Some credit cards may also offer limited health emergency benefits.
- Research health facilities at your destination.

Contact hotels at your destination to find one that offers rooms that meet your needs.

Important amenities can include:

- A refrigerator to store medications
 - On-site restaurant or room service
 - Pools or hot tubs
 - A main-floor room, so you don't have to climb stairs
 - An accessible room
- Purchase trip insurance in case you need to cancel your trip. Make sure it covers cancelations due to preexisting conditions.
 - Plan out activities in advance. Be sure to build in rest time.
 - Plan options for companions while you are resting.
 - Book nonstop flights to reduce having to walk between terminals at unfamiliar airports. Enlist a travel companion. They can help with luggage and other logistics. Rest-up a few days before the trip. Taking it easy can reduce inflammation before travel.
 - Plan your travel itinerary to include a rest day after you get home.

Step 2: Packing

- Start packing about 2-3 weeks before your departure to reduce the stress of getting ready.
- Pick a rolling suitcase with 4 wheels. Be sure to push the suitcase with both hands, instead of pulling it, to reduce stress on shoulders.
- Pack light, so your bags are easy to lift.

Medications

- Make sure to pack extra medication.
- Keep medications in carry-on bags.
- If you check in medication, split them between two bags in case one bag is lost.
- Pack medications that need refrigeration in a small cooler or with an ice pack.
- Make sure that medications are in their original prescription bottles and that the name on the bottles matches the one on your boarding pass. *Continued on page 4*

Coping and Thriving with Rheumatic Conditions

Part Six: Traveling with Rheumatic Conditions *continued from page 3*

- Keep a copy of prescriptions with you in case you need a refill. Also keep a copy with someone at home, so they can fax it to you if you lose the original.

Health Insurance Information

- Keep either a paper summary or a wearable ID bracelet of your Health Records. Newer ID bracelets have USB drives that allow you to
- Doctor's names and phone Numbers
This includes your primary care doctor and rheumatologist.

Assistive Devices

- Request a wheelchair with your airline, if needed. You can also bring a cane on-board an airplane, but will have to stow it for take-off and landing.
- Heat or cold wraps—to help with achiness and stiffness while traveling.

Comfortable Clothes

- A good pair of shoes
Make sure they are comfortable and easy to slip on and off for security lines. Do not break in a new pair of shoes while traveling.
- Pick clothing that is easy to get on and off. Avoid belts or anything that is difficult to remove for security.
- Sun protection
Medications can make people sun-sensitive. Pack sunscreen, long-sleeves and a hat.
- A cross-body purse—
To reduce stress on shoulders while traveling.
- Hand-sanitizer and face mask (medications can reduce immunity. Protect yourself from potential germs especially in small, enclosed spaces like an airplane.)
- Pillows and cushions
These can make long car rides more comfortable.

Step 3: Day of Travel

- Print boarding passes at home, or download them to your phone to avoid long check-in lines.
- Use curbside check-in, instead of dragging your bag into the terminal.
- You can request a hand-check of your medications at security if you prefer not to send them through x-ray.
- If you are using a wheelchair, ask to be pre-boarded and first-off.
- Request wheelchair assistance for departures and arrivals. They will help you with your bags as well.
- Stay on your medication schedule while you travel to reduce the chance of flare-ups. Set a timer on your watch and phone to remind you.
- Get up and stretch frequently. If you are driving, try to stop every hour or so to stretch out. If you are flying, try to get up and walk about or stretch as you are able.

Traveling with a rheumatic condition is possible. It simply takes some forethought and planning to make it all happen.



Recommended Reading:

Websites with Tips for Traveling with a Rheumatic Condition:

[8 Tips for Pain-free Travel](#)
[RA Everyday Health: Travel tips for Arthritis Warrior: Tips for Traveling with Rheumatoid Arthritis](#)

Healthy Eating While On the Road

By Carolyn Kosanouvong-Walker



Carolyn resides in CA and is the ORS for the AI Support Group in Fresno County. She was diagnosed with Juvenile Onset Rheumatoid Arthritis since 3 years old. Living with a rheumatic condition for over 40

years has been a physical and emotional challenge as a result of severe joint deformities and chronic pain. Carolyn enjoys cooking just like her mom! She has a personal blog on Facebook titled: Happiness is in the Kitchen as she shares memories of food, fun, and family.

