Benefits of Occupational Therapy for Spondyloarthritis (SpA)

John Indalecio, MOT, OTR/L, CHT
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John Indalecio
Hospital for Special Surgery
Disclosure: I DO NOT have a financial relationship with any commercial interest.
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  Hand Therapy Technician and one day occupational therapist
  For modeling for photos
Overview

- SpA overview
- Adaptive Techniques / Adaptive Equipment
- Energy Conservation: Four Ps
- Tasks
- Resources

Spondyloarthritis (SpA)

- Disease of remissions and exacerbations - cyclical
- Immune-mediated disorder primarily affecting spine and other joints
- May affect peripheral joints, ligaments, tendons
- Often accompanied with fatigue and pain
- Strong genetic features and familial association
Spondyloarthritis (SpA)

- Assembling your team
  - Rheumatologist
  - Other MDs: primary care, GI, cardiologist
  - Therapists: OT, PT
  - Nutritionist
  - Social worker
- Gain knowledge about your diagnosis

SpA & Occupational Therapy

- Spinal stiffness
- Fatigue
- Management of self-care
- Other Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
- Ergonomics and the office
- Maintaining fitness
Self-Assessment

- What can you change or have an effect on?
- What is the disease’s progression?

How do you tell the difference?

Self-Assessment

- What is the disease’s effects that you can’t control?
  - **Stiffness** – vertebrae can fuse themselves
  - **Mobility** – morning stiffness’s grip
  - **Energy** – may not be restored with sleep alone
  - **Outlook** – immune-mediated disease
    - May have an effect on mood
Self-Assessment

- What can you change or have an effect on?
  - **Flexibility**—stretches (consult your PT)
  - **Mobility**—activity
  - **Energy**—using it carefully
  - **Outlook**—controlling mood and emotional attitude
  - **Actively engage your care**
  - **Track your symptoms** (use apps or journal)
  - **Build on a good foundation:** diet, rest, exercise

Managing Activities of Daily Living (ADL)

- Adaptive Techniques and Tools – objects that allow us to achieve our goals

- **Examples of adaptive equipment**
  - Coat when it’s cold
  - Eyeglasses to see in focus, or to shade against sun
  - A wrench to tighten a nut
Tasks: Getting out of bed

- Pelvic Rotations – prepare to get up
  - Bend knees and keep shoulders flat during the motions

Perform 5 Reps, 5 second holds when knees point max left and right

Tasks: Getting out of bed

- Moving from lying in bed to sitting at edge of bed
  - Roll to one edge of the bed
  - Bend knees
  - Move legs forward and as legs move toward the floor
  - Push up across your body to shift to a vertical position
Self-Management: Long-handed equipment

- Long-handed equipment
  - helps with gaining reach for stiffness in lower back
  - added reach for shoulder or thoracic difficulties
  - can be implemented for short-term or long-term use
  - can make everyday activities easier (and faster)

**Reachers**

Extending Reach

- Sock Aid
- Reacher
- Long-shoehorn
- Elastic shoelaces
- Dressing Stick
Tasks: Shampooing hair

- Long-handled brush,
- hair shampooer
- Hand-held shower
- Lotion applicator

Dressing Stick
Sock Aid

Extending Reach

- magnetic nib
- pincher
- grip
Extending Reach

4 Ps of Energy Conservation

- Principles that ration energy to maximize function and independence
- **Rationale**: proper diet and rest, as well as maintaining good physical condition bolsters the immune system and can keep symptoms at bay
- Planning
- Pacing
- Prioritizing
- Positioning
4 Ps of Energy Conservation

- Pay attention to your body’s response to daily activity
- Watch for signs of early fatigue
- Over-fatigue may result in a need for prolonged rest
- Over-fatigue may contribute to flare-up

**Planning**

Looking ahead evaluating tasks and scheduling activities that are more strenuous during your strongest times of the day.

*Example:* allow enough time and avoid rushing as this consumes more energy. Utilize your strongest times of the day for the most demanding tasks.

Gather all items for project in one place before getting started.
4 Ps of Energy Conservation

- **Pacing** regulate the tempo of the activity. Too fast or too slow can consume energy. Build rest breaks into the daily/weekly tasks. Avoid overfatigue. Learn your limit!

*Example:* A 20-minute nap can be truly effective at recharging for evening’s activities. Don’t push yourself until you are exhausted.

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- **Prioritizing** perform most important activities and eliminate or postpone tasks that are unnecessary.

*Example:* Let a more physically difficult job go until someone is available to help. Use your energy for things that only you can do!
4 Ps of Energy Conservation

- **Positioning** using the body to its mechanical advantage will reduce the amount of effort needed to complete a task.

  *Examples:* Sit down to put on your shoes.
  Use a cart to move belongings.
  Assess your comfort when sitting at the desk.

Tasks / Activities of Daily Living (ADL)

- Getting out of bed
- Hair washing
- Donning/doffing socks
- Picking up objects on floor
- Driving
- Work position
Tasks

- Driving

Driving prep: Cervical Spine stretches

Rotation: active, assistive

Hold end range 10 seconds
Repeat 3-5 times
Driving prep: Cervical Spine stretches

Lateral Stretches: active, assistive

Hold end range 10 seconds
Repeat 3-5 times

Driving prep: Cervical Spine stretches

Neck Flexion/Extension Stretches: active, assistive

Hold end range 10 seconds
Repeat 3-5 times
No Size Fits All, but Travel Disrupts Routines

- Personal / Pleasure
- Professional / work-oriented
- Traveling alone or with others
- Caring for children or others
- Modes: car, train, air, bus, boat, etc.

Travel Demands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demands</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing others</td>
<td>Maintain awareness of your party. Enlist their help if needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Pack your medications first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of day</td>
<td>Energy may vary at different times of day- see Energy Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurry up and Wait--</td>
<td>Get an aisle seat. Whether in a car or other mode of transport, stand up and move five minute every hour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long sitting times</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Energy Conservation

- Avoid excessive loads!
- get help, check bags!
- use valets/bellhops/redcap/skycaps
  note: be sure to carry small bills for tips!

SpA symptom: spinal stiffness

- Inflammation in spine may result in bony fusion (ankylosis)
- Spinal fusion may cause kyphosis (rounded shoulder posture)
SpA symptom: spinal stiffness

- Perform "self-checks" regularly
  - check your posture by standing with your back to a wall, standing as straight as you can
  - Check your posture when sitting

Desk Work: Ergonomics

- A properly positioned workstation including your desk, home work station, kitchen, etc. can be helpful in preventing hand and wrist discomfort.
Desk work

- Sitting
  - Upright chair with good support
  - Avoid low seats or soft sitting
  - Use a bolster for lower back support
  - Consider a footrest at a chair where you spend more time
  - Get up and change positions frequently
  - Consider a standing desk

Journaling your symptoms

- Using apps on your smartphone to log daily status
- Can assist your medical team with historical record of status revealing patterns
Journaling your symptoms

My RA

iAnkSpond

RheumaHelper

Opening Screen

Recording Joint Pain

Summary
App: Learning about your Disease

iAnkSpond

Recap

- Learn about your disease → seek out answers to questions
- Build good health foundation → diet, rest, exercise
- Assemble your medical team → communicate with them, apps
- Use energy wisely → 4 Ps, avoid over-fatigue
- Keep active → stretch, use your body
- Maintain healthy independence → adapt, but ask for help
Sources


Thank You!

John Indalecio, MOT, OTR/L, CHT
Please feel free to contact me at:
indalecioj@hss.edu
Hand and Upper Extremity Therapy Center