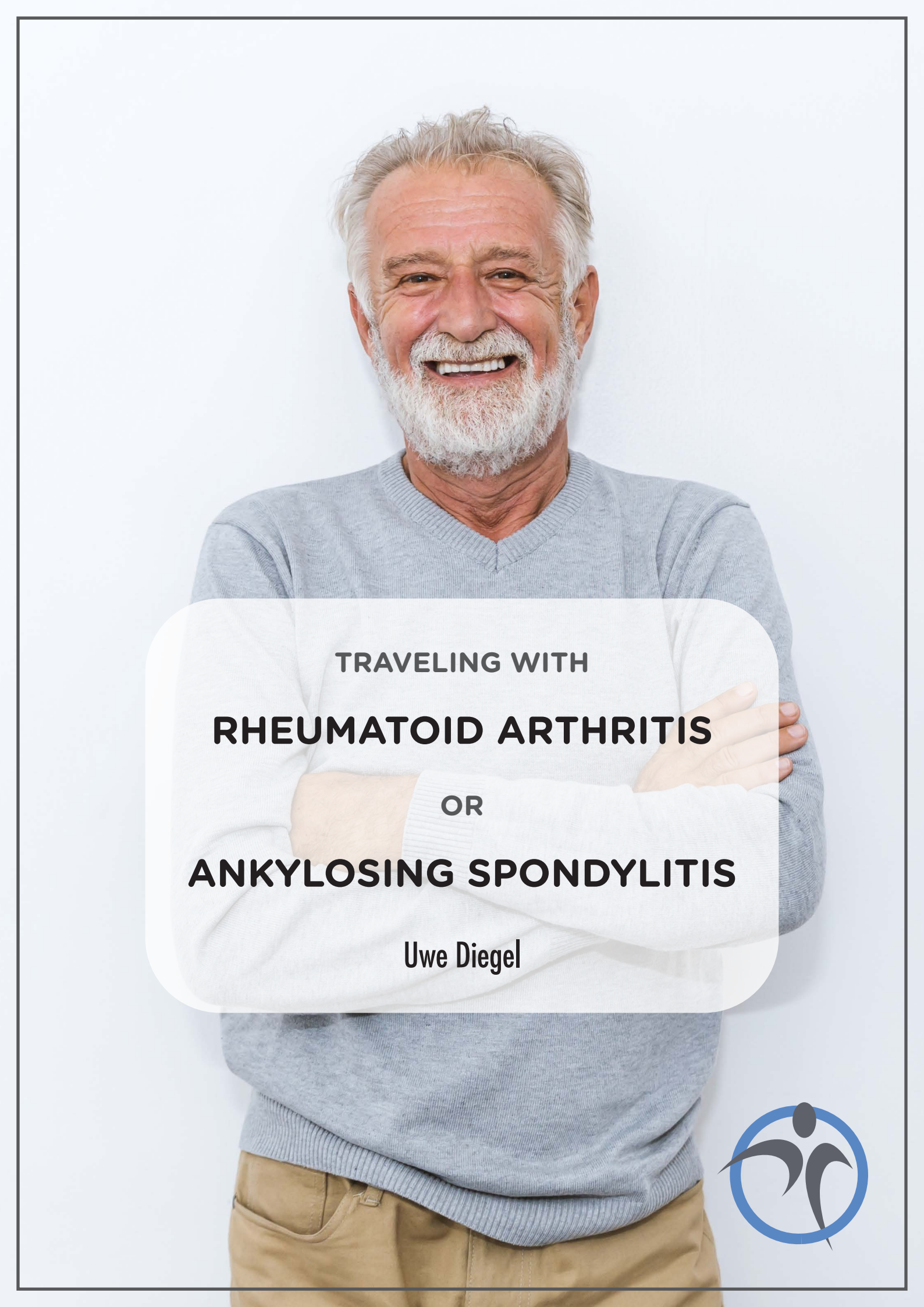


TRAVELING WITH

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

OR

ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS

Uwe Diegel

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Going on holiday soon? Travel has become increasingly accessible, and a chronic disease such as arthritis is no longer a sentence to inactivity. Here are a few tips that will make your trip easier.

Traveling with arthritis is sometimes a bit more difficult than with other pathologies, but with a bit of good cheer and preparation, you'll be able to travel just about anywhere you want.

