



Speaking from Experience Young Adults with Arthritis

Transcript for chapter 4 of 9: Management strategies

Sue (developed rheumatoid arthritis at 12 years): If I was my grandmother, I would be bed bound now. My mum nearly fell over when I said that for the first time - but I would've been. Management is just so different these days. You didn't have the options of the medications that we have they didn't have the benefit of the surgery that I've been able to - and the self-management strategies that are espoused these days. The exercise and the relaxation and making sure you're eating well. All of those really basic things have really helped people with arthritis now.

Peter (diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis at 30 years): I have a really, really hot shower in the morning and do exercises in the shower to try to loosen up all my joints and my back. And then I don't drive to work, I actually walk to the station and that sort of helps a lot. And I usually find during the day, that if I just... If I'm sitting still in any position for too long, I'll get up and move around and stretch and then I'll walk home at night. And once a week I do hydrotherapy.

Judi (developed rheumatoid arthritis at 27 years): If I know I have to open a jar and it's gonna hurt, I'll sing a song. Or, in the middle of the night when, for me that's when the pain is at its worst, I'll get up and turn the telly on. It's amazing how the telly can distract me from the pain. And then things like heat wheat bags and creams and just the thought of putting it on can make you think of that - rather than the actual pain.

Heidi (diagnosed with fibromyalgia (FMS) at 22 years): I have a basic daily routine, that I pretty much have to follow, in order to live my day quite sanely, or feel that I can cope. That basically includes a lot of visualisation, a lot of stress management, a lot of positive thinking. A lot of exercise - I practice yoga daily, depending on my pain level. That sort of controls how long I'm doing it for.

Sue: With the joint surgery, that's basically stabilised the bigger problems for me. So, I can now walk relatively pain-free and I... in those particular joints anyway. It has been liberating, in a lot of ways, for me. It's certainly not the option for lots of people.

Judi: They fused my wrist, so I can't bend it. People have commented, "oh, how horrible that you can't bend your wrist", but I look at it, that I could never bend it before anyway, because the inflammation was so bad. It was so painful that I couldn't bend it anyway. So I look at it, well, I can't bend my wrist but I've got no pain.

Peter: I find that if I'm having a bad time with the arthritis, I get very determined and very focussed. Instead of lashing out at people, I tend to use that anger to keep going - pushing myself through it all.

Heidi: I get through the bad days by knowing the good days are gonna come. And knowing that, because I'm using my bad days in creative ways, sometimes, by drawing and creating things, I'm still getting something out of the bad days, and I'm learning a lot as well.



Sharyn (developed juvenile Arthritis at 16 months): I know that if I concentrate quite hard, I can push the pain down through my legs and right to my toes. And that will let off a tingling sensation. But it takes a lot of my own concentration, and after it, it is mind draining, but you can do it.

Judi: Hearing other people's ideas and comments, at first, I didn't know how to deal with that at all. That was really annoying, when people would tell you to try this, try that. And then, if you tried it and it didn't work, you felt like a failure.

Sue (developed rheumatoid arthritis at 12 years): If I was my grandmother, I would be bed bound now. My mum nearly fell over when I said that for the first time - but I would've been. Management is just so different these days. You didn't have the options of the medications that we have they didn't have the benefit of the surgery that I've been able to - and the self-management strategies that are espoused these days. The exercise and the relaxation and making sure you're eating well. All of those really basic things have really helped people with arthritis now.

Peter (diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis at 30 years): I have a really, really hot shower in the morning and do exercises in the shower to try to loosen up all my joints and my back. And then I don't drive to work, I actually walk to the station and that sort of helps a lot. And I usually find during the day, that if I just... If I'm sitting still in any position for too long, I'll get up and move around and stretch and then I'll walk home at night. And once a week I do hydrotherapy.

Judi (developed rheumatoid arthritis at 27 years): If I know I have to open a jar and it's gonna hurt, I'll sing a song. Or, in the middle of the night when, for me that's when the pain is at its worst, I'll get up and turn the telly on. It's amazing how the telly can distract me from the pain. And then things like heat wheat bags and creams and just the thought of putting it on can make you think of that - rather than the actual pain.

Heidi (diagnosed with fibromyalgia (FMS) at 22 years): I have a basic daily routine, that I pretty much have to follow, in order to live my day quite sanely, or feel that I can cope. That basically includes a lot of visualisation, a lot of stress management, a lot of positive thinking. A lot of exercise - I practice yoga daily, depending on my pain level. That sort of controls how long I'm doing it for.

Sue: With the joint surgery, that's basically stabilised the bigger problems for me. So, I can now walk relatively pain-free and I... in those particular joints anyway. It has been liberating, in a lot of ways, for me. It's certainly not the option for lots of people.

Judi: They fused my wrist, so I can't bend it. People have commented, "oh, how horrible that you can't bend your wrist", but I look at it, that I could never bend it before anyway, because the inflammation was so bad. It was so painful that I couldn't bend it anyway. So I look at it, well, I can't bend my wrist but I've got no pain.

Peter: I find that if I'm having a bad time with the arthritis, I get very determined and very focussed. Instead of lashing out at people, I tend to use that anger to keep going - pushing myself through it all.



Heidi: I get through the bad days by knowing the good days are going to come. And knowing that, because I'm using my bad days in creative ways, sometimes, by drawing and creating things, I'm still getting something out of the bad days, and I'm learning a lot as well.

Sharyn (developed juvenile Arthritis at 16 months): I know that if I concentrate quite hard, I can push the pain down through my legs and right to my toes. And that will let off a tingling sensation. But it takes a lot of my own concentration, and after it, it is mind draining, but you can do it.

Judi: Hearing other people's ideas and comments, at first, I didn't know how to deal with that at all. That was really annoying, when people would tell you to try this, try that. And then, if you tried it and it didn't work, you felt like a failure.