

AXIAL SPONDYLOARTHRITIS **WELLNESS BOOK**

For Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) and Non-radiographic Axial Spondyloarthritis (nr-axSpA)





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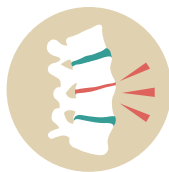
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THIS IS ALL ABOUT YOU & YOUR CONDITION

You'll find resources that can help you live better with AS and nr-axSpA.

Living with axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA), which includes ankylosing spondylitis (AS) and non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis (nr-axSpA), can be difficult at times, so it's important to work with a rheumatologist who is familiar with these conditions to create a treatment plan that works for you. At the same time, it helps to stay proactive about your own wellness.

To help you take better control of your AS or nr-axSpA and overall well-being, this book includes resources like:

- Anti-inflammatory recipes
- Exercises and stretches
- Advice on working with your rheumatologist
- Weekly symptom trackers

And remember that you can always visit [FaceYourBackPain.com](https://www.FaceYourBackPain.com) if you need even more resources and info.



“

If you've just been diagnosed, look for the opportunities, look for ways to build resilience and positivity. It can either drag you down or build your outlook on life.

”

Noel, Real AS patient

Understanding axSpA

Axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA) is an inflammatory disease of the spine that primarily causes back pain. Inflammation from axSpA also causes fatigue, pain in other areas of the body, stiffness, and in some cases, structural damage.

Other signs of axSpA include:

- Neck pain
- Joint pain
- Eye redness and swelling (uveitis)
- Finger swelling (dactylitis)
- Symptoms coming on gradually and lasting more than 3 months
- Symptoms appearing before age 45

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it may be a good idea to talk to your doctor.

Ankylosing spondylitis (AS) and **non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis (nr-axSpA)** are types of axSpA. They are related and fall under axSpA:



With AS, structural damage to the spinal joints is visible on an X-ray. Over time and in advanced cases, bones in the spine can fuse together.



With nr-axSpA, there is no clear evidence of inflammation on an X-ray. Diagnosis is difficult and doctors may use an MRI to see inflammation in the sacroiliac joints of the pelvis. For some people, nr-axSpA progresses to AS. For others, it does not.

Here's some information about how AS and nr-axSpA are similar and how they are different:

Similarities:

- Both show similar age of onset and prevalence of the genetic marker HLA-B27.
- Both may have related conditions, like arthritis in the arms and legs, psoriasis, and inflammatory bowel disease.
- Both may show a similar degree of disease activity, like fatigue, spinal pain, joint pain and/or swelling, areas of tenderness due to inflammation of tendons and ligaments, and morning stiffness.

Differences:

- People with AS can have more limited mobility and function.
- Inflammation in nr-axSpA does not show up on an X-ray, so it may be difficult to diagnose. That's why it's important to make sure you see a rheumatologist who is familiar with both conditions.
- Currently, more men are diagnosed with AS, and more women are diagnosed with nr-axSpA, but numbers may be closer to each other than originally thought.



ANTI-INFLAMMATORY RECIPES CREATED WITH AXIAL SPONDYLOARTHRITIS (AXSPA) IN MIND

AS and nr-axSpA wellness starts with you.

When it comes to controlling the inflammation caused by axSpA, it is best to partner with your rheumatologist to find a treatment that works for you. This may include how you approach your diet and exercise routine. Before making lifestyle changes, check with your rheumatologist or doctor to make sure it's right for you.

Enjoying anti-inflammatory foods (like fruits, vegetables, fish, healthy fats, and legumes) can reduce inflammation—helping your body fight AS and nr-axSpA. In these recipes, you'll find a variety of anti-inflammatory ingredients because they were designed with those who have axSpA in mind.



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DAIRY-FREE CHIA SEED & COCOA BREAKFAST PUDDING

SERVINGS 4 | ACTIVE TIME 3 MINS | TOTAL TIME 10 MINS

This dairy-free breakfast pudding is packed with protein. Bonus, this creamy pudding is so delicious it can double as dessert!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 cups unsweetened almond milk (or any non-dairy milk of choice)
- 4 oz silken tofu
- 1/2 tsp vanilla or almond extract (optional to taste)
- 2 tbsp natural cocoa
- 1/4 cup chia seeds
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts or sliced almonds
- 1 cup blueberries

STEP 1:

In a blender, add almond milk, tofu, extract (optional), and cocoa and blend until smooth.

STEP 2:

In bowl, combine blended mixture and chia seeds and let sit for about 10-15 minutes. Fold in blueberries and nuts.

