

Staying active really can help those with chronic disease ward off their symptoms!

Nancy Milhousen's story:

Nancy was diagnosed with arthritis in 1984 after just barely entering adulthood. Just as her life was about to really get started, Nancy had to listen to her doctors tell her that she had better prepare herself for a wheelchair in the not-too-distant future.

Her reaction? No way!

Nancy took charge of her own health care and hunted down a great specialist. Together, they formed a plan of action that presented exercise as an alternative to a wheelchair. Nancy committed to the plan fully and credits her current state of health and mobility to her adopted active lifestyle.

Today, 25 years later, Nancy enjoys running and gardening and is even involved with the Saskatoon Road Runners Association. She takes special care to participate in those events that raise awareness and funds for her condition, such as the annual **Jingle Bell Walk & Run for Arthritis** (www.jinglebellwalkandrun.ca).

Nancy's advice for people with arthritis is:

- ✓ Begin by doing something active at least 2 to 3 times a week
- ✓ If you feel good, add a longer or more vigorous exercise on the weekends
- ✓ Give yourself breaks (Nancy prefers to run in cooler weather so she allows herself a breather over the summer months)
- ✓ Take care of yourself when you're sore (ice and heat work for Nancy) but don't abandon your plan of action
- ✓ Revisit your plan of action each year and evaluate what's working and what isn't—update or adjust your plan as needed
- ✓ Use the community around you and take advantage of running/walking events where the enthusiasm is infectious (like the [Jingle Bell Walk & Run for Arthritis](http://www.jinglebellwalkandrun.ca) - www.jinglebellwalkandrun.ca, on **November 8th 2009!**)
- ✓ Always remember: CHANGE DOESN'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT BUT IT DOES HAPPEN!