



# Exercising for older adults (over 65 years)

## Every move counts

Move more and reduce your sedentary time each day by incorporating different types of movement. It is never too late to start, some is always better than none!

## How to get started

Regular exercise as part of everyday life can both prevent and reduce age-related physical and mental changes. Regular exercise significantly reduces your risk of heart disease, hypertension, some cancers, obesity, type 2 diabetes, pain, depression, anxiety and the onset of dementia and helps you manage stress. Regular strength, flexibility and balance exercises improve your ability to do the activities of daily living and help prevent bone and muscle strength loss, osteoporosis, joint problems and falls. Physical fitness can help you enjoy greater independence and mobility, which means a fuller quality of life and energy to do the activities of daily living, including leisure activities with friends and family, or running around with your grandchildren!

Exercise can be any activity that you have enjoyed in the past, or one you would like to try. Social environments that incorporate exercise have a positive effect on memory, cognitive abilities, self-esteem, mood and overall health, so try exercising with a group or friends and family. Brisk walking is a great exercise that can significantly improve your heart health and help you to stay fit.

Individualize your exercise plan to maximize your health benefits and exercise within your abilities. If you have other long term health conditions such as heart disease or osteoporosis, ask your doctor or healthcare provider what exercises would be best for you!

**Take all medicines as recommended by your doctor or pharmacist.**

## Warm up and cool down

**Always start your exercise session with a 10–15-minute warm up to loosen up the muscles and raise the heart rate safely.** Warm-up exercises include dynamic stretches, range-of-motion activities and low intensity movements. This can be done standing up, walking around, marching on the spot or seated.

**Always end your exercise session with a 10–15-minute cool-down to ensure your heart rate and breathing rate return to normal safely.** Cool down exercises include slowly decreasing the intensity of your activity and simple stretches.

## Be active

### Some is good, more is better

<b>How much:</b>	Aim for at least <b>150-300</b> minutes a week of moderate intensity or at least <b>75-150</b> minutes a week of vigorous intensity physical activity. Start moving more each day increasing to regular movement every day and add sessions as your strength and stamina improve.
<b>How hard:</b>	Any movement helps. Aim for moderate to vigorous intensity—aim to get slightly breathless. Take frequent breaks, if necessary.

<b>How long:</b>	Aim to spread out your session throughout the week. If your fitness level is low, start with 5–10-minute sessions and add 10-minute intervals until you can comfortably exercise for longer.
<b>What type:</b>	All physical activity counts. Try activities within your abilities: walking, cycling, jogging, dancing, swimming, water aerobics, hiking— choose something you enjoy! Recreational team sports such as soccer, tennis, or volleyball are great social activities too! Household activities such as cleaning, gardening, vacuuming or walking your dog are great activities for your health. Choose something you enjoy!

### What will it do for me?

*Regular exercise significantly improves overall health and helps promote a feeling of wellbeing.*

## Build strength

<b>How much:</b>	At least twice a week.
<b>How hard:</b>	Start with light muscle strengthening exercises and progress to moderate or greater intensities over time.. Target the legs, trunk, chest, back, core and arms.
<b>How long:</b>	Choose 8–10 exercises targeting the upper and lower body and repeat each exercise 10–15 times. Try 1–3 sets of each exercise.
<b>What type:</b>	A variety of strength exercises using free weights, resistance machines or household items such as a can of beans or a weighted water bottle as a weight. Exercises may need to be modified if you have had surgery or treatments that may have caused muscle weakness or limited your range of movement. At home, try slow sit to stands, squats, heel raises, wall push ups, arm curls, front and side arm raises and regular stair walks. Household chores such as carrying the shopping, mowing the lawn or gardening are also good strength-building exercises.

### What will it do for me?

*Strength exercises help to improve your ability to do everyday household chores and work by improving your bone, muscle and joint health. They also improve your coordination and help prevent falls.*

## Improve balance

<b>How much:</b>	At least three days a week.
<b>How hard:</b>	Try 2–3 balance exercises and repeat each exercise 10-15 times.
<b>How long:</b>	Hold each balance for 10-30 seconds.
<b>What type:</b>	Try yoga, Tai Chi, or simple home balance exercises. Balance exercise can be done standing up, using a chair, against a wall or sitting down. Ensure the area you are exercising in and the type of balance exercise is safe. If you are at high risk of falling, do seated balance exercises or exercise using a sturdy chair or wall for support.



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## What will it do for me?

*Practicing balance exercises helps to train your body to react more quickly to impending balance loss, by reducing the risk of falls, fractures and injuries.*

## Sedentary living

**Reduce the amount of time being sedentary.** Move more and break up sedentary time. Sedentary behavior is defined as time spent sitting or lying with low energy expenditure, while awake in the context of occupational, educational, home and community settings, and travel. Higher amounts of sedentary behavior can increase the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer.

**Replace sedentary behavior with more physical activity of any intensity (including light intensity).** It is possible to avoid sedentary behaviour and be physically active while sitting or lying, through, for example, upper body led activities, inclusive and/or wheelchair-specific sport and activities. Try seated stretches for those with limited mobility; using active forms of transport; standing while working (within your abilities and environment), and other accessible active options to replace sedentary time.

## Your exercise, your way!

Choose activities that are easy to start with, and that you enjoy. Always exercise within your abilities. If mobility is difficult, adapted cycling, swimming and chair-based exercises may be better alternatives. Exercise with friends and family or join a group class to improve your motivation levels and engage in social activities. Try exercising both indoors and outdoors and see which you prefer! Most importantly: **some physical activity is better than none.**

## Exercise safety

Start with shorter sessions (e.g. 10–15 minutes) and slowly build up to the recommended level. Aim to get slightly out of breath, but exercise sensibly and stop the activity if you feel unwell.

Always wear comfortable clothing and shoes that give good support and don't rub or cause discomfort to prevent sores or infection. Take frequent breaks if necessary and drink water before, during and after exercise.

Ensure you exercise safely during all exercises and ask for assistance and supervision if you are unsure about any exercises.

Choose environments that you can access freely and safely. Choose routes with resting places. Please ask your healthcare provider or local leisure organizations for advice on the best option for you.

Please ask your healthcare provider for information on adaption or modification for exercises within your abilities.

Scan for more physical activity resources!