STEP 3:

Mixture can be left in bowl or divided into 4 smaller containers. Cover with lid, tinfoil, or plastic wrap.

STEP 4:

Refrigerate overnight. In the morning, add desired toppings and enjoy!



BAKED SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH CUMIN & CAYENNE

SERVINGS 5 | ACTIVE TIME 10 MINS | TOTAL TIME 35 MINS

Using cayenne, this recipe has plenty of flavor and anti-inflammatory benefits.

INGREDIENTS:

10 large eggs

1/2 cup almond milk, unsweetened

1/2-1 tsp cumin powder

1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

Optional add-ins:

Spinach, peppers, onions, mushrooms

STEP 1:

Preheat oven to 350° F.

STEP 2:

Spray olive oil onto glass 9x13-inch baking dish.

STEP 3:

In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, almond milk, and spices until well blended (stir in any add-ons, if using any).

STEP 4:

Pour egg mixture into baking dish.



STEP 5:

Bake uncovered for 10 minutes, then stir and bake an additional 10-15 minutes (until top begins to brown).

STEP 6:

Serve fresh out of the oven with toasted sprouted grain bread or baked sweet potato wedges.

BANANA & CINNAMON OVERNIGHT OATS

SERVINGS 1 | ACTIVE TIME 5 MINS | TOTAL TIME 6 HOURS OR OVERNIGHT

Make your mornings a little easier by prepping your breakfast the night before with this recipe.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup oat milk or preferred dairy alternative
- 3 tbsp Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 medium banana, sliced

STEP 1:

In a cereal bowl or quart-sized container, combine rolled oats with oat milk, Greek yogurt, cinnamon, and vanilla extract.

STEP 2:

Add sliced banana on top of oat mixture.



STEP 3:

Seal container with lid, plastic wrap, or aluminum foil.

STEP 4:

The next morning, enjoy cold or heat your bowl in the microwave for 30-45 seconds.

5-SPICE QUINOA CHILI

SERVINGS 8 | ACTIVE TIME 10 MINS | TOTAL TIME 6-8 HOURS

This recipe is loaded with anti-inflammatory ingredients like garlic and beans. And you can put the prepped servings into microwavable containers for lunch or dinner on the go.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 can (32 oz) diced tomatoes
- 1 can (15 oz) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup frozen corn, thawed
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tsp onion powder
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
- 2-3 tsp chili powder



STEP 1:

Add all ingredients into a 6-quart slow cooker.

STEP 2:

Cook for 6-8 hours on low.

STEP 3:

Remove the chicken from the slow cooker and shred.

STEP 4:

Add the shredded chicken back into the slow cooker and stir until mixed thoroughly. Turn off slow cooker and serve.

LEMON & GARLIC SHEET PAN SALMON

SERVINGS 4 | ACTIVE TIME 15 MINS | TOTAL TIME 40 MINS

This sheet pan recipe is a delicious combo of salmon, broccoli, and tomatoes. With under 40 minutes of cooking time, it's a simple meal to prep, cook, and clean without sacrificing flavor.

INGREDIENTS:

For the salmon

- 4 (6 oz) salmon fillets with the skin on
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 4 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large lemon (zest and juice separated)
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper

For the vegetables

- 1 lb fresh or frozen broccoli chopped
- 2 pints cherry tomatoes
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper

STEP 1:

Preheat oven to 400° F.

STEP 2:

Line baking sheet with aluminum foil and drizzle small amount of olive oil on foil. Arrange salmon fillets in the center of the sheet.

STEP 3:

In a small bowl, whisk salmon ingredients of 1/4 cup olive oil, garlic, lemon zest, parsley, and black pepper. Pour mixture over salmon fillets.

STEP 4:

Place tomatoes and chopped broccoli in large bowl. Drizzle 1 tablespoon of olive oil over vegetables and sprinkle with kosher salt and black pepper. Toss to coat evenly and arrange around the salmon.

STEP 5:

Drizzle lemon juice over salmon and vegetables.

STEP 6:

Place sheet pan in center of oven and cook about 16-20 minutes until fish flakes easily with a fork.

FETTUCCINE WITH SWISS CHARD, GARBANZO BEANS, & BALSAMIC GLAZE

SERVINGS 4 | ACTIVE TIME 15 MINS | TOTAL TIME 40 MINS

The Swiss chard, tomatoes, and olive oil all can help reduce inflammation without leaving behind taste.

