

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **For Immediate Release**

ROME, Ga., March 9, 2011 – The first certified Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program in the region will be offered at the Harbin Clinic Vitality Center. The program is designed for those with moderate to severe arthritis with a goal of improving mobility and reducing pain. Toris Redding and Ellyn Houston of Harbin Clinic’s Vitality Fitness Center have completed training and are nationally certified Arthritis Foundation instructors.

The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program is an 8-week session designed specifically for people with arthritis. The cost will be \$50 for nonmembers, and free for Vitality Center members. To register, contact Toris Redding at the Vitality Center or call (706) 290-2334.

“We’re not just creating a program to say we have the program,” says Redding, manager of the Vitality Fitness Center. “We really want to meet the needs in the community.” One in five adults in the United States (46 million people) has arthritis, including 48 percent of people over age 65. An estimated 67 million people will be affected by 2030.

Keith Rott, M.D., Harbin Clinic Rheumatologist, often recommends exercise to his patients. “An appropriate exercise program for patients with arthritis can lead to improved strength, improved joint mobility, improved balance, improved function, as well as weight loss, improved cardiovascular health and improved outlook in general,” Rott says.

“ I am pleased to now be able to refer patients to these exercise programs developed specifically for patients with arthritis and sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation,” Rott says.

“The instructors undergo specific training from the Arthritis Foundation. In addition, I feel that there is great benefit for patients to participate in an exercise program comprised of others with similar conditions and abilities.”

The class is a low-impact workout that will include cardio warm-up (marching in place, for example) and stretching exercises, usually in a seated or standing position. Participants will use equipment such as light weights (from 3 to 5 pounds), stability balls, and resistance bands.

“This class will use much slower movement to avoid pounding on the joints,” says Redding, adding that even the music will be slower than in a regular exercise class, using the number of beats per minute recommended by the Arthritis Foundation. “There won’t be any bouncing or anything that’s going to put a lot of strain on the joints.”

As exercise can aggravate arthritis if not done properly, says Redding, the Arthritis Foundation training teaches the instructors specific things that certain patients should not do. For example, people who have had hip joint surgery should not go beyond a 90-degree hip flexion.

“From what I learned in the Arthritis Foundation training, and from my own experiences here at Vitality Center, I see this new exercise program being a benefit all the way around for arthritis patients, not only physically, but also mentally and emotionally,” Redding says.

“It’s taxing on your mind to have limitations in your movement in everyday life, from reaching up into a cabinet, to being able to button clothes and tie shoes. The exercise really helps arthritis patients lead a normal life without as much pain, and even possibly eliminating pain. So I believe it will affect their whole life in a positive way,” she says.

The Vitality Fitness Center is located across from Redmond Regional Medical Center in the Harbin Clinic heart center.

**Side Bar**

***Arthritis Walk October 15, 2011***

The Rome Arthritis Walk is scheduled for October 15, 2011 at Ridge Ferry Park. Sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation, this event brings together those impacted by arthritis while raising funds to increase awareness of arthritis and support programs such as the Arthritis Foundation exercise programs.

For more information about the walk, contact Emily Young, Development Coordinator for the Southeast Region of the Arthritis Foundation at (678) 237-4448 or [eyoung@arthritis.org](mailto:eyoung@arthritis.org).

The Arthritis Foundation, with headquarters in Atlanta, is the leading health organization addressing the needs of millions of Americans living with arthritis. The foundation is also the largest private, not-for-profit contributor to arthritis research in the world, funding more than \$415 million in research grants since it was founded in 1948.

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