

## Self-help series fact sheet 1

### Self-management

So, what is self-management? If you've never had or been involved in the care of someone with a chronic illness you may not be familiar with the idea of 'self-management'. This is where small changes to your lifestyle brings about more comfort. You could call them tips and tricks.

We often learn through life and experience that if something is wrong (either physically or mentally) then there is someone we need to go to 'fix it'. Many people will spend their entire lives trying to find 'the magic pill' or the 'right treatment' but never quite learn that 90 per cent of the work (if not more) needs to be done by you.

Think about a Type 2 diabetic. A doctor will diagnose it based on some blood tests, and they might prescribe some tablets, but the majority of the work 'managing' it needs to be done by you. You need to learn to eat foods that manage your blood sugars. You need to exercise to regulate your blood sugars AND help you achieve a healthy weight range. You need to manage your stress because spikes in stress hormones causes your blood sugars to rise. This is all stuff that you have to do or be in charge of. You might talk to a dietitian about how to eat more healthily, go to a gym or talk to an exercise physiologist about the best exercise for you to engage in; you might talk to a counsellor to learn strategies to manage your stress. But at the end of the day, you have to implement the changes in your life. This is called self-management. Only you can put all these things into practice in a way that works in your life.

If you need further information or support please have a look at our website at [www.arthritisact.org.au](http://www.arthritisact.org.au).



***This fact sheet is supported by funding from the ACT PHN through the Australian Government's PHN Program.***

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