

- Exercise

Staying active is one of the best things you can do for yourself

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Getting exercise regularly is one of the best things you can do for yourself, and it helps prevent falls.

Between the ages of 20 and 90, a person's muscle mass decreases by almost 50 per cent. Bone density decreases as well, resulting in bones that are more porous and fragile. This can make a fracture more likely if you fall.

The good news is that regular exercise can help prevent or lower the risk of injuries from falls, as well as protect against other age-related health problems. Studies have shown that as much as half of the loss in function with age is actually due to inactivity, not the aging process itself.

Older adults who take part in strength training exercises (like resistance or weight training) can increase their muscle strength by up to 50 per cent after only six weeks.

Here are some of the benefits associated with regular physical activity:

Reduced risk of falling and fractures

Improved posture and balance

Increased bone density Fewer aches and pains Reduced risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke and cancer

Increased energy

Improved self-confidence As an added bonus, regular physical activity lowers your risk of suffering from mental health issues that are common amongst older adults such as depression, thoughts of suicide and anxiety disorders.

How much exercise do you need to stay healthy?

The good news is you don't need to be an Olympic athlete to stay healthy! According to the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines, adults over the age of 65 should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.

That breaks down to five sessions of 30 minutes per week.

Moderate-intensity physical activities cause you to sweat a little and breathe harder.

Examples are brisk walking and bicycling.

If you would like a bit more of a challenge, try some vigorous-intensity physical activities, which will make you sweat and be out of breath, such as cross-country skiing and swimming.

And don't forget to make muscle and bone strengthening activities part of your workout routine at least two days per week!

Just ensure your workout makes you use all major muscle groups. If you suffer from poor mobility, try physical activities that improve your balance, which will ultimately help you prevent falls.

Well, it's time to get out there and have fun!