Happy summer my fellow warriors! Can you believe that 2016 is going by so quickly and we are already in the summer season! Summer means warmth (sometimes too warm) and comfort for our achy bodies and painful joints, especially after the cold and chilly winter that we have experienced particularly for those living on the East coast.

Whether we're planning a summer vacation or a business trip, making a list of items like clothing, routine medications, adaptive equipment that we may need to use on the trip and even healthy snacks to satisfy our hunger in between meals are a must before we pack everything in the luggage or carry-on bag. If we make a list ahead of time, it allows us to be a bit organized so that we can take our essentials without forgetting anything. Of course, I have found myself in the past that even with a list I have forgotten a thing or two and didn't realize the missed items until I reached my destination!

One of the biggest things that I have found by packing my own snacks is that I have saved myself a bit of money by avoiding the high priced snack items at the airport or at another town that I am traveling to. By packing our own snacks, we are more likely to follow portion control and eating munchies that we know are good for our bodies.

Here is a suggestive idea about the kinds of healthy and satisfying snacks to pack that are ideal in size and proportion. For those who are on a gluten-free, dairy-free, or vegetarian diet, you may want to pack some of your favorites by buying travel size snack packs or packaging your snacks in a Ziploc snack bags or sandwich bags.

Some nut items are sold in convenient travel packs. How about dietary food supplements that you can throw in your carryon bag or tote bag and when you need the pick-me-up nutrition, you can simply mix in with a beverage. These are some of my favorite that I will be packing.



Baked green pea crisps that are lightly salted and low in sodium compared to regular potato chips. This snack has a good source of fiber and is gluten-free. There is also a brand rice crisp of that is gluten-free and available in various flavors. A helpful tip that I've learned is to store the individual snack bags in a lightweight food safe plastic container like the one in the picture. This will prevent the snacks from being crushed in the luggage as the airport crew tends to throw luggage when handling them. Protein bars also make good snacking, but be sure to avoid certain granola bars that have high sugar and fat contents.

Spotlight on Wendy Hawkins

By Nomi Stanton



Nomi is an Outreach Relations Specialist for AI. She has a BA in English from Bradley University and a certificate in Clinical Mental Healthcare from UMUC. Nomi will be doing blogs for AI relating her own personal journey as an RA warrior in the hopes that you find yourself saying; "me, too".



I had the pleasure of interviewing someone who is active in social media and very well known in our circle of people, Wendy Hawkins. Wendy was 18 months old when she was diagnosed but

before that, her parents knew something was not quite right. Wendy was born in Pittsburgh which explains how she became a Steelers Fan. She then briefly lived in Baltimore, then San Francisco and finally her family settled in Phoenix. Wendy started volunteering for the Arthritis Foundation in 1993 and met Kevin, our founder, in 1995 at an AJAO conference in Kansas.

If you are on Facebook, you'll know what keeps Wendy so busy. She is an admin on the "Rheumatoid Arthritis Laughing, Living and Learning" and I have personally seen that she does her best to make new members (over 13,000 folks) comfortable and at ease. She is also an admin for the page/club "Love and Intimacy for Women with RA" and it is a page run with empathy, compassion and understanding. As if that's not enough, Wendy also is an AI Outreach Relations Specialist for Phoenix. The AI Phoenix support group is a safe place where we gather to share our experiences, triumphs, concerns, and questions about living with arthritis. The group

offers educational and social events throughout the year and opportunities to meet others facing the same challenges.

Having an auto-immune disease is really only a small piece of who Wendy is. She was a high-speed computer programmer for Hewlett-Packard for 16 years before the 24/7 lifestyle became too much. It took a great deal for Wendy to actually stop doing something that she loved, and was obviously good at, but she knew that she had to listen to her body and make her health her #1 priority.

When I asked Wendy to tell me something that even folks who have known her from way-back-when might not know, she told me that when she was little, she was pulled to school by her parents in a little red wagon. She said that her classmates were such a good group of humans that they always fought for whoever got the opportunity to pull her places in the wagon. What a beautiful lesson in empathy that those children must have gotten early on....priceless.

