

Physical Activity for Older Adults

Informational Fact Sheet

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Physical activity is important as you age. The loss of muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility is in part due to lack of use. With the implementation of physical activity, older adults can help maintain muscular function. Physical activity helps make daily tasks such as household chores, yard work, lifting and carrying items, and tying your shoes easier. Physical activity further helps older adults maintain independence by preventing diseases and disabilities.

Regardless of your current physical condition, implementing physical activity into your lifestyle will help you become more self-sufficient.



Why Physical Activity?

The question is, why not add physical activity to your life? Regular physical activity can help you live longer and healthier. Maintaining a physically active lifestyle as you age helps deter the development of many chronic diseases, improve cardiovascular fitness, increase bone density, and increases your energy level. Physical activity helps maintain flexibility, balance, strength, and endurance, all of which are necessary to live independently.

Benefits of Physical Activity

Additional Benefits of Physical Activity Include:

- ◆ Reduce heart rate and blood pressure
- ◆ Helps control symptoms of arthritis by promoting joint health and reducing inflammation
- ◆ Improves mood and alleviates stress
- ◆ Increases muscular strength, balance, and posture, helping to reduce the risk of falling



What do you mean, ‘physical activity’?”

Physical activity can be anything requiring your body to move and does not need to be strenuous. Common activities among adults 65 and older include walking and gardening. Fitness programs, such as those offered through SVHAP, help individuals achieve specific goals in flexibility, muscle strength, and overall function. The key is finding something you like,

so you will stick with it and keep your body moving.



How much do I need?

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that exercise programs should take into account your current level of activity as well as your health status. If you are 65 years or older, are generally fit, and have no limiting health conditions, incorporating moderate and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity and muscle-strengthening activities 2 or more days per week is recommended.

How do I get started?

There are a few things to consider before you implement more physical activity to your lifestyle. Consult your physician, especially if you have any health problems (diseases, joint replacements, etc.) that may affect your performance. Start slow and work your way up to more intense activities, being mindful of any discomfort you feel, and stop as soon as any pain arises. Find activities you enjoy, and get your friends involved, too! The more fun you have, the more likely it is that you will continue to be active.

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