Managing pain and maintaining mobility

The wet winter weather and cold air will send 70 million Americans with arthritis searching for relief from sore and inflamed joints. Arthritis pain particularly affects older adults, as more than half of Americans have symptoms of osteoarthritis in at least one joint by age 65. While no cure for arthritis exists, people suffering from this condition can take a number of steps to decrease pain and maintain mobility.

Oxford offers the following tips for alleviating arthritis pain:

• Create an arthritis action plan. Work with your physician to create a plan that incorporates diet, exercise and strength-building movements to counteract the effects of arthritis.

• Gently move stiff joints through a full range of motions each day to maintain their maximum reach and strength. Consult a physician or physical therapist for exercises that will help improve range of motion.

• Use jar openers, pot movers, or long-handled brushes and combs to ease the stress of daily activities on joints. Many people also find it helpful to replace doorknobs with levers, which put less stress on joints.

• Get walking to keep joints flexible.

• Purchase a pair of comfortable shoes that relieve pressure placed on knees and hips.

• Visit a massage therapist. A massage from a certified massage therapist can help increase flexibility and circulation.

• Stretch regularly. Stretching is an easy way to keep joints and muscles flexible. Remember to start with easy stretches.

• Swim for exercise. This can be an alternative for many who are looking for an exercise that is less stressful on joints than weightlifting and jogging.

• Take a vacation to a dry, hot climate, which has been found to alleviate the symptoms of arthritis.