Wendy loves art, going to museums, learning, reading, meditating to relax and every week makes it a point to do some form of body work like acupuncture or massage and feels that she is at her best when she keeps her body moving. And did you know, Wendy was her 6th grade Spelling Bee champ. So now you know who to turn to if you need vocabulary help.

If Wendy could give one word of advice to someone who was/is newly diagnosed with RA or JA, it would be to "always advocate for yourself, learn as much as you can, speak up for yourself and know that knowledge is power". THANK YOU, Wendy!

No Gumby

By Trina R.V. Wilcox



Trina R.V. Wilcox is an on air talent, writer, and columnist with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems from Missouri State University. She has been a certified fitness professional through FiTour and the Arthritis Foundation. Trina is a

two-time Boston Marathon finisher, former aerobics instructor, and is the director of the JRA 5K. Although Trina has battled rheumatoid arthritis from childhood into adulthood, she has used a positive focus to prevail in a variety of ways. She has many interests including nature, art, and fitness. Trina writes to encourage and teach others as well as herself.

Some people have a passport plastered with more stamps than a post office holds. Personally, I never even owned a passport until it was decided that my husband and I would head Down Under. His dream of visiting the outback could no longer be contained, so we set the date, planned the trip, and before we knew it, it was time to travel. Now, since my husband had served in the Air Force, he had been outside the States several times and had a good idea how to pack light and be prepared for any unplanned circumstances. I wasn't a stranger to cramming a carry on full and, with a type A personality, I was pretty sure I wouldn't be caught off guard when it came to preparedness.

Since it was a long trip we had decided to make the most of it and stay for a few weeks. That would mean packing up the meds and like many of you know, some medications must be kept refrigerated and others need a doctor's note and proof of prescription. Hassle numero-uno, take an extra week to sort and pack your RA medicine. Ugh! Not only was this a bit of an annoyance to organize, the dog-gone things started to occupy precious cargo space in my backpack. Look, you know family and friends will want to try Vegemite so every bit of space was valuable at this point. Once the medicine ordeal was sorted and packed

along with the necessities, we were off to Australia!

Knowing that traveling isn't my favorite thing in the world to do, my husband enticed me with a once in a lifetime opportunity – the Sydney Marathon! Sounds crazy and some people might think the adjective suits me; but, my knees are in pretty good shape and with prescription made orthotics I can actually run pretty well and I take full advantage of the blessing! Now, lacing my shoes or a standard zipper might try to get the best of me but let me run and you will have a happy RA patient! As we headed to the airport my nerves were working overtime with the stress of the flight ahead and the anticipation of the race, all I wanted was to arrive at our destination.



We checked some bags, but toted an oversized carry-on in case our luggage was misplaced. Attention RA patients, don't do this. That silly backpack probably weighed as much as a small child and my back, neck, and shoulders did not appreciate my efforts in strapping a mini walk-in closet to my body. Wheels are your friend. Get a piece of luggage that you can easily drag through an airport because my inner hiker was not a happy camper. *Continued on page 8*

No Gumby

Continued from page 7

Once on the plane, one might think it's a treat to sit a spell, especially after a backbreaking journey through a few airports. Maybe for a short while, but not for over a day – this trip was 24 plus hours my friends. While on the subject of sitting, one might think the act of sitting is letting your body relax in a rested state. Perhaps in most cases, but in this particular situation, it wasn't even close to restful or relaxing. There is nothing, I repeat nothing, relaxing about being on a plane sandwiched between two massive bodies and cramped into positions that could be challenging to a 5-year-old gymnast with mobility like Gumby!

Altitude changes and being cramped into a tiny airplane seat, my body felt the pressure inside and out. As tired as I might have been, it was nearly impossible to sleep. A trip to the restroom was both a hassle and a blessing because it caused a disturbance to traipse over the other passenger and squeeze through the aisle but the leg stretch felt amazing. After countless hours in the sky, we finally made it to our destination.

The naive traveler in me learned that such a long, achy trip does not bode well for good marathon prep. Unfortunately, I ran the worst race of my running career.