This guide to traveling with rheumatoid arthritis or ankylosing spondylitis was developed by Uwe Diegel with a team of specialists and international medical consultants. We try to provide you with information that is factual and current. If you have any comments/suggestions/questions about arthritis, please login to our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/lifeinatimeline (don't forget to like us)) or visit us on www.lifeina.com.

ABOUT UWE DIEGEL

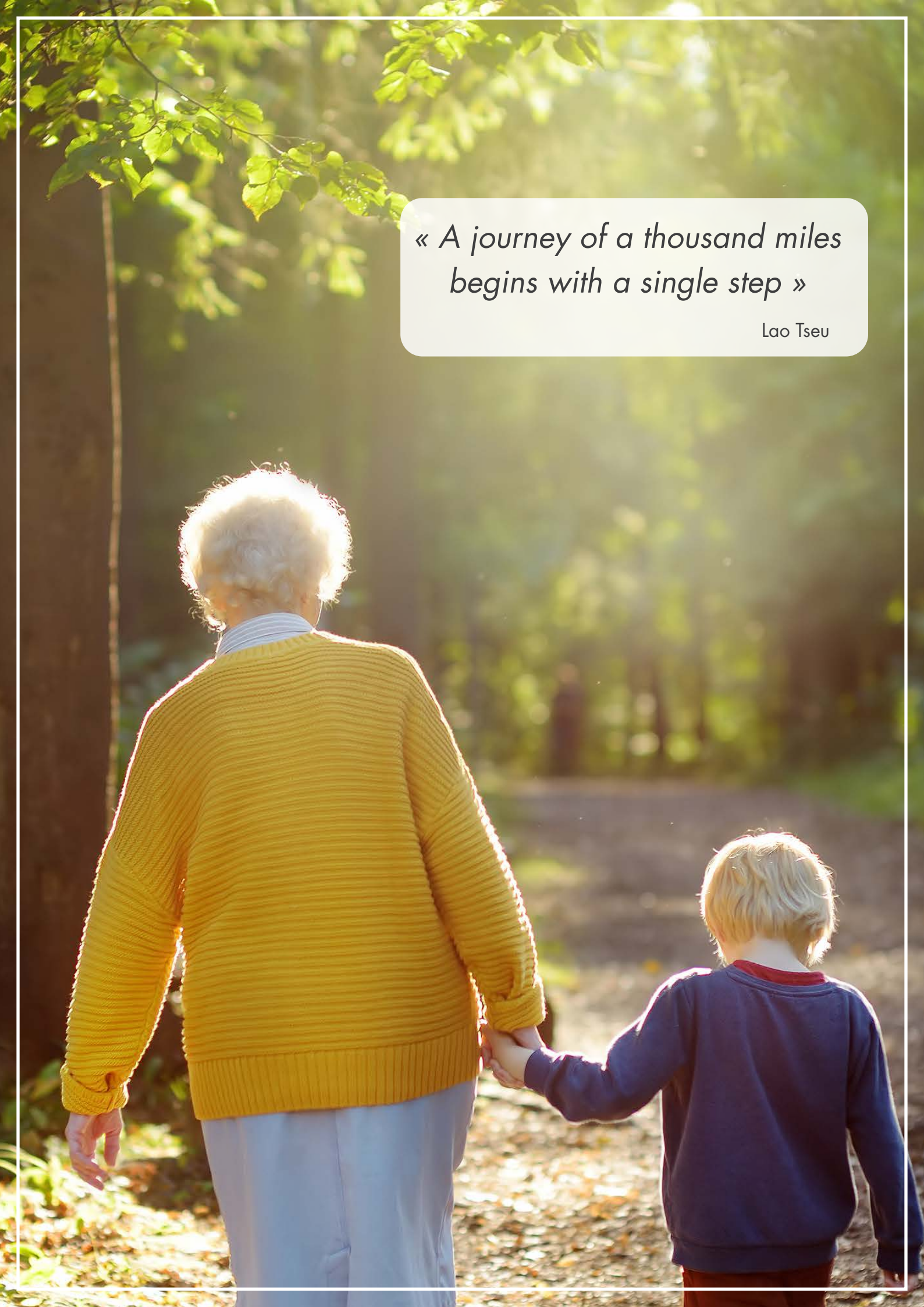
Uwe Diegel (born 1965 in New Zealand), is a specialist in various forms of medical diagnostics such as blood pressure, temperature, asthma and diabetes. He is the holder of several patents relating to temperature and blood pressure measurement. Until the age of 26 he was a concert pianist. Following an accident that partially restricted movement in in right arm, he started a new career in medical diagnostics.

