

# It's Time to Start Exercising!



As you grow older, an active lifestyle is more important than ever. Regular exercise can help boost energy, maintain your independence, and manage symptoms of illness or pain. Exercise is good for your body, your mind, mood, and memory.

There are plenty of ways to get more active, improve confidence, and boost your fitness. And it can even be fun, too.

Reaping the rewards of exercise doesn't require strenuous workouts or trips to the gym. It's about adding more movement and activity to your life. Always make sure that you consult with your physician before starting any exercise routine. Try out some of these examples and get moving!



- ▶ Walking. It requires no special equipment, aside from a pair of comfortable walking shoes, and can be done anywhere.
- ▶ Senior sports or fitness classes. Keeps you motivated and also provides a place to meet friends.
- ▶ Water aerobics and water sports. Working out in water is great because it reduces stress and strain on the body's joints.
- ▶ Yoga. Works on strength, flexibility and balance and can be adapted to any level.
- ▶ Tai Chi. Martial arts-inspired system of movement that increases balance and strength.

Starting or maintaining an exercise routine can be a challenge. You may feel discouraged by illness, ongoing health problems, or concerns about injuries or falls. Or, if you've never exercised before, you may not know where to begin. Or perhaps you think you're too old or frail, or that exercise is boring or simply not for you. In order to relieve your concerns, we've listed some myths about exercise and aging:



*Myth 1:* There's no point to exercising. I'm going to get old anyway.

**Fact:** Regular physical activity lowers your risk for a variety of conditions, including Alzheimer's, heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, high bloodpressure, and obesity.

*Myth 2:* Older people shouldn't exercise. They should save their strength and rest.

**Fact:** Inactivity often causes older adults to lose the ability to do things on their own and can lead to more hospitalizations, doctor visits, and use of medicines for illnesses.

*Myth 3:* Exercise puts me at risk of falling down.

**Fact:** Regular exercise, by building strength and stamina, prevents loss of bone mass and improves balance, actually reducing your risk of falling.

*Myth 4:* It's too late. I'm already too old to start exercising.

**Fact:** You're never too old to exercise! If you've never exercised before, or it's been a while, start with light walking and other gentle activities.

*Myth 5:* I'm disabled. I can't exercise sitting down.

**Fact:** Chair-bound people face special challenges, but can lift light weights, stretch, and do chair aerobics to increase range of motion, improve muscle tone, and promote cardiovascular health.