**Stay Active As You Get Older : Quick Tips**

Physical activity is good for people of all ages. Staying active can help:

* Lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some types of cancer
* Improve your strength and balance so you can prevent injuries and stay independent
* Improve your mood
* Feel better about yourself
* Improve your ability to think, learn, and make decisions

Before you start...

If you have a health problem like heart disease, diabetes, or obesity, talk to your doctor about the types and amounts of physical activity that are right for you.

Aim for 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activities.

* If you were not exercising before, start slowly. Begin with 10 minutes of aerobic activity and gradually build up to doing 30 minutes at a time.
* Aim for 30 minutes of aerobic activity on most days of the week.
* Choose aerobic activities – activities that make your heart beat faster – like walking fast, dancing, swimming, or raking leaves.
* Tell your doctor if you have shortness of breath, chest pain, or unplanned weight loss.

Do strengthening activities 2 days a week.

* Try using exercise bands or lifting hand weights. You can also use bottles of water or cans of food as weights.
* Breathe out as you lift the weight, and breathe in as you lower it. Don't hold your breath – holding your breath can cause unsafe changes in your blood pressure.

Do balance activities 3 or more days a week.

* Practice standing on one foot (hold onto a chair if you need to at first).
* Stand up from a sitting position without using your hands.

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* Learn tai chi (“ty chee”), a Chinese mind-body exercise that involves moving the body slowly and gently.
* Sign up for a yoga class, or try following a yoga video at home.

For more information about staying active as you get older, visit:

* [**GO4Life, from the National Institute on Aging**](http://go4life.nia.nih.gov/get-started)
* [**NIH Senior Health**](http://nihseniorhealth.gov/exerciseforolderadults/healthbenefits/01.html)

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