Serial entrepreneur, he entered the world of medical diagnostics in 1992, quickly developing a particular interest in cardiovascular diagnostics. His intense scientific curiosity has led him not only to develop new technologies in this field, but also to interest himself to field of medical manufacturing, industrial design and problems faced by Chinese manufacturing concerns.

Uwe lives in Paris, France, where he runs HealthWorks Global and does fundamental research in blood pressure diagnostics. He is today considered to be a foremost expert in the field of blood pressure management and in the manufacturing of medical diagnostics devices.

In 2009, Uwe gets interested in connected health as a means of providing better patient management. He becomes involved in iHealth, a platform that takes all the signals of the body and translates them into a meaningful format using smartphones and tablets. Uwe serves as CEO of iHealthLabs Europe until 2016. He leaves iHealth in 2016 to launch Lifeina, a company dedicated to developing new solutions for the safe transport of medication.

Uwe Diegel has been at the forefront of international changes in healthcare technology for the last 30 years. His drive and passion for innovative technology have driven major changes in perception about healthcare. He has driven the manufacturing of medical devices to new horizons by forcing new practices in manufacturing and innovation. An internationally recognised expert in the management of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, he is continuously looking for better solutions to improve outcomes for patients. He has for the last few years spearheaded the dissemination and acceptance of connected health as a tool for providing better solutions for patients.


« A journey of a thousand miles
begins with a single step »
Lao Tseu

PREPARING YOUR TRIP !

MAKE YOUR NEXT TRIP AS PAIN-FREE AS POSSIBLE

The only rule when traveling with arthritis is that there are no rules. Whatever works for you is the right rule. The stress and tension that often come with a trip can add to physical discomfort and worsen joint symptoms. But with a little research and proper planning you can reduce pain and anxiety and have a pleasant journey.

TIMING YOUR TRIP

The first thing to consider is when to go on your trip. If you know there is a particular time when you have flares (e.g., in the heat of summer or right after the holidays), avoid planning trips during that time of the year.

Schedule your departures during non-active hours to avoid standing in long lines and being jostled in crowds. Speak with the airline or resort staff to find out when the low traffic times are. (Friday through Monday is typically the busiest time in airports.) Another advantage to traveling during off-peak hours is that there are more staff members to help you based on your specific needs.

Be sure to schedule a time to recuperate and acclimate upon your arrival. Consider adding an extra day to your itinerary so you can be sure to find some rest after arriving.

Try to avoid arriving tired, stiff, and uncomfortable. Avoid rushing; provide yourself with long breaks during your trip. For example, if you are traveling somewhere internationally and have a layover, instead of just boarding the next plane, schedule a day between the legs of your flight and spend a day or two in the layover country - not only to rest, but to enjoy your surroundings.

CHOOSING YOUR DESTINATION

Be realistic about choosing a destination. Plan ahead and be practical about what your body can do.

When deciding where to travel, there are two major things to consider: environment and climate. If you know you do not do well in heat and humidity, going to the South or to a tropical location in the height of summer may not work for you.

Consider the distance of your destination from your home. How long will travel take? How worn out will you feel once you get there? Also, how challenging will it to be for you to be far away if you need to get back to your doctor or to your home to recover? When possible, choose nonstop flights. That way you won't have to walk long distances through unfamiliar airports.

Research the availability of local transportation at your destination. For example, if you want to go sightseeing, find out if there will be taxis, Uber, bus services, or other means of transportation. Resorts where everything is on one property may be a good idea for anyone with limited mobility. Find out if there is transportation from the airport to your accommodations and if it will be readily available after you disembark the plane when you may be feeling stiff and achy.

Investigate the types of activities that will be available at your destination. Consider not only what you will be doing, but also activities for the people you are traveling with. If you need to rest at a certain time, you do not want to feel an obligation to do something you're not feeling up to in order to entertain your companions.

Do not let others convince you to go to places or do things that are not right for you. Never forget, it is YOUR holiday and YOUR pain. Life is much easier for other people...

BOOKING A HOTEL

There are three things to consider when booking a hotel: Location, location, location.

Hotel location can be one of the key factors in making your trip comfortable. If you are going to a resort and everything will be in close proximity, just consider how far the resort is from the airport or station where you'll be arriving. However, if you are staying in a city and will be sightseeing, you will want to know how close your accommodations are to local transportation and the places you would like to visit.

