

Senior Health & Fitness

Exercise is the most practical and underutilized health care option out there... and the best part is it's free! For older adults, exercise is more important than ever as the systems of the body are naturally slowing down and losing efficiency. Exercise combats this by increasing; oxygen consumption by 10-25% (giving you more energy to move); sugar and fat metabolism; food transit time; bone mineral density and muscle mass (which naturally decline with age); sleep quality; equilibrium and balance (so, less chance of a fall); range of motion, strength, flexibility, endurance; and mood! Exercise also helps us by lowering: blood pressure; cholesterol; nervous tension and mental stress. Exercise is like a 'magic pill' for overall health by controlling weight gain, improving blood lipid levels and heart rate and creating overall well-being! There is no age limit to strength and muscle building- a study at Tufts University found a 90 year old woman increased muscle mass by 9% and strength by more than 100%!!! Health benefits and life expectancy also improve with those who start exercising later in life. So, it is never too late to start! Inactivity can cause a 30% higher risk of coronary artery disease. It is important to note that only 23% of 65-69yrs and 35% of 55-64yrs old participate or achieve recommended exercise standards! New standards recommend 150 minutes of cumulated moderate activity per week (moderate activity relates to a brisk walk). These 150 minutes can be added together in as small as 10 minute bouts at a time. It is best to be consistent with exercise because a lack of consistency (aka weekend warrior activity) can lead to an increased susceptibility for exercise related injury or even sudden death. It is important to do what feels comfortable to you and that you enjoy it. Find an activity that best suits your interests and schedule! The benefits far out-weigh the risks and you will find yourself with more energy at the end of the day. You will have more vigor for friends and family, daily activities, and for yourself! Once you start to feel the difference you will be more motivated to maintain your fitness! So what have you got to lose? Get active today!!!