

Physical Activity

WHY DO OLDER ADULTS NEED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

Regular physical activity is important at any age. It can offer other health benefits. It can also improve our quality of life. Research shows that physical activity can be safe for most older adults.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Regular physical activity can help:

- Keep muscles strong.
- Reduce bone loss.
- Control weight, diabetes, and heart disease.
- Reduce the risk of falls and injuries.
- Improve energy and mental health.



TYPES OF EXERCISE

- **Stretching** helps keep the body flexible. It may help prevent falls.
- **Endurance exercise** improves the heart rate. It helps bring more blood and oxygen to the brain. Examples are walking and swimming.
- **Strength exercise** helps build muscles and bones. Examples are using free weights, or raising the arms while holding unopened soup cans.
- **Balance exercise** helps prevent falls, hip fractures, and other injuries. Examples are standing on one foot, or raising a leg to the side while holding onto a sturdy chair.

ASK YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

- If you have a medical condition that might prevent you from being physically active.
- How much exercise is best.
- What types of activity you may want to limit or avoid.
- Whether you need supervision.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION*****Growing Stronger: Strength Training for Older Adults***

Website: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/growing_stronger/resources.htm

Published in 2002 by Tufts University and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Exercise: A Guide from the National Institute on Aging

Website: www.niapublications.org/exercisebook/ExerciseGuideComplete.pdf

Reprinted in 2004 by the National Institutes of Health.

REFERENCES

- *Exercise: A Guide from the National Institute on Aging*, reprinted in 2004.
- *Growing Stronger: Strength Training for Older Adults*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Tufts University, 2002.
- *Position Stand: Exercise and Physical Activity for Older Adults*. American College of Sports Medicine, 1998.