

## **GAINING GRIP STRENGTH**

**If you have arthritis, you may have trouble picking up things with your hands or keeping a grip on them. Some of the exercises in the next section of this book will help strengthen your hand muscles. If you're concerned about grip strength, you may also want to add a grip exercise to increase strength and decrease stiffness in your hands. The exercise is simple; it can be done easily while reading or watching TV, and most people already have the equipment at home.**

**Equipment:** Racquetball, tennis ball, or "stress" ball.

**Time:** Less than 5 minutes.

**Exercise:** Grasp a ball in one hand while sitting or standing. Slowly squeeze it as hard as you can and hold the squeeze for 3 to 5 seconds. Slowly release the squeeze. Take a short rest, then repeat the exercise 10 times. Switch hands, and do 2 sets of 10 squeezes with the other hand.

**Frequency:** You may do this exercise every day or every other day, depending on how your hands feel. If they feel stiff or painful, you may want to skip a day.