Be aware of hotel facilities. While having a spa, pool, or exercise room may help you loosen up your joints at the end of the day, there are some amenities that are just as important. First, find out if they have a restaurant and room service. This is key because if you don't feel up

to leaving the hotel at mealtime, ordering room service can be very helpful. Another way to be sure you have food and beverage on hand is to request an in-room refrigerator. It can also be helpful for refrigerating medication.

When making reservations, ask the hotel staff to tell you exactly where your room will be. Find out its distance from particular amenities and whether there are steps, ramps, or elevators near the room. When booking your room, request a location close to the elevator and on a lower level in case there is a blackout or some problem where you cannot take an elevator up or down. Also, if you are traveling alone or have an emergency, hotel staff can more quickly aid you if you are closer to the lobby.

Request a refrigerator. If you take medications that need to be refrigerated, an in-room refrigerator is a must. It can also come in handy if you need a quick snack to boost your energy level after a day of sightseeing.

Let the front desk know if you have any mobility issues, especially if you are traveling alone. If there is a fire or an emergency, they are required to make sure you have assistance in evacuating the hotel.

WHAT TO PACK

When packing medication, include prescriptions and over-the-counter remedies you think you might need. If you are having a flare-up and also have a headache, you want to avoid having to leave to find a drug store.

Pack a list of the medications you are taking and include a list of medication allergies. Make two copies of the list; leave one in your room and keep another with you.

Bring a brief medical history in case of emergency. It is easier to provide a physician with a list rather than explaining your medical history. Include the contact information for your physician and your rheumatologist.

Be absolutely sure to bring your insurance information. If you are purchasing travel insurance, check to see if they will cover a pre-existing condition. Most do not. It is best to contact your medical insurance company and ask them what to do in case of an emergency.

BOOKING A CAR

Before you hit the road, make sure that you contact your rental company and choose the right car service. There are rental car companies with special programs. For example, Avis Rent-A-Car's Access program offers cars with swivel seats, spinner knobs and other hand controls. Check out the Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality for additional information and resources.

GETTING THROUGH SECURITY

Canes and walkers are generally allowed, but check with the airport to make sure you are meeting the most up-to-date security requirements. Walkers and canes have to be stored during take-off and landing, but they can be returned to you during the flight so you can move around. Do not put canes or walkers in your checked luggage in case your luggage is lost. Remember to put an ID tag on your assistive devices. Canes, walkers, and medication in

Did you know? About 50 million American adults (nearly 1 in 5) suffer from some type of arthritis.

LOOK FOR SIMPLE SOLUTIONS...

insulated bags do not count as your limited carry-on pieces.

Bring a letter from your doctor about your medical history and the medications you take. This will provide backup if security questions you. Travel with a Travel Certificate. You can download a travel certificate on the Lifeina website at the end of this document.

BE A STAR, AND GET TREATED LIKE ONE...

Airlines are required to offer pre-boarding, wheelchair or motorized escorts through the airport to disabled passengers who ask. Call the airport for security screening assistance that may prevent you from standing for extended periods. Once onboard, get help stowing your overhead bag from flight staff or a fellow passenger. If you use a wheelchair, label it with your name, address, and destination airport – and ask that it be loaded "last on/first off." If you use a cane, you can take it on board with you. You'll need to stow it at take-off and landing, but you can use it during the flight.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SUITCASE

Select a bag on wheels with a handle that will lock in the upright position. Choose a suitcase with 4 wheels that is easy to push around. Then push the bag instead of pulling it to avoid strain on your shoulders. Nowadays, even small bags like backpacks and computer bags are equipped with wheels and can help you avoid stress on your joints.

It is normal for things to be a bit harder for you when standing in line at the airport. Do not feel that you are holding people up. It is perfectly normal. You are sick...

Do not lift your bags when you are checking them, going through security, or putting them in the overhead bins. If you need help getting your bag through security, let someone from the airline know in advance that you are going to need assistance and they will be happy to help you.

Pack light. Your bags will be easier to carry. If you find that you must lift your suitcase – into your car trunk or the overhead bin on a plane, for example – find someone who can help.

Clean out any handbags down to necessary items only to lighten your load. If you are carrying extra items such as cameras or snacks for the day, consider a sling bag that wraps across your body to reduce strain on your back and shoulder. The best bet is to lighten your load and use a fanny pack to carry items you must have.

