



You're Never Too Old to Exercise

According to Duke University Medical Center researchers, the benefits of exercise are just as significant for those in their 70s and beyond as for younger persons and that regular exercise can in fact slow or even reverse some of the effects of aging that were once thought to be inevitable. Regular physical activity for seniors benefits both mind and body.

The physical activity seniors choose does not have to be intensive to realize meaningful health benefits. It is not necessary to run a marathon. You'll see benefits from walking, biking and other simple activities.

Exercise can also benefit patients with existing medical conditions. For patients who have osteoarthritis, for example, it improves their functional ability and reduces pain. It also builds bone density and lowers the risk of osteoporosis, conditions that lead many to their orthopedic doctor every day.

Older Americans, like the rest of our population, aren't getting enough exercise. The current recommendation is to try and get at least some aerobic exercise almost every day for approximately 30 minutes, five days a week. Research also shows that exercise can help lower health care costs for America's aging population.

There was once a belief that beyond a certain age, older people wouldn't benefit from exercise as much as a younger person. Researchers now confirm this is not the case. Exercise can help to improve physical fitness, muscle strength and aerobic capacity as well as mood and cognitive abilities at any age.

Its Never Too Late to Start Exercising...see our tips for beginning your program...

10 Healthy Steps to a New You

1. Consult your physician.

It is always a good idea to make sure you consult with your physician before beginning any new exercise program in order to determine if you have any special needs, or parameters to use as a guide as you exercise.

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2. **Develop a plan.**

Utilizing the advice of an exercise expert, a trainer or physical therapist, develops a plan that is right for you.

3. **Diversify.**

When developing your exercise program, make sure you incorporate a balanced combination of static and dynamic stretching (Yoga, Tai Chi, Chi Gong), strength training exercises as well as aerobic conditioning activities.

4. **Create a space.**

Success in maintaining any exercise program is in making a commitment to a new routine. This process involves creating a time and place to exercise that is consistent from day to day.

5. **Involve friends and/or family.**

For some, exercising is more fun when performed with others. This can help nurture relationships while also doing something physically healthy.

6. **Listen to your body.**

Your body never lies. If you notice some discomfort that does not seem to subside within a couple of days, you probably need to modify your exercise program a bit (see #2).

7. **Use proper equipment.**

Tune up your bicycle, check your walking/running shoes, adjust your weight/resistance equipment...make sure you are using proper and safe equipment to avoid unnecessary injuries.

8. **Progress slowly.**

The most common cause of injury when beginning a new exercise program is progressing too quickly. A good general rule to follow is to progress mileage and or resistance no more than 10-25% weekly.

9. **Establish goals.**

A good way to stay motivated in your exercise program once the "honeymoon is over" after the first week or so, is to establish goals for yourself. Start with realistic weekly goals, then monthly, and perhaps a long term goal of six months or maybe even a year. Some individuals use an event to shape their goals, ie., a 10 K running race, a walking event, a cycling event, etc...

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10. Keep it fun.

If you're not smiling, something is wrong...you're probably taking the whole thing too seriously. The key to a successful and sustainable exercise program is to implement some element of fun...so be creative and let yourself smile and have some fun.

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