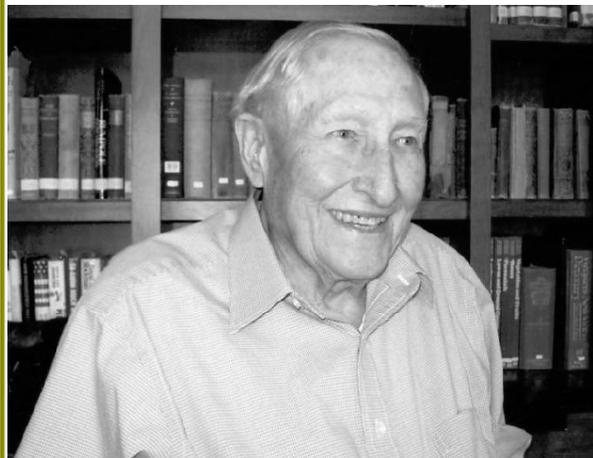


# Successful Living with Arthritis

## Exercise Works!

### Meet Bob Van Velkenburgh

Bob Van Velkenburgh is a vivacious 88-year-old. A retired teacher, Bob is active in local government and dedicates his spare time to an ever-growing family of grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren. **He has no intention of slowing down.** So, after experiencing searing pain in his joints while on a trip with his wife, Bob was determined to work with his doctor to discover the cause and search



for a solution. He was soon diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis (RA), a painful and potentially-disabling condition if not managed properly. Bob got to work, looking for ways to **regain control of his health.**

Bob came across a program in his local paper to help people just like him learn to manage their chronic diseases. He recalls saying to his wife, “We should take a class like that. It certainly won’t do any harm!” That very summer, the Van Velkenburghs enrolled in the local *Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP)* sponsored by the Utah State Health Department. Utah’s is one of many state health departments using grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to address arthritis in local communities, so that residents can learn techniques to

**manage arthritis and other chronic conditions** on a day-to-day basis. Bob and his wife learned about the benefits of appropriate exercise, how to communicate with friends and family about their conditions, and ways to manage the symptoms of RA and other chronic diseases. “It’s an excellent program,” says Bob. “Yes, the pain from my rheumatoid arthritis is still there, but this helps to cope with it. **I will not let my arthritis get me down!**” Bob and his wife are not alone in their assessment of the *CDSMP*. Participants often report reduced pain, fatigue, depression, fear, and worry about their health.

### Bringing It Home

Months after participating in the program, Bob still uses the skills he learned on a daily basis. Every morning, Bob does exercises tailored for his chronic conditions, working both his upper and lower body. As he says, “I exercise every day because if you sit too long, you’re going to regret it!” Thankfully, those exercises are paying off. Bob reports **reduced pain, increased flexibility, improved mood, and a better quality of life.** Even with a positive outlook on life, Bob truly believes his arthritis symptoms would not have improved if he had not attended the self-management classes. Bob does not worry about what might have been, but understands the significant impact the classes have had on his health. Building the skills he has learned into his day-to-day life, Bob has a renewed perspective: **“Every day I just pick something to look forward to tomorrow,”** and at the rate Bob is going, he will have many more tomorrows!

Arthritis is not going to get me down! I have learned about the importance of exercise and stress management to improve my symptoms. I have so much to live for arthritis is not going to get in the way!