However, I became more of a runner after that race because I had to find the grit to make a comeback. I had to use the same grit that got me to the race, the same grit that helps me hold my head up when I see and feel the damage to my joints that makes me want to hide, and the same grit that helps me laugh in the face of the disease that tries to steal my joy every single day to keep going and fighting for a full and happy life. I have been given a "twisted gift" and I have every intention of using it! ~trvw

Call for Submissions

Calling all creatives! Thrive Newsletter is calling all artists in the Arthritis Introspective Community to submit relevant, original, previously unpublished works of art, in the form of poetry, paintings, drawings, photography and sculpture or relative artwork that symbolically portrays our "community" voice of empowerment through building and growing together on this sometimes difficult journey of chronic illness via arthritis and related conditions.



If you've been looking for a place to showcase your talent this is it. We want you! Let's celebrate the fantastic creativity within our community. Come on now, you know who you are and you know you want to show us the creative powers that help you make it through, over, and up to a better place. We'll be celebrating the arts in a special "Fall Arts" edition of Thrive newsletter and we want your submission.

Please email your submission and any images by September 1, 2016 to [Loraine Alkire](mailto:LoraineAlkire@arthritisintrospective.org) at editor@arthritisintrospective.org - We look forward to hearing from you! You will receive an auto-responder email to ensure that we have received your work. Please allow up to ten business days for a reply. Thank you for your patience.

Welcome Awesome New Outreach Relations Specialists



Vince Santos—Houston SW, TX The Houston/Sugar Land area will be an ongoing opportunity to bring like-minded people together to learn, listen, enlighten and laugh. Vince, having founded a group in Texas before and knowing what attracts people to not only come once but repeatedly will help give Houston a group that has the potential to thrive. Ultimately, as a person who has lived with arthritis for decades, Vince is drawn to people who don't let the disease define them. It is his hope to create a group that unites those dealing with any of the multiple forms of arthritis, and establish a way to educate and empower one another and the community around them!

About: Vince

Diagnosed with JRA in 1967. Vince has undergone well over 37 surgeries including multiple joint replacements and has been on a host of medications to try and maintain an active quality of life. Having just turned 51, he has been married to his wife Wendy for almost 15 years and they have been blessed with two adorable girls-Joy age 7 and Hope age 4. Vince has attended multiple AI Gatherings as well as many AF conferences. Vince has hosted and co-chaired two AI Gatherings and is looking forward to future gatherings.

Having lived in the Houston area since the mid-1970s, Vince has benefitted a great deal from a top notch healthcare and medical centers. And yet, it was not until the early 1990s, while dealing with his first consideration for hip replacement surgery, when he realized that there was NO support system or peer network for him to turn to for advice, counsel, or inspiration. Houston is a phenomenal place to live and it's still growing. Over the years, thanks to Arthritis Introspective, Vince has met at least 10 people, living in his vicinity that he knows may benefit from this new support group, and he really loves to be a part of making that a reality.



Linda K—South Miami, FL Linda's vision for this support group is to encourage more people, with any form of arthritis, to find their optimum quality of life and participate in various facets of the group to help it grow.

Linda believes in a great truism- that when you reach out and help others you also help yourself. Her goal is to help encourage others to aim for their best quality of life. Linda believes through education coupled with encouragement that people with arthritis can maximize their lifestyle.

About: Linda

Linda's personal experience with arthritis started with watching it impact her father when she was a child when the treatments available now were not an option for him. He tried every "natural cure" (which still continue to cycle in and out of popularity) as well as mega corticosteroids. Linda got RA when she was 17 years old. She was determined to maintain the best quality of life in spite of her arthritis and has personally benefitted by the evolving treatments that are available today that were not options for her father.



Hannah Shirley—Denver, CO

It is Hannah's goal to create an environment where people can get together to talk, encourage, commiserate, and share resources and success stories! Hannah knows it can be a major challenge going about day to day life with arthritis, with people who don't know what it's like. It's important to spend time with folks who get it. There's nothing more relieving than not having to explain yourself when symptoms come up. Hannah wants you to know that whether you are newly diagnosed or are a seasoned veteran, young or old or somewhere in between, to come and join! If you can bring your sense of humor, all the better. If you can't, then you can gladly have some of Hannah's. *Continued on page 10*

Welcome Awesome New Outreach Relations Specialists

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Hannah wants her support group to be a positive space for people. She's open to anyone joining and will gladly offer support to people who are struggling; obviously that is a big reason to have support. She wants to do that by creating the general tone of the group to be as positive and uplifting as possible.

About: Hannah

Hannah is a 30-something professional who's been living with RA for 10 years. It is part of her daily experience, but it doesn't solely define her. Hannah's really passionate about social justice. She loves to travel, garden, and lose herself in good fiction. She loves interesting people, good conversation and spending time with the people she loves. She "stress" bakes.

Hannah knows arthritis can be a huge bummer and can make managing things you otherwise want or need to do really hard. "Life is a little easier when you have support. When you don't have to explain yourself when you have symptoms," she said, "I would like support and I would like to give support."



Stefanie Remson—Las Vegas, NV Stefanie's vision for this support group will be to provide support and friendship along with coordinating multi-faceted resources for attendees. She will include her volunteer resources along with guest speakers from athletics, medicine, nutrition, and other specialties. And of course, the group will have FUN!

About: Stefanie

Stefanie is looking to help people living with arthritis in the Las Vegas community. She personally struggles with RA and has learned a variety of ways to manage and cope. She looks forward to sharing with others and providing hope. Stephanie also has a strong background in medicine, leadership, and social networking which she feel puts her in an ideal position to facilitate this group.

Stefanie became an ORS and started an AI Support Group because there is a great need in Las Vegas. Through her journeys, she desperately sought support and she could have benefitted greatly with a monthly group. She is hoping to ease the transition of newly diagnosed patients and friends.



Jennifer Walker—North San Antonio, TX

Jennifer wants participants of this group to connect to one another and to connect to the outside world - the city of San Antonio. She wants this to be a place where family members can learn and understand

better when they visit. She wants the support group to be a place where the group goes places and gets "outside of ourselves and our pain." Jennifer wants the group to experience the power of the city and the power of connecting to one another.

About: Jennifer

Jennifer not only has rheumatoid arthritis, but fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis, and gluten intolerance. Her husband has RA, fibro, osteoarthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, and scoliosis. His symptoms began two years after hers. She had to be his advocate even when he was ready to give up because no one would believe there was anything wrong with him since he was a man and so young. Jennifer's diseases are aggressive and crazy and she fights back with all that she is on a daily basis. Jennifer and her husband have two small children and are in this crazy struggle together.

Jennifer says, "It is hard and scary and challenging. At the end of the day, we are not defined by any of these diseases and live our lives to the best of our ability. We are more than pain and more than flares, and more than suffering. We are alive and try to enjoy each day the best that we can." It has been Jennifer's dream, since she was diagnosed almost five years ago, to become an advocate for those struggling with rheumatoid arthritis.

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Welcome Awesome New Outreach Relations Specialists

Continued from page 10

Jennifer found a support group within the first few months of diagnosis when she lived in Austin, and that group strengthened her and encouraged her when she felt alone and scared and overwhelmed. Jennifer found courage, medical advice, assistance advice and techniques along with hope that she was unable to find anywhere else. This disease can sometime rip away connections to others and she wishes to bridge that gap and create the connection that is often taken away for so many.



Vonda Laffey—Springfield, IL

Vonda envisions a group of individuals - each having their own stories and following their own path - who can listen to one another, provide encouragement and be understanding friends to one another. Vonda believes the group can become friends who are willing to listen, learn, and lean on each other.

About: Vonda

Vonda Laffey is 49-years-old with Rheumatoid Arthritis. In her former life, she was an award-winning radio show co-host plus news anchor/reporter. Then, Vonda became a Licensed Massage Therapist/Compassionate Touch® Practitioner and loved serving her clients! Vonda's RA diagnosis came in 2014, so she is still somewhat new to living with chronic disease. In the two short years since her diagnosis, Vonda has undergone lung surgery (multiple nodules) had a knee replacement and is preparing for the next one in August.

