



AGING WELL LIVING WELL



News & Information Provided by the Administration on Aging
Washington, DC • www.aoa.gov

Exercise Benefits Everyone

Exercise benefits everyone – regardless of age. Physical activity can help older adults prolong their independence and improve their quality of life. It can also improve mood and relieve depression. Staying physically active on a regular, permanent basis can help prevent or delay certain diseases (such as some types of cancer, heart disease, or diabetes) and disabilities as people grow older. Regular exercise can even improve management of some diseases and disabilities in older people who already have them.

There are four types of exercises that are important for older adults' health.

1. Endurance activities increase heart rate and breathing for extended periods of time. They improve the health of the heart, lungs, and circulatory system, and have been shown to help prevent or delay some diseases.
2. Strength exercises make older adults strong enough to do the things they need and like to do.
3. Balance exercises help prevent falls, a major cause of disability in older adults.
4. Stretching helps keep the body limber and flexible.

For older adults, the most important step in establishing an exercise program is just getting started. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers the following tips:

- Make activity a daily part of your life.
- Find activities that you enjoy that can become a regular part of your routine.
- Find others to join you. Partners can make it more fun, can provide encouragement, and help overcome problems of transportation or safety.
- Consult your doctor about what level of activity is safe and appropriate for you. Discuss any medical issues that might be interfering with more regular activity and review any symptoms and problems that might affect what activities are safe for you.
 - Set specific activity goals.
 - Start slowly and build up to increasing levels of activity. Try to be active for 30 minutes a day on a regular basis.



As the nation celebrates Older Americans Month and National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, learn more about starting an exercise program by visiting the Administration on Aging website, at www.aoa.gov or by going to the National Institutes of Health senior health website at www.NIHseniorhealth.gov. You can also order a copy of the National Institutes on Aging Exercise Guide by calling toll-free 1-800-222-2225, or view it online at www.nia.nih.gov/exercisebook.