INGREDIENTS:

For the Balsamic-glazed Garbanzo Beans

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 can (15 oz) garbanzo beans, rinsed
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder

For the Swiss Chard and Tomato Fettuccine

- 1 lb fettuccine (can substitute with gluten-free pasta)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 bunch Swiss chard sliced into 1/2-inch-thick ribbons (chiffonade)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2/3 cup vegetable broth
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 can (15 oz) diced tomatoes
- 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

STEP 1:

Cook pasta according to package directions.

STEP 2:

In a pan, warm up olive oil over medium heat and sauté garbanzo beans for 2-3 minutes or until they start to sizzle.

STEP 3:

Add balsamic vinegar to the pan and gently stir until most of the liquid evaporates (2-3 minutes). Sprinkle in the garlic powder and remove from heat. Set aside for topping.

STEP 4:

In a large stock pot, add olive oil over medium heat. Add Swiss chard and stir until coated with oil and cook down for about 3 minutes.

STEP 5:

Add minced garlic, broth, and salt, then cook for another 2-3 minutes. Add can of diced tomatoes, juice and all, and red pepper flakes. Cook until the chard is tender (another 3-5 minutes).

STEP 6:

Fold in the cooked pasta and heat for another minute. Turn off heat and add in balsamic vinegar. Serve right away with garbanzo beans on top of each serving.

AVOCADO TOAST 4 WAYS

SERVINGS 1 | ACTIVE TIME 5 MINS | TOTAL TIME 5 MINS

These toast recipes express the versatility of avocados by switching up the toppings to deliver 3 flavorful combinations.

#1: CLASSIC AVOCADO TOAST

Ingredients

- 1 slice whole grain bread or other base
- 1/2 avocado, ripe
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1/8 tsp sea salt

Step 1:

Cut avocado in half, remove the pit, scoop the flesh into a bowl and mash with a fork. If desired, add sea salt for enhanced flavor.

Step 2:

Toast slice of bread until golden and crispy.

Step 3:

Spread toast with mashed avocado. Enjoy.

#2: SWEET TOPPINGS - YOGURT & HONEY

Classic avocado toast ingredients

- 2 tbsp plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp almond butter
- 1/2 tsp honey
- pinch cinnamon

Added Direction from Classic:

Top classic avocado toast with plain Greek yogurt. Drizzle almond butter and honey on top of yogurt. Sprinkle with cinnamon and serve.

#3: SAVORY TOPPINGS - MEDITERRANEAN

Classic avocado toast ingredients

- 3 slices cucumber
- 1 tbsp feta cheese
- 3 cherry tomatoes
- 1 tbsp olive tapenade (or 3 kalamata olives)

Added Direction from Classic:

Top classic avocado toast with cucumber slices, feta cheese, cherry tomatoes, and olive tapenade. Drizzle with olive oil (or balsamic vinaigrette) and serve.

#4: SPICY TOPPINGS - BUFFALO

Classic avocado toast ingredients

- 1 tbsp crumbled blue cheese
- 2 tsp buffalo sauce or Sriracha
- pinch black pepper

Added Direction from Classic:

Top classic avocado toast with crumbled blue cheese and drizzle with buffalo sauce or Sriracha sauce. Sprinkle a pinch of black pepper on top and serve.

TUSCAN CANNELLINI BEAN SALAD

SERVINGS 6 | ACTIVE TIME 10 MINS | TOTAL TIME 10 MINS

This dish can be served warm or chilled and is loaded with flavor and fiber. The onion, garlic, and sun-dried tomatoes make this Tuscan-themed side a complement to any meal.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cans (15 oz) cannellini beans
(look for low sodium or no salt added)
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes,
loosely chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh basil (or 2 tablespoons
dried basil)

*Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper,
to taste*

STEP 1:

Rinse and drain the beans.

STEP 2:

In medium-sized mixing bowl, combine and mix all ingredients and serve warm or chilled.



TURMERIC GARLIC-ROASTED CAULIFLOWER

SERVINGS 4 | ACTIVE TIME 10 MINS | TOTAL TIME 30 MINS

This combination of turmeric and garlic livens up the cauliflower for a simple serving of vegetables that can go with many meals.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 3/4 tsp sea salt or Himalayan salt
- 3/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley (optional)
- 1 large cauliflower, cut into florets (or 3-4 cups pre-cut florets)

STEP 1:

Preheat oven to 425° F and line a baking sheet with aluminum foil.

STEP 2:

In a medium mixing bowl, combine garlic, salt, turmeric, black pepper, olive oil, and parsley (if using).



STEP 3:

Add in cauliflower florets and mix so that all are covered in seasoning.

