Improve Daily Life With These RA Friendly Products

by ANGELA FINLAY

Arthritis Friendly Products to Ease RA Pain

As your rheumatoid arthritis flares and progresses, everyday tasks can become difficult to handle, but living with a reminder of your limitations can be even more challenging. Instead of fiercely fighting every obstacle, work with some helpful resources and arthritis friendly products specifically designed to ease the pressure and spare your sore, stiff joints the effort. In the end you'll feel happier and healthier.

Clever Reaching Tools

Many RA sufferers find that the reaching motion is a particularly difficult maneuver when their arthritis flares. Luckily, there are plenty of products that address specific reaching actions to make them easier on your aching joints:

- **Seatbelt handle.** A small plastic clip grasps the fabric of your seatbelt, and another plastic arm extends six inches so you can easily grab and pull it toward you instead of struggling against the belt's resistance. If you're in the car a lot, you'll certainly notice a difference after using this product.
- **Magnet-tipped reaching arm**. The reaching stick concept has been around for a long time, but there have been advances even here. Now you'll find versions outfitted with a trigger that operates a clamp, magnetic tips to grab metal objects, and telescoping lightweight arms to minimize the effort and store easily.
- **Long-handled gardening tools.** Gardening is a particularly relaxing and rewarding activity, and many RA sufferers enjoy maintaining their green plots. However, the bending and twisting can be a nightmare for those with RA, so invest in a stand-up weeder to eliminate bending, and use curved handles to make trowels and shovels more comfortable to operate.

Tools to Help Dexterity

One of the most frustrating daily tasks for sore wrists and hands is the small but necessary morning routine. From brushing your teeth to buttoning your shirt, there is a range of arthritis friendly products to use, and since most of them are very affordable, you don't have to settle on just one:

- **Buttoning and zipping device.** There are several tools designed to button, zip or otherwise manipulate clasps and snaps. Your best bet is to find a universal device so you have fewer tools to keep track of. Look for features like a rubber handle, a small hook, and a long looped wire arm to make easy work of small buttons.

- **Book holder.** The act of holding a book's spine open with your hands can amount to lots of pain and stiffness, and you may wind up reading less because of it. So, whether you're reading a novel or a recipe, use a simple book holder to keep the pages open; some even prop the book up with a handy stand.
- **Foam handles.** You can find foam handle covers in an array of sizes and colors to pop over your utensils,

tooth brush, hair brush, or any other narrow piece of equipment that challenges your grip strength. If you prefer to go low-tech, simply buy some foam hair rollers from a beauty supply store, toss out the plastic frame and fit the foam over the handles on your devices.

There are many arthritis-friendly gadgets out there, and while some offer a lot of help, others won’t be a worthwhile investment. Think about your daily routine and when you suffer most from stiffness, but also about what sort of habits you want to develop. Invest in the items that make your favorite hobbies easier, healthy food prep more comfortable, and moving around more enjoyable.