

Mental Wellness Self-Assessment



Arthritis not only takes a toll on our bodies, it can take a toll on our minds as well. Coping with symptoms like chronic pain, inflammation and fatigue, as well as the social and economic impact of arthritis, can sometimes cause or contribute to stress, anxiety and depression. Looking after our minds is just as important as looking after our bodies, because factors such as stress can impact how we experience arthritis pain.

The [World Health Association](#) states that mental health isn't simply the absence of mental illness, but defines it as "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community." Therefore, mental health is not just about our own bodies and minds, but also about how we interact with our community and the world around us.

There are a number of factors that can impact our mental health, including social, economic, environmental and biological factors. Studies have shown that people with rheumatoid arthritis, for example, often report higher rates of [anxiety](#) and [depression](#) than the general population, which is why it's important to pay attention to signs if you're feeling down or out of sorts to know when to seek help. Everyone feels a little blue sometimes, but if you're having a hard time coping, it might be time to talk to someone. **This resource can help you identify when it might be time to reach out for help and identify options you can take.** While coping with arthritis can be a challenge both mentally and physically, there are steps you can take to improve your mental health and well-being.

If you're experiencing a mental health crisis, please contact Crisis Services Canada at 1-833-456-4566, a [crisis line in your region](#), or dial 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency.

The following quiz has been adapted from the Canadian Mental Health Association's Mental Health Meter and Princeton University's U Matter Wellness Self-Assessment. It is not a scientific test and is intended for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional advice. **If you require mental health advice, please contact your doctor or a qualified mental healthcare professional.**

Mental Wellness Self-Assessment Quiz

For each pair of statements below, please indicate which one more accurately reflects your feelings

COPING STRATEGIES

	COLUMN A	✓	COLUMN B	✓
1	Even though I might get worried about the future, I try to stay focused on what I can do in the present		My worries about the future can make it difficult to enjoy the present moment	
2	If I need help, I'll ask for the support I need		When I'm going through a difficult time, I tend to avoid family and friends	
3	I recognize when I'm feeling stressed and take steps to manage it		I often feel that my stress levels are out of my control	
4	If I have a problem, I know where to turn to for help		Sometimes it feels like there are no solutions to my problems	
	TOTAL COLUMN A		TOTAL COLUMN B	

QUALITY OF LIFE

	COLUMN A	✓	COLUMN B	✓
1	I'm still able to maintain a fulfilling life despite my arthritis		Arthritis has taken away my ability to enjoy life	
2	My friends and family improve my quality of life just as I improve theirs		I feel like a burden to my friends and family	
3	I tend to focus on the "now" and appreciate what I have in the moment		I often think about my life before arthritis and how much better it was than now	
4	I am thankful to have the food, accommodation and finances I need to get by		I am often worried about whether I will have enough money for necessities like food and accommodation	
	TOTAL COLUMN A		TOTAL COLUMN B	

SELF-ACTUALIZATION

	COLUMN A	✓	COLUMN B	✓
1	I feel that I am able to contribute to my family and/or society in meaningful ways		I feel that I am not contributing to my family and/or society in meaningful ways	
2	I've learned to make positive changes in my life because of my arthritis		I can't do the things I want to because of my arthritis	
3	Arthritis has helped me realize new priorities and build on my strengths		I feel like I am not living up to my potential	
4	I am interested in the world around me and enjoy learning new things		It's become harder to take interest in the things I used to enjoy	
	TOTAL COLUMN A		TOTAL COLUMN B	

FLEXIBILITY

	COLUMN A	✓	COLUMN B	✓
1	I try to remain positive and adapt when a flare causes me to change plans		I feel really down and can't shake it when a flare causes me to change plans	
2	When I have a setback, I remind myself things will get better		When I have a setback, it seems like things will never get better	
3	I've come to accept that there are some things I can't change and do my best to live with my condition		It gets me really down to think that I can't change my condition and have to live with it	
4	While I didn't choose to get arthritis, I can choose how to respond to it		I feel helpless when it comes to dealing with my arthritis	
	TOTAL COLUMN A		TOTAL COLUMN B	

SOCIAL WELLNESS

	COLUMN A	✓	COLUMN B	✓
1	I have a good support network		I feel very isolated, like I have to go through this alone	
2	When I'm feeling frustrated, there is someone I can talk to		No one wants to hear me complain, so I keep my feelings inside	
3	When I'm upset, I try to express my emotions in positive, constructive ways		When I'm upset, I tend to become confrontational and hurtful to others	
4	I seek opportunities to participate in social activities when I can		I try to avoid socializing with others if I can help it	
	TOTAL COLUMN A		TOTAL COLUMN B	

BALANCE

	COLUMN A	✓	COLUMN B	✓
1	I'm able to make some time for myself when I'm feeling stressed or overwhelmed		I often let myself get run-down before I take care of my own needs	
2	I'm able to maintain a balance between family, friends, work/chores and self-care		I feel pulled in competing directions and I'm having a hard time coping	
3	I have hobbies that I practice regularly		I feel totally consumed by obligations	
4	I exercise regularly and eat a healthy diet		I find it too difficult to stay active and/or prepare healthy meals	
	TOTAL COLUMN A		TOTAL COLUMN B	

Once you've answered all the questions, add up all your answers in column A and all your answers in column B.

If you scored between 19-24 "As" and 0-5 "Bs": Way to go! It seems like you've developed some effective strategies to help you cope with the challenges of arthritis and daily life. Focusing on the positive and what you are able to control can help you maintain a healthy outlook. While you answered mostly "As," if you find yourself struggling in one or more areas, professional support may be helpful. Mental health, just like physical health, can fluctuate over time, so if you ever feel that you're having difficulty coping day-to-day, speak with your doctor or a qualified mental health professional. Practices like mindfulness, meditation and/or cognitive behavioural therapy can help you deal with the pain of arthritis and promote mental well-being.

If you scored between 13-18 "As" and 6-11 "Bs": While you might sometimes struggle with the challenges posed by arthritis or daily life, you've also found positive ways to help you manage. When you're having a difficult time, remember to rely on the resources and strategies that have been useful for you in the past. Is there a different way to look at the situation? Who can you turn to for support? Practices like mindfulness, meditation and/or cognitive behavioural therapy can help you deal with the pain of arthritis and promote mental well-being. If you find at some point that it becomes harder to cope day-to-day, your family doctor can help connect you to free mental health services, or you can visit ementalhealth.ca for information about free and private practice services in your area.

If you scored between 0-12 "As" and 12-24 "Bs": Dealing with the challenges of arthritis and day-to-day stresses can have an impact on our mental health, but there are steps you can take to improve your mental well-being. Perhaps you are currently having some difficulty managing and may want to talk to your doctor or a qualified mental health professional. Mental health, just like physical health, can fluctuate over time, and getting the healthcare we need at the right time can make a big difference to how we feel. Your family doctor can help connect you to free mental health services, or you can visit ementalhealth.ca for information about free and private practice services in your area. Practices like mindfulness, meditation and/or cognitive behavioural therapy can also help you deal with the pain of arthritis and promote mental well-being.

To learn more about types of mental health services available and whether they are covered by government health plans, visit our [Mental Health page](#).

Sources:

<https://umatter.princeton.edu/sites/umatter/files/media/princeton-umatter-wellness-self-assessment.pdf>
<https://cmha.ca/mental-health-meter#.VWDcAZRIUUM>

This resource was last updated in May 2020 with expert advice from:

Dr. Heather Hadjistavropoulos, PhD, R.D.Psych

Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Regina

Founder & Executive Director, Online Therapy Unit for Service Education and Research