

RESET YOUR HEALTH GOALS – PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical Activity: Getting Fit for Life

Do you have reasons to not exercise or be more physically active? Well, put those reasons and fears behind you. Not exercising or being physically active causes your body more harm than good. It's never too late to start being physically active.

Why physical activity?

Here are some reasons why physical activity is good for older adults.

- It can help you feel better and enjoy life more.
- It can prevent or slow-down some diseases like cancer, heart disease or diabetes.
- It can improve your mood and help with depression.
- It can help you stay independent, so you can keep doing the things you love.



IMPORTANT TYPES OF EXERCISE

These four types of exercises are necessary for improved health and wellness:

1. Aerobic Exercise

Engage in 150 minutes each week of physical activity that increases your heart rate. This equals 30 minutes on 5 days per week. You do not have to be active for 30 minutes all at once. You can start with ten minutes of physical activity such as walking and build up to 30 minutes a day.

2. Strength Training

Do strength training activities twice a week to help maintain your muscle strength as you age. Having enough muscle helps you to: get in or out of a chair by yourself; walk; and enjoy daily activities.

Keeping your muscles in shape can help prevent falls or balance problems. Falls can cause broken hips and are a serious problem for older adults. When the leg and hip muscles that support you are strong, you are less likely to fall. Even if you do fall, you will be more likely to be able to get up on your own. And using your muscles may make your bones stronger. You should keep your bones strong to avoid osteoporosis.

3. Balance

Balance is important for exercise and preventing falls. Try some of these activities:

- Stand on one foot, then the other. If possible, try this without using support.
- Stand up from sitting in a chair without using your hands or arms.
- Try walking heel to toe in a straight line.

4. Stretching and Flexibility

Stretching can help keep you flexible and able to move more freely. Stretch when your muscles are warm. Never stretch so far that it hurts. Stand on one foot, then the other. If possible, try this without using support.

WHO SHOULD EXERCISE

Almost anyone, at any age, can improve his or her health by doing some type of physical activity. Check with your doctor before you start any new physical activity or exercise plan if you:

- Have an ongoing disease
- Are overweight
- Are a smoker
- Have any new symptom you have not talked about with your doctor
- Have problems such as chest pain or shortness of breath
- Have joint swelling
- Have pain or trouble walking after you have fallen
- Have problems with balance
- Have hernia (when tissue swells and bulges through a weak spot in the wall of your stomach)
- Have had surgery or an injury

EXERCISE SAFETY TIPS

Here are some things you can do to make sure you are doing your activities safely:

- **Start slow.** Little by little, build up your level of physical activity. Doing too much too soon may cause you pain if you have not been active.
- **Do not hold your breath when exercising.** That could cause changes in your blood pressure. When weight lifting, breathe out when you lift; breathe in when you stop.
- **Do not use your pulse rate as a way to tell how hard you should exercise.** Some conditions and medicines can change your natural heart rate.
- **Use a helmet for bike riding and the right shoes for walking and jogging.**
- **Be sure to drink plenty of water when you are doing activities that make you sweat.** Hydration is important, unless your doctor asks you to limit fluids.

Physical activity should not hurt or make you feel really tired. You might feel some soreness, a little discomfort, or a bit weary, but you should not feel pain. If you feel pain when exercising, stop and talk to your doctor. Your doctor can check off which level of physical activity is best for you based on your health status.

For additional guidance on physical activity, explore these additional resources:

- [The American Heart Association](#)
- [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [The U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)



WEBINAR: LIFE WELL STRETCHED

Need some additional tips on keeping your mind, body and spirit healthy? Make some time in your schedule and register for the Life Well Stretched webinar. This beginner yoga session will connect movement with breathing exercises to enhance relaxation within the body and calm the mind. Open to all employees.

Session choices: July 13 – July 16:

- [9 a.m.](#) – click to register and select the date
- [11 a.m.](#) – click to register and select the date
- [2 p.m.](#) – click to register and select the date

Office of Human Resources Management
Level Up – Employee Wellness Program
1400 McCormick Drive, Suite 245
Largo, MD 20774
LevelUp@co.pg.md.us