STEP 4:

Pour mixture onto lined baking sheet and cook for 15-20 minutes in oven.

SUNSHINE LEMON BARS

SERVINGS 12 | ACTIVE TIME 10 MINS | TOTAL TIME 3 HOURS

Naturally gluten- and dairy-free, this dessert is worth the wait between the prep and serve time. Have a craving that can't wait? Get a frozen, gluten-free pie crust for your lemon mixture.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose rice flour or almond flour cake mix
- 3 eggs
- 2 tbsp honey or agave nectar
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 1 lemon to zest (optional)
- 6 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp almond extract (optional)
- 1/2 cup coconut flakes

STEP 1:

Preheat oven to 350° F and oil an 8-inch baking pan.

STEP 2:

Mix together 2 tablespoons oil, 1 tablespoon honey or agave nectar, 1 tablespoon lemon zest (optional), vanilla extract, and almond extract (optional).

STEP 3:

Fold wet mixture into gluten-free all-purpose flour.

STEP 4:

Press mixture into baking pan in an even layer.

STEP 5:

Put in oven and bake about 15 minutes until golden.

STEP 6:

While pie crust is baking, combine remaining oil, 1 tablespoon honey or agave nectar, eggs, lemon juice, and 1 tablespoon lemon zest (optional). Whisk together or blend until smooth.

STEP 7:

Pour lemon mixture over freshly baked crust and bake together for about 15 minutes until the top is golden.

STEP 8:

Sprinkle coconut flakes on top and let sit at room temperature for 1 hour. Cover the bars with a lid or plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2 hours until fully chilled.

CHOCOLATE CHERRY OAT BARS

SERVINGS 12 | ACTIVE TIME 15 MINS | TOTAL TIME 40 MINS

The walnuts, dried cherries, and dark chocolate chips are rich in antioxidants, making this a nutritionally sweet treat.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup dried, unsweetened tart cherries
- 2 cups old-fashioned oats
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/4 cup flaxseed meal
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 cup dark chocolate chips

Optional: dried tart cherries and dark chocolate chips to sprinkle on top

STEP 1:

Preheat oven to 350° F and line a 9x13-inch baking sheet with parchment paper.

STEP 2:

In a medium-sized mixing bowl, mix together dried tart cherries, old-fashioned oats, chopped walnuts, flaxseed meal, and salt. Set aside.

STEP 3:

In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, honey, cocoa powder, and vanilla until smooth. Add the oats mixture to the bowl and stir until evenly coated with the chocolate-honey mixture.

STEP 4:

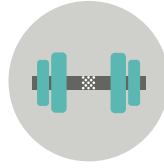
Add dark chocolate chips to the mixture and stir again.

STEP 5:

Pour mixture into prepared baking dish and spread out in an even layer. Sprinkle additional tart cherries and chocolate chips on top (optional).

STEP 6:

Place on center rack and bake for 20-25 minutes. Let bars cool completely before slicing.



BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE WITH EXERCISES FOR AS & NR-AXSPA

Here are a few stretches and exercises you can include throughout your day to help keep you flexible.

To help avoid injury:

- Wear comfortable clothing that won't constrict movement
- Do not force your body into painful positions
- Move into stretches slowly and avoid bouncing (which can cause muscle strain)

Make sure to talk to your rheumatologist or doctor before starting an exercise program.

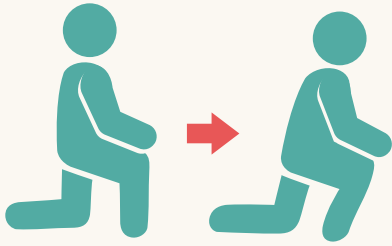


“

The best thing for me is exercising. Being active helps me manage the pain and stress of having AS.

”

Alex, Real AS patient



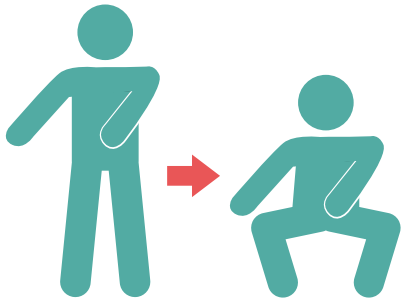
**One to try in the morning:
kneeling lunge stretch.**

Kneeling lunge stretches can help relieve back pain in the morning and loosen you up for the rest of your day.



Use a chair for body rotations.

Try using a chair to keep you steady while you practice a simple body rotation by turning to the left and right.



Try squats to build strength.

