

# Tools for Life

## Rheumatology Education Group

### Patient Information Leaflet

If you are interested in attending the group, please discuss this with your consultant or rheumatology clinical nurse specialist (CNS).

### Introduction

This leaflet is about a service called Tools for Life for people who have been diagnosed with a rheumatologic condition. It gives information about the service, what topics are covered in the group, and what to do if you are interested in joining the group.

### What is 'Tools for Life'

'Tools for Life' is an education group run by occupational therapists and physiotherapists for people who have been diagnosed with a rheumatologic condition.

### Why are we providing this service?

The government NICE Guidelines\* recommend that self-management programmes are an important part of increasing your knowledge of your condition and how to manage it.

\*NICE Guidelines provide independent and evidence-based guidance on the most effective ways to prevent, diagnose and treat disease and ill health.

This group has been developed to provide advice and guidance on managing your condition long term. Although you may feel this group may not be beneficial when having a good period, it is about giving you the 'tools' for the long term management of your condition.

### The topics covered within the group are:

**Joint protection:** The principles of joint protection; how to look after your joints and applying these principles to the activities of your daily life.

**Gadgets:** We have a range of gadgets and small aids that you can try that may be beneficial to you.

**Pacing/energy conservation:** We discuss what this means and how this will be beneficial to you. We share advice and examples on how to apply pacing/energy conservation into your daily activities to enhance your quality of life.

**Relaxation:** We explain how this is beneficial to you and the positive effect it can have on reducing stress and pain. A variety of relaxation styles are practised during the session so you can find a style which suits you.

**Hand exercises:** Gentle hand exercises to maintain the movement of your joints.

**Exercise:** The benefits and barriers to exercise are discussed within the group and each week, an exercise session is held. You will be provided with an individual graded home exercise programme. There is the opportunity for you to be referred onto Action Heart, which is based at Russells Hall Hospital, for a more intense exercise programme. Please discuss this with the therapy team if you feel this would be helpful for you.

## What if I am interested in joining this group?

All you need is a referral either from your consultant or clinical nurse specialist. Following this, we will send you dates and additional information about times and location. If you decide to join, it is important that you attend all four sessions to achieve the best outcome for you to be able to manage your condition.

## Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following weblinks:

### **NICE - National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance>

### **Arthritis Research UK**

<https://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/>

### **NRAS – National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society**

<https://www.nras.org.uk/>

If you have any questions or would like any more information, please contact:  
Occupational therapist, Hand Therapy Team on 01384 456111 ext. 2430 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/occupational-therapy/>

If you would like this information in an alternative language or format, for example in large print or easy read, please call us on 0800 073 0510 or email [dgft.pals@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.pals@nhs.net) or write to Patient Advice and Liaison Service.