BRING A FRIEND... OR THE NEXT BEST THING

Ideally, you want to travel with a friend who can help you through all those little irritating situations and help you carry your luggage. However, if this is not possible don't be embarrassed about taking weird contraptions to help you get through; my rule is: Whatever works for you is best. So, if you need to use a cane (there are some funky new folding models), a walker, a travel chair with a built in whoopy-cushion, beaded seat cover, folding reacher or something as simple as an extra pillow for back support, just do it...

Bring an inflatable pillow with you on the plane to cushion your seat or to act as a back or neck support. Blow up pillows take up very little room and allow you to adjust the level of support on long flights.

Take all the little daily comforts you can think of... Inflatable pillows, folding canes, anything that in your opinion makes your life easier.

STAY COOL AND WARM

Hot and cold therapies are great for pain and stiffness. Stock up on heat wraps and pads, portable ice packs and topical cream. Choose hotels with heated pools, hot tubs and saunas.

BE MEDICATION READY

If you are travelling abroad and taking your anti TNF therapy with you it's important to make plans to keep it at the correct temperature during the journey and at your destination. At the end of this guide is a section of useful links for the transport of your medication. Always keep your medication with you and not in checked bags. If your bag is lost or delayed it might ruin your holiday if you don't have your medication. Put a medication reminder on your phone to remind you when to take your medication. Check ahead to find the closest pharmacy to where you're staying. You may even want to ask your doctor for an extra written prescription to take with you as a backup.

LEARN A COUPLE OF WORDS IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

It may be worthwhile finding out what ankylosing spondylitis, rheumatoid arthritis or any other medical conditions you have are called in the country you are travelling to in case there's an occasion (such as a medical emergency) where you need to let people know what you have.

BE ON THE MOVE

Sitting still for long periods can cause stiffness. Plan road trips with time for rest stops. Move

Just imagine if you were abducted by aliens who didn't know anything about arthritis... Learn a few words in the local language.

around on a plane or train when it's safe. Too unsafe or too achy to stand up? Try simple stretches while seated, or other exercises like isometrics, which involve flexing and holding muscles for five to six seconds. When you fly, take a train, or ride a bus, try to get an aisle seat so you can stretch and get up and walk.

ASSISTANCE

Always tell your airline, travel agent or tour operator when you book if you are going to need assistance when you travel.

CODEINE-BASED MEDICATIONS

Some prescription medications, including codeine-based medications, are illegal in some other countries. Check with the embassy or consulate of the countries you are travelling to and find out if any of your medications are illegal there.

TRAVEL CERTIFICATE

Always travel with a Medical Travel Certificate if you are taking medication with you.

This completely free document is completely meaningless yet essential. It is a document that states that you are affected with a chronic disease and that you are treated with medication that is injected and that you are allowed to carry injection needles and drugs and that these drugs must be kept between 2 and 8°C during travel. However, having it with you when you go through customs makes everything much easier. You can download it for free on the Lifeina website.

COPIES OF YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS

Carrying copies of your prescriptions in your hand luggage will be important if you are stopped and questioned about the drugs you are carrying. Also leave a copy of your prescriptions at home with a friend or family member. If you lose your medications or are gone longer than expected, have them send you your prescription.

EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD (EHIC)

If you are travelling to Europe, this card will entitle you to free or low cost healthcare in most countries. You can apply for one here: https://assure.ameli.fr/

CHOOSE MEALS CAREFULLY

Most airport and rest stop food choices are high-fat, high-calorie processed foods that promote inflammation. Carry healthy snacks,

Learn some exercises that can improve strength, ease pain, and increase your range of motion if you have arthritis that affects your hands.

CERTIFICAT MEDICAL *MEDICAL CERTIFICATE*

Docteur/*Doctor* _____

Adresse/*Address* _____

Tel _____

Je soussigné, Docteur _____

I, the undersigned, Doctor

Certifie que
(Prénom et Nom) _____

Certify that
(First name and Name) Passport No _____

souffre d'une pathologie chronique nécessitant la prise du traitement suivant administré en injections sous-cutanées :

is affected with a chronic disease and is treated with the following medication, managed by subcutaneous injections:

nom commercial/DCI _____

Ce traitement nécessite qu'il/elle puisse garder dans la cabine de l'avion le produit et les seringues nécessaires aux injections d'une part ; et d'autre part que ce produit puisse être maintenu à une température comprise entre +2° C et +8° C pendant la durée de son voyage.

