

## ***The key to healthy aging***

Exercise is important for older adults, but knowing where to begin can be difficult. Many seniors feel discouraged from exercising due to chronic health conditions or concerns about injury or falls. You may not know where to begin if you haven't exercised before. Or maybe an ongoing health problem or disability is keeping you from getting active. Perhaps you think you're too old or frail.

The truth is seniors can't afford not to get moving. Exercise is the key to staying strong, energetic, and healthy as you get older. Exercise and physical activity can help you manage the symptoms of illness and pain, maintain your independence, and even reverse some of the symptoms of aging. Exercise is good for your body AND it's good for your mind, attitude, and memory.

No matter what your age or current physical condition, you can benefit from regular exercise and activity. Experiencing the rewards of exercise doesn't require strenuous workouts or even trips to the gym. It's about increasing the movements and activities in your life, even in small ways. No matter if you are fairly healthy or are managing an illness—even if you're housebound—there are many easy ways to get your body moving and improve your health.

### **5 Myths about Exercise and Older Adults**

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

**Fact:** Exercise and strength training helps you look and feel younger and stay active longer. Regular physical activity lowers your risk for a variety of conditions, including Alzheimer's and dementia, heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, high blood pressure, and obesity.

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

**Fact:** Research shows that a sedentary lifestyle is unhealthy for the elderly. Period. Inactivity often causes seniors 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.