# Running Errands

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## Osteoarthritis and Errands

Many people take getting into their cars to go on an errand for granted; they don't even think about it. However, there are those of you that cringe to think about going out to shop. You cannot enjoy going to see friends or going for a drive because the movement causes more pain than it is worth.

Some problems people have when suffering from OA is the loss of range of motion in their extremities, joint stiffness, fatigue with activity, and of course, pain. Simple things like steering or pushing a grocery cart can bring on much pain and discomfort.

However, there are some things to do that may make errands more manageable.

**Driving**

- Have your car modified to relieve your OA. For example, have a seatbelt mechanism that puts it on you automatically so you don't need to hurt your finger joints putting it on or adding pain to your shoulder and neck by reaching for it.
- Keyless entry and ignition can be a godsend if you have arthritis of the fingers.
- Automatic transmission should be used to reduce movement of the right arm and prevent pain in the shoulder, hands, and wrists.

**Bending**

- Avoid bending from the back. Anytime you bend at the spine, it puts pressure on the discs of the lower back. If you have OA, this will cause extreme pain.
- Bend properly, using your hips and knees to lower yourself toward the floor, all the while maintaining a straight back. If you cannot do this due to knee OA, have someone pick up the object for you, like a store clerk.
- Lift things the correct way. You will do the same maneuver here by lowering yourself by bending at the knees and keeping your back straight.

**Walking**

- Use a scooter. Many department stores offer scooters to do your shopping. Your back and knees will be forever grateful to you.
- Sit down as needed. If you need a break from shopping, find a bench at the front of the store.

- Do not do all of your shopping at once. It can be very tiresome to do all of your shopping in one day. Get what you need and either have someone else pick up the rest or you can have another shopping trip on a future date.

- Wear good shoes. Having a pair of shoes that are comfortable will make your errand running much easier to do. Spend a bit more on the better brand; they last longer and support your feet much better.

**Breaks**

- Listen to your body. If you need to take a break, do it. It is much better than aggravating your OA and paying for it later.
- You don’t have to do it all. Delegate if you have family. If you don’t, then hire a professional errand service to do much of your shopping, bill paying, etc. If you are out and about doing your errands, take your time.