"I'm blessed with a patient and understanding husband, a delightful son and daughter-in-law, and two Bichon Frise doggies!" Vonda enjoys calligraphy, painting, loom weaving, sewing, and social media. It was really surprising to Vonda that there were NO Rheumatoid Arthritis/Autoimmune inflammatory disease support groups in her local area. Especially because Springfield is the state capital, home to a medical school and

has a progressive medical community. She wishes to learn from and build relationships with fellow "spoonies" face-to-face! Vonda believes face-to-face personal interactions in a welcoming and encouraging environment can improve quality of life.



Nicky Gibson Mack—Maple Grove, MN

Nicky's vision for this support group is to provide a safe place for folks to come together and share their experiences, struggles and successes as well as be a fun place to meet like people and build lasting friendships.

About: Nicky

Nicky is 37-years-old and has had JRA since she was 5 years old. Growing up Nicky did not have access to others who had similar diagnoses and did not meet another with arthritis until she was well into her 20s. As many with arthritis do, she struggled growing up feeling alone, left out, and with major body image and self-esteem issues. Nicky was inspired by a special nurse who administered many of her treatments and decided to become a nurse herself.

Nicky currently works full time as a registered nurse, a volunteer for Girl Scouts as a service unit manager for the Maple Grove area, as well as a troop leader for both of her daughters. In her free time, she enjoys spending time playing with her husband and three children, watching movies, reading books, photography and being outdoors. She is looking forward to leading the group in the Maple Grove area to provide support, community and friendship to those with arthritis and rheumatic conditions.

Become an AI Outreach Relations Specialist

If you are interested in learning how to start a social support group in your community, please complete the [ORS application](#). Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). Tell us [Your Story](#), for the newsletter. We would love to hear from you.

Eat, Move, Sleep, Repeat

By Trina R.V. Wilcox



Trina R.V. Wilcox is an on-air talent, writer, and columnist with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems from Missouri State University. She has been a certified fitness professional through FITour and the Arthritis Foundation. Trina is a

two-time Boston Marathon finisher, former aerobics instructor, and is the director of the JRA 5K. Although Trina has battled rheumatoid arthritis from childhood into adulthood, she has used a positive focus to prevail in a variety of ways. She has many interests including nature, art, and fitness. Trina writes to encourage and teach others as well as herself.

Eat
Move
Sleep
Repeat

As the weather begins to transition into summer and your joints welcome the warmer temperatures, the number of activities are going up like the mercury on the thermometer! The idea of socializing might sound amazing but the physical toll can be exhausting. Having a schedule, and sticking to it, may be exactly what you need to enjoy yourself for upcoming events.

There are three main things your body will thank you for when you stay on a regular schedule. Those top items are rest, diet, and exercise. You might already know the benefits of each one of these but there is even more power in your favor when you do your best to keep your body in top condition.

Diet is something that we all have. It might be better or worse at times but you always have one. It isn't something you're "on" but something you are in control of. When you nourish your body with fresh, nutrient-rich foods you will experience less inflammation and feel better overall. Maintaining good gut health, in my opinion, is important as well when considering some of the medications that you might need to take to manage your disease. Eating on a regular

basis will help your body learn how to better use vitamins, minerals, and aid in digestion.

Moving can be a challenge but is a must to keep the body as limber as possible. Explore a variety of exercises to see what you enjoy, what fits your schedule, and your ability. It's perfectly okay to modify exercises. Doing so even encourages others who might also be learning how to adapt to a life with fitness. Once you learn how your activities best work with your lifestyle, keep at it regularly.



Sleep is a biggie. Folks dealing with rheumatic diseases automatically need extra rest

(which you probably already know). Find a time to wind down and a time to rise, then stick to it! Allotting time for rest is going to let your body recharge and repair, as well as revive you mentally.

Combining a routine that lets your diet, exercise, and sleep schedule work together will give you an edge when it comes to enjoying work and play as much as possible. It might seem cumbersome, or even boring, at first; however, when you make time to put your health first it can be easier to manage your disease and do what you need to do - enjoy life! -trvw



Thank you for being a part of Arthritis Introspective.
We hope you enjoyed the summer 2016 newsletter.
If you would like to receive more updates please register at
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