This treatment requires that he/she be allowed to carry the drug and the needles used for the injections in the cabin of the plane. The drug must be maintained at a temperature between +2° C and +8° C during the period of travel.

Certificat médical établi à :
Medical certificate made in : _____

Date : _____

Signature :

medactiv
transforming lives

NB: En aucun cas son traitement ne peut être interrompu.
NB:Treatment must never be stopped.

WWW.MEDACTIV.CA

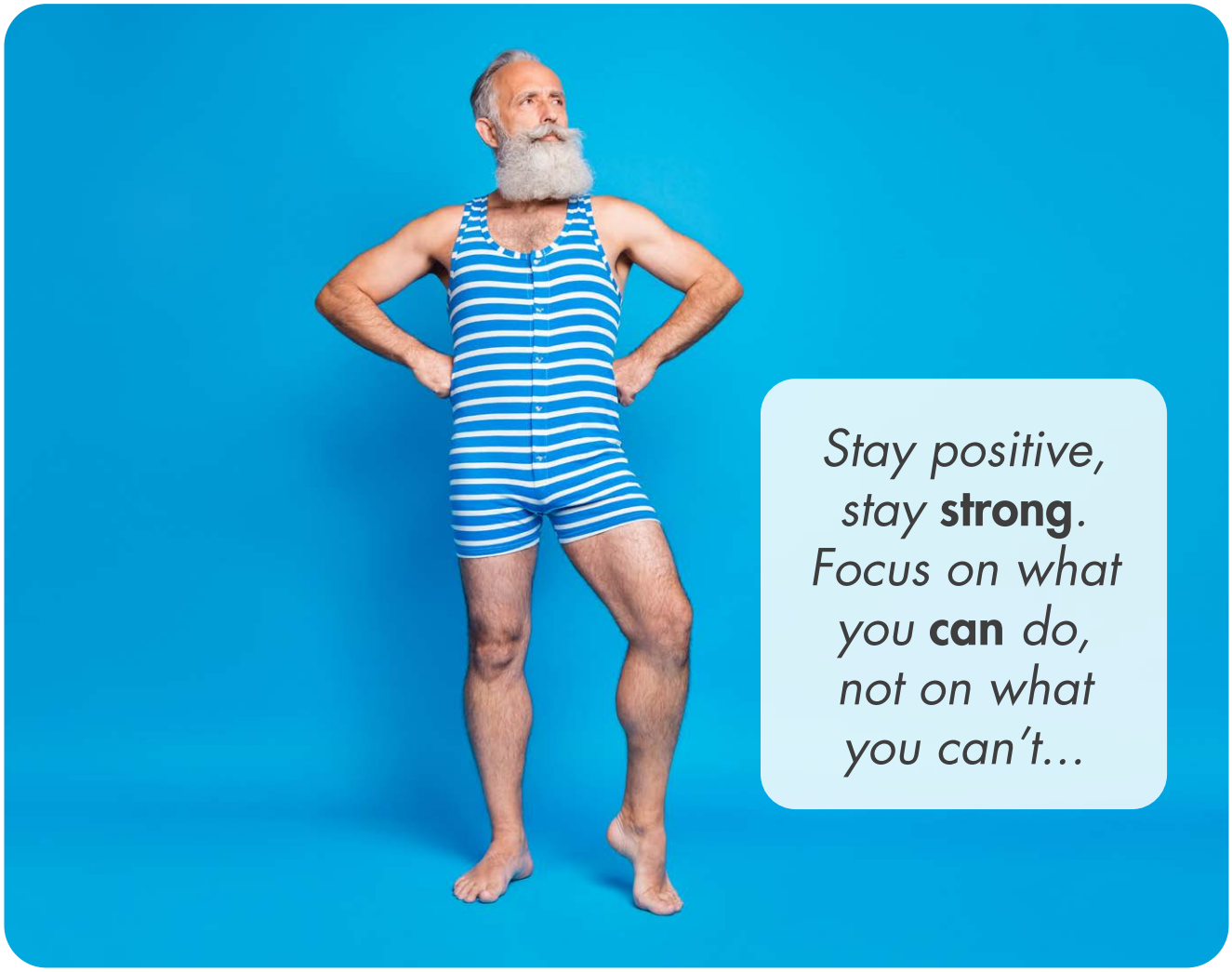
TAKE IT EASY !

drink plenty of water and go easy on alcohol and caffeine that can aggravate inflammation. Need a break from just water? Try natural cherry juice that can help reduce inflammation – but avoid options with added sugar.