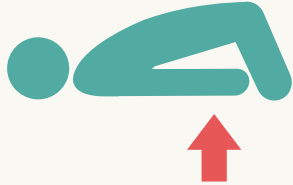
With your feet about hip distance apart, keep the weight in your heels, tighten your core muscles, send your hips back so that your knees stay apart and behind your toes as your arms reach forward. Then stand up and repeat.



Spare time?

Try a bending side stretch.

Try this bending side stretch on your left and right when you have a few spare minutes.



Do a bridge to help your body.

Lie flat on your back and use carpet or a mat to help you feel more comfortable, if needed. Push your hips up to straighten your back to your knees. Hold and rest back down to help you stretch and improve strength.



For anytime: upward arm/forward fold stretch.

Lift your arms up and bend at the hips while reaching down to the ground.



Take a seat and do some quad training.

Sit on the edge of a stable chair to straighten and lift one leg as your other leg is bent and planted firmly on the ground. Remember to do repetitions on both legs.



Child's pose for an evening stretch.

This stretch is ideal before you go to bed. Tuck your chin in and sit as far back toward your heels as you comfortably can. Hold for at least 5 seconds before releasing.



YOU & YOUR RHEUMATOLOGIST ARE IN CHARGE

Strengthen your partnership to better treat your AS or nr-axSpA.

Having the right rheumatologist—one who understands you and your condition, and with whom you can speak openly—is crucial. They need to understand how ankylosing spondylitis or non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis truly affects you. Sharing details and having a strong partnership can help you and your doctor get you on a treatment plan that works for you.

Check in with yourself before every appointment and **print out and answer the questions on the following pages** before sharing them with your rheumatologist. It will help them understand how well your AS or nr-axSpA is being managed and whether your treatment plan is meeting your goals.



“

This is something that's going to affect you forever. And you need to have that bond with your rheumatologist.

”

Karen, Real AS patient

Questions that can open up your discussion.

Print and fill out before each rheumatologist appointment.



Which parts of your life are affected by your AS or nr-axSpA symptoms?

Ankylosing spondylitis and non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis can have an impact on many areas of your life. Think about how your symptoms may get in the way of doing the things you want to do. Has your AS or nr-axSpA interfered with activities like going on walks, playing with kids and pets, or even dancing? Write it down and let your rheumatologist know.



What are your personal goals for your AS or nr-axSpA treatment?

Along with clinical goals—like reducing back pain and stiffness—setting personal goals for your ankylosing spondylitis or non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis treatment can help you and your rheumatologist develop a more successful plan. Personal goals can include socializing, doing yoga, or traveling without worrying about symptoms.



Are you satisfied with your current AS or nr-axSpA treatment plan?

If you have symptoms that are keeping you from achieving your goals, tell your rheumatologist to see if a change in treatment could be right for you.



HELPING YOU TRACK YOUR AS & NR-AXSPA SYMPTOMS

Use this tracker to provide as much detail about your symptoms as you can. This will help you and your rheumatologist get a better understanding about how your AS or nr-axSpA impacts you over time—and it gives them a more detailed view into what you're experiencing to help evaluate how well your treatment plan is working.

[Print and fill out the symptom tracker on the next page](#) about once a week and discuss with your rheumatologist at your next appointment.



“

It felt good to be able
to tell people,
‘This is what’s going on for me,
this is what I have.’

”

Sarah, Real AS patient

SYMPTOM TRACKER

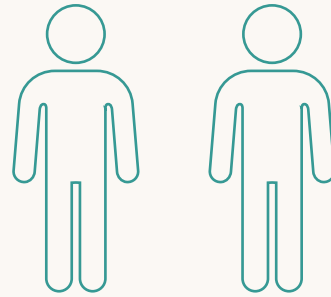
WEEK OF / /

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms I've felt this week are:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Back pain | <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic diarrhea or other GI symptoms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neck pain | <input type="checkbox"/> Eye redness or pain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hip pain | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint swelling | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fever | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heel pain | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Morning stiffness | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elbow pain | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Achilles pain | _____ |

Mark areas of pain and stiffness:



FRONT

BACK

Overall, I feel that the severity of my symptoms are:



ACTIVITIES

I've had difficulty with everyday activities, like:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climbing stairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Sitting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifting objects | <input type="checkbox"/> Exercising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bending at the waist | <input type="checkbox"/> Socializing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looking over shoulder | <input type="checkbox"/> Working |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Being active all day (at home or work) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standing or getting up | |

QUESTIONS

Questions for my rheumatologist:
