<https://scrubbing.in/encouraging-the-elderly-to-exercise/>

Regular exercise benefits people of all age groups. However, the older we get, the more important it is to have a regular exercise program.

According to the [American College of Sports Medicine](http://www.acsm.org/), the benefits of regular exercise are extensive, and have been shown to reduce mortality and the risk of developing other chronic disease. Because the aging population is the least physically active, it is important to encourage them to exercise. “The tips for getting people to exercise are not much different across the age groups,” says Keith Birkemeier, program director for Scott & White Healthcare’s Cardiac Rehabilitation program.

#### Tips:

* **Having someone to exercise with you makes it more enjoyable**. “The main pitfall for most people is accountability; having someone that is counting on you being there,” says Mr. Birkemeier. “For the elderly, especially in our program, we encourage them to bring their spouse in with them.”
* **Make exercise a priority and set time aside during the day.** “Schedule it into your day, just like brushing your teeth,” says Mr. Birkemeier.
* Identify activities that they enjoy. Older adults are more likely to perform exercises they deem pleasurable. By selecting an activity that they like to do the chances are greater that they will continue doing it.
* Start slowly and advance the exercise program gradually. “I recommend starting off at two to three times per week, then move up to three to five times per week,” says Mr. Birkemeier.
* Set realistic expectations. “You never want to set an expectation you can’t meet,” he says.
* Be supportive. Older adults need to receive regular encouragement from friends and family.

#### Activity Plan:

The challenges for the elderly population when it comes to exercising are knowing how much they should exercise, what’s safe and what’s not safe, and how intensely they should work out. This occurs especially if the person has a pre-existing condition, such as a heart attack or heart disease, because they tend to have less confidence in their ability to exercise. In addition, the older population may be on more medications –some which may interfere with balance– so it is best that they speak with their physician before beginning a workout program.

*“The physician is the gatekeeper.”*

The physician is the gatekeeper. Before beginning any exercise program check with your physician. “Their physician can advise them on any types of exercise to avoid based on their physical status and medication regimen. The physician will know what level of exercise the patient should be exercising,” says Mr. Birkemeier. “Physicians may recommend our service, Cardiac Rehab, as a good place to start as opposed to a gym because we can inform the patient how much to exercise and where they are going to gain the most benefit. We use a [Borg Scale](https://3121vn46gx2sotjq1eq92fu4-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Borg-Scale-of-Perceived-Exertion.pdf)(PDF), a rating of perceived exertion, to tell them at what intensity level they should be exercising. We also teach them how to [take their own pulse](https://3121vn46gx2sotjq1eq92fu4-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/COUNTING-YOUR-OWN-PULSE.pdf) (PDF).”

“When it comes to exercising it is important to remember that there is no finish line; this is exercise for life,” says Mr. Birkemeier.

<https://thecaregiverspace.org/how-to-encourage-the-elderly-to-exercise/>

### … Tips To Get the Elderly Moving

Most commercials for exercise programs or machines caution you to “Consult your doctor before taking on any new exercise routine.” This warning is especially important when it comes to seniors. Get their physical examination done and let the doctor know you’d like your loved one to get permission from him/her in this regard. Regularly practice only the exercises the doctor has approved. Because exercise has a lot to do with ensuring a senior’s good health, use the following tips to get them to work out regularly.

* Start slowly. Trying out long edurance or heavy exercises as they begin is not a good idea. It’s always advisable to build up gradually.
* Set short-term goals. This is one of the best strategies to keep your loved one motivated. By setting these goals, seniors are motivated to continue their exercise. Make sure you do not include weight loss in these short-term goals. More important goals could be stress reduction, and energy and mood improvement.
* Take special notice of their symptoms. In many cases, the body may not be able to cope with certain types of exercise. Shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness, pain and cold sweats may make it necessary to stop the exercise at once and consult a doctor.

<https://livehealthy.chron.com/elderly-motivated-exercise-6452.html>

Exercise among seniors can mean the difference between a happy, healthy and independent person and one whose plagued by serious medical problems and limitations. Exercise not only wards off disease, it promotes mental health and independence.

If you're concerned about an older relative or friend, there are a number of ways you can motivate them to exercise their way to better mental and physical health.

**1. Scare Tactics**

In general, scare tactics are a poor motivator, but, in some cases, it's hard to argue the numbers. To wit:

Every 11 seconds an elderly person is admitted to the hospital for a fall in the United States

Two million adults over the age of 65 suffer from depression

A whopping 83.6 million Americans over the age of 60 have at least one type of cardiovascular disease

These sobering numbers are just the tip of the iceberg, and all of them can be improved with better exercise regimens among the elderly.

**2. Eliminate Barriers**

All too often, marketing does a giant disservice by portraying every activity as some sort of extreme sport. To get your loved one to exercise more, it's important to show them that physical exercise is accessible to them. For example, the local gym may offer senior-only time slots, leaving the elderly to use the equipment at their own pace. Many yoga and pilates studios offer chair sessions, where seniors can reap the benefits of these exercises without having to turn into a pretzel on a mat.

**3. Get Creative**

The old adage that you can't teach an old dog new tricks needs to be thrown out in favor of exploration and curiosity. Introducing the elderly to a new activity not only increases their physical fitness, it also does wonders for their mental health. Activities like Qigong are perfect mind and body exercises that are great for lowering heart rates and keeping joints fluid.

**4. Find Groups**

Local senior centers are amazing resources for finding groups that are designed to get seniors up and moving. Things like organized walks, trips to the pool for water aerobics or senior square dances provide incredible entertainment and exercise at the same time.

**5. Issue an Invite**

One of the best ways to get your loved one to exercise is to issue an invite. Whether it's to get out for a walk to see the new spring blossoms or a trip to the zoo to wander around, outings such as these provide great motivation to exercise and combat loneliness to boot.

**6. Setting Goals**

Setting goals by measuring exercise is always a great motivator. Everyone loves a challenge, and by setting out a certain number of steps per week or flights to climb, you can provide the necessary motivation for your loved one to not only meet those numbers, but improve upon them over time. If your loved one doesn't have a smart phone, a $10 pedometer does the trick.

**7. No Excuses**

Consider setting up a small workout area for your loved one right in their own home. A few weights, a TV and a treadmill are enough to get started. Urge them to watch their favorite morning or afternoon show while walking on the treadmill or lifting weights. Maybe even join them for a session or two to show them how easy it is to exercise in the comforts of their own space.

The bottom line is that the importance of exercise overshadows any excuse not to. It may just take a little perseverance and creativity on your part to get started, but don't be surprised when your loved one starts calling you and inviting you out for a walk or bike ride after a while.

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/senior-health/fun-ways-seniors-can-get-in-shape.aspx>

Take up tango or grab your golf clubs: Now's the perfect time to try these fun, low-impact exercises.

By [**Wyatt Myers**](https://www.everydayhealth.com/authors/wyatt-myers/)

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11 Fun Exercises for Older Adults

**Take up dancing.** [Dancing helps improve seniors’ gait and balance](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25456888) and could help prevent dangerous injuries from falls, according to a research review in the January-February 2015 issue of the Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics. “Dancing is a fantastic way to get some cardiovascular benefit, improve your coordination and balance, and meet local seniors who enjoy similar activities,” says [Carrie Plummer, PhD](https://nursing.vanderbilt.edu/people/bio/carrie-plummer), an instructor at the Vanderbilt School of Nursing in Nashville, Tennessee, and board-certified adult nurse practitioner. For many types of dance classes, you don't even have to bring a partner. Check your local recreation or senior center for dance classes.

**Become a Zen master.** “Research has shown that participating in low-impact exercise classes, such as tai chi or yoga, can help improve strength, balance, and coordination and reduce stress,” Plummer says. “Many yoga poses can be modified to work for those who are less flexible or have decreased upper or lower body strength.” Even adults with limited mobility have a higher quality of life and less depression with a seated yoga program, according to a July-August 2014 report in Holistic Nurse Practitioner.

**Hit the links.** Golf is a go-to game for competitive seniors who want to get back to nature in a fun way. And it can be a great way to build endurance, which makes it easier to accomplish everyday tasks, according to the [National Institutes of Health](https://www.nih.gov/)(NIH).

**Go for a swim.** Few things are healthier — and low-impact — than a water workout. And you don’t have to swim laps, Plummer says. She recommends water aerobics and aqua jogging as great ways to get low-impact exercise and also [socialize with friends](https://www.everydayhealth.com/senior-health/enhancing-your-life.aspx). Water aerobics have been shown to improve body composition and reduce lower back pain, according to research published in the February 2015 issue of the Journal of the Physical Therapy Science.

**Garden on your patio.** If you love to garden, but your joints scream from all that bending, you can still get benefits by creating a garden of raised pots and containers on your deck or patio. “Raised plant containers are helpful if you have arthritic knees and find it difficult to bend,” says Forrest Hong, PhD, a licensed clinical social worker, certified advanced social worker care manager, and vice-president of Your Care Manager, a geriatric care management company in Los Angeles, California. “Raising tomatoes or herbs in pots can be a nice mixture of fun, along with creating a healthy meal.”

**Go window shopping.** Of course, walking anywhere is good, but Plummer recommends the mall for a variety of great walking opportunities in one convenient location. “Walking inside an air-conditioned mall provides a cooler environment, which not only reduces the risks of ill effects due to weather, but also provides a safe environment with less likelihood of any physical harm from strangers,” she says. “Many local malls open their doors early in the morning before the stores are open specifically for mall walkers.”

**Weight-train with groceries.** Just as you don’t need a nature trail to walk, you don’t need a gym to lift weights, Plummer says. “You can use items in your pantry or refrigerator to pump some iron.” she suggests. “For example, use canned [vegetables](https://www.everydayhealth.com/senior-health/health-benefits-of-fruits-and-vegetables.aspx) or a half-gallon milk jug to do bicep curls, tricep kickbacks, and some overhead pushes to work those shoulder muscles. You can also do some lower body work with nothing more than a chair. While seated, extend your lower legs out and up, so that the leg is fully extended, and lower it back down.”

**Dust off the bike.** If you do feel like being outdoors, cycling is a fantastic way to exercise in a low-impact fashion. “It’s a great cardiovascular workout, and it also helps to improve balance and focus the work on your leg muscles,” Dr. Hong says.

**Make child’s play of exercise.** As any grandparent can attest, one of the easiest and most fun ways to get exercise is to chase the grandkids around. You'll also be setting a great example for them.

**Head to the alley.** Bowling is another excellent endurance activity, according to the NIH. And you don't have to depend on good weather to get in a few games. Joining a bowling league has the added benefit of making fitness a social activity, as well.

**Try a Wii.** This handy gaming console from Nintendo offers all kinds of great