FOOD POISONING

Anti TNF therapy and some other medications may make you more susceptible to food-borne infections, which can result in food poisoning and other serious illnesses. Food to avoid include:

- salads, such as lettuce
- uncooked fruits and vegetables, unless they have been washed in safe water and peeled by you
- fresh or cooked food that has been allowed to stand at room temperature in warm environments, or that has been exposed to flies, such as in an open buffet
- unpasteurised milk, cheese, ice cream and other dairy products
- raw or undercooked shellfish or seafood
- food from street traders, unless it is has been recently prepared and is served hot on clean crockery



INFECTIONS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

These can be more severe in people who are on anti TNF therapy or other medications that affect the immune system. Therefore, you may need urgent assessment and treatment, if you have come into contact with someone who has one of these infections. Remember different parts of the world have more risk of certain infectious diseases than others.

MEDICATION

Make sure you have sufficient medication to cover the entire period you will be away. It may be an idea to take double the amount you'll need for your trip and put one set in your hand luggage and the other in the luggage of your travel companion. This way you'll have a backup if you were to lose some of your drugs during your trip. Always carry your medication in a correctly labelled container as issued by your pharmacist.

TRANSPORTING YOUR MEDICINES

MedActiv and Lifeina have developed a range of solutions to keep your arthritis medicines at the right temperature at all times. These solutions are divided in two major technologies, which are cooler bags and mini fridges.

ICOOL

The iCool bags use a new generation of chemical ice packs that do not sweat and have a longer thawing point than traditional ice packs. The iCool bags can keep medication between 2 and 8°C for up to 36 hours, depending on the model chosen. They also include separate compartments for transporting your accessories. Available under both the MedActiv (iCool) and the Lifeina (LifeinaBag) brands, these bags are the perfect companion for longer trips.

Of singular elegance, the LifeinaBag transport bags are discrete and offer a protection of 24 hours between 2 and 8°C.

LIFEINABOX

LifeinaBox is the world's smallest intelligent fridge for the safe transport of fragile medications. Connected to an application that monitors the temperature of your medication, and with a built-in 6-hour battery, LifeinaBox is truly the best possible example of Human Centred Design.

SHARPS BOXES

In addition to your anti TNF medication you will require a travel size sharps box to throw away used needles or syringes (if you are using them). Most pharmacies will give these to you for free, so discuss it with your local pharmacy.

LifeinaBox is the smallest smart fridge in the world and is an ideal solution for the secure transport of madication. Connected to an application, it keeps medicines between 2 and 8 ° C and gives you the freedom to travel anywhere, anytime, with your medication at the right temperature.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Make sure you have comprehensive travel insurance to cover your trip and carry copies of your insurance documents with you in case of an emergency.

VACCINATIONS

If you need vaccinations for the country or countries you are planning to visit, you'll need to remember to go for them in time to develop immunity to the diseases the vaccinations are for. If you are on anti TNF therapy do be careful about which vaccinations you have, as certain ones are not recommended for people on anti TNF therapy.

USEFUL HINTS

For environmental reasons, more and more hotels are using coded cards to open the doors of their rooms and these cards are also often used as a switch to turn on and off the electricity in the room. This means that when you leave your hotel room, you take your card with you and turn off all the electricity in your room (including the little bar fridge where you keep your medications cool). To work around this problem, just use any old plastic card (a gym membership card, business card, etc.) to switch on the power in your room. Leave it permanently in the room so that the electricity stays on.

If you need to freeze the ice packs of your travel bag before leaving the hotel, the refrigerators in the hotel rooms are generally not of a very good quality and will not completely freeze your ice packs. So instead of using the bar fridge in your room, go down to the hotel bar and ask the helpful staff to freeze them for you. After all, they always need ice in bars for gin tonics and therefore have high quality freezers.

USEFUL SITES

European Health Insurance Card
Google translate
MedActiv (transport solutions for medication)
Lifeina (the world's smallest fridge for transporting medication)

medactiv
transforming lives

Live your life
medactiv
transforming lives

BON VOYAGE !

medactiv
transforming lives