



MUSCULOSKELETAL
AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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Valuing self-care for people living with musculoskeletal conditions

Today is International Self-Care Day. International Self-Care Day is observed each year on 24 July, or 24/7. This date symbolises that the benefits of self-care are experienced 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Musculoskeletal Australia (www.msk.org.au) is a strong supporter of International Self-Care Day, which focuses on the importance empowering people with the knowledge and ability to be active participants in their own health and wellness.

For people living with 150+ musculoskeletal conditions such as back pain, arthritis, osteoporosis and many others, self-care encompasses all that people do to manage their condition/s. This includes everything from seeking information about their condition to visiting their doctor or health professional, appropriate use of medications, and taking active steps to reduce the impact of their condition/s through diet, exercise and other lifestyle changes.

As Sophie Thompson, a member of the Musculoskeletal Australia Consumer Advisory Committee explained, “Managing my condition is made up of equal parts medical intervention and self-care. Each day, just as I have to remember to schedule my appointments and take my medication, I have to factor in time to engage in other aspects of self-care. Be it exercising, taking a hot bath, asking questions of my healthcare team if there’s something I’m not sure about, or modifying my work/social commitments, it’s a huge part of my quality of life.”

Self-care provides considerable benefits for the individual, their family and the greater community, with improved wellbeing and happiness, lower morbidity and mortality, and reduced health care costs.

Musculoskeletal Australia’s [national consumer survey](#) in 2020 revealed that people with musculoskeletal conditions practise self-care by exercising, eating healthfully, taking medications as prescribed, working with their healthcare team, using mind-body techniques and seeking peer support. But they also indicated they needed support to do this. We want people to feel empowered to play an active role in managing their condition/s, and we want support for self-care to be embedded across health services. Because self-care isn't just the individual's responsibility, governments need to provide support to enable people to do this.

In response to the feedback received from the survey, Musculoskeletal Australia is developing self-care plans encompassing resources and support to build people’s capability, knowledge, skills and confidence to effectively manage their condition/s.

Musculoskeletal Australia also calls on government to develop suitable funding models to support self-care for people with complex health issues like musculoskeletal conditions, as outlined in the Mitchell Institute, Victoria University report: *Self-care for Health: A National Policy Blueprint*.

Rob Anderson, CEO Musculoskeletal Australia said, “The evidence is clear - self-care works. Understanding and incorporating the principles of self-care into our lives enables us to live happier, healthier lives, even with chronic health conditions. However, people need the tools and resources to help them get there. With the number of people living with musculoskeletal conditions, as well as many other chronic conditions, only continuing to increase, all levels of government should be funding self-care as a matter of urgency”.

End

More about Musculoskeletal Australia

Musculoskeletal Australia (www.msk.org.au) is a consumer organisation working with, and advocating on behalf of, people with musculoskeletal conditions such as back pain and arthritis. It provides free, evidence-based information and support for people with musculoskeletal conditions via a national Help Line staffed by nurses, information resources and webinars.

Available for interview

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