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**Supporting people with arthritis**

Arthritis NZ Mateponapona Aotearoa provides information and support for people with all forms of arthritis, at any age.

While there is no cure, most people can live fulfilling and productive lives with early intervention, good treatment and self-management tools.

We have increased our digital service offering featuring self-management tools so that we can help more people. In the last few years, we have launched the New Zealand versions of two websites – one dedicated to people with osteoarthritis and one specifically for people with rheumatoid arthritis. Visit the osteoarthritis website tool at [www.MyJointPain.co.nz](http://www.MyJointPain.co.nz) and the rheumatoid arthritis website tool at [www.MyRA.org,nz](http://www.MyRA.org,nz) .

Nearly half of all people with arthritis are of working age and experience difficulties in trying to earn a living. They may have problems getting time off work to go to specialist appointments. Workers may have to use up all their sick leave or take leave without pay when coping with a ‘flare’. Sometimes it’s the physical demands of the work itself (standing or lifting) that are difficult. Or it may be the negative perceptions of work colleagues that add to the stress.

Therefore, flexible hours, modified equipment, and empathetic colleagues and managers who take a positive lead can go a long way towards making sure that workplaces are suitable and welcoming for people with arthritis.

We can help people with arthritis in the workforce navigate these challenges by advocating for them at a government level, as well as provide guidance and advice on how to talk to employers or how to access other support that might be available.

Anyone of any age who has arthritis can reach out to **Arthritis Assist** and **Peer Support,** which are available on **0800 663 463** or **info@arthritis.org.nz** during business hours. People with arthritis can request a free consultation and/or information pack tailored to their needs, covering understanding of their arthritis, treatments, pain management, nutrition, mental health, employment issues and access to other support services. These information packs can be posted to your door or emailed.

There is an active arthritis support group in Whangarei and water-based exercise classes are run independently at the Aquatic Centre.

CONTACT ARTHRITIS NEW ZEALAND by phone 0800 663 463, visit our Facebook page, email info@arthritis.org.nz or find heaps of information on the website [www.arthritis.org.nz](http://www.arthritis.org.nz)