Get Creative With Art Therapy for Rheumatoid Arthritis

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How You Can Benefit From Art Therapy

You may not think that child's play could be good for your rheumatoid arthritis but think again. Art therapy has been used for years for many different types of health conditions. It is used to help patients overcome physical and emotional problems by using a creative outlet like drawing or painting. Dance, poetry, and photography are other ways to express yourself through art.

What is Art Therapy?

A professional usually facilitates this type of therapy to help a person through illness or other challenges in life. The art therapy guides a person to self-awareness and awareness of others. It can also be used to cope with pain and other symptoms that trouble the patient. It can alleviate stress and even enhance one's cognitive capabilities.

Art therapy encompasses both art and psychotherapy; it encourages the patient to use art to facilitate the journey toward self-exploration. Feelings can be drawn with color or images, and thoughts can be expressed while striving to understand yourself.

How Is It Helpful to RA Patients?

If you are a patient with RA, you may find that art therapy can help you with pain control and alleviate the stress in your life. You may want to meet with a professional in the beginning to learn the techniques to art therapy. The great thing is that you don't need to be an artist to engage in this therapy. It is all about creating a piece of art that expresses your thoughts and feelings in a safe environment. No one even needs to see what you made – it's the process that's important.

Many things can be used that suits you. If it is painful for you to use drawing tools, you may elect to use paints. Clay or cutting pictures out to make a collage are other projects you could try. Crayons, markers, or any other type of drawing utensil can be used. You may elect to use all of them, depending on how you are expressing yourself. The sky is the limit.

You can try art therapy at home, or attend a session with a professional. If you are with a professional, you can expect your session to:

- Start with a short conversation about your issues with RA. You may have some other issues that are weighing you down as well. This will give the therapist a sense of where you will be going with your artwork.
- Last a little more than a hour
- Offer you insight as you produce your art and uncover solutions to the issues you are facing.

There will be time after your art work is done to reflect on your art session. You will be encouraged to analyze the

piece of work and see if there is something that has revealed itself through the project. It may offer you some understanding of yourself. If you are seeking pain relief, the session may give you relaxation and the chance to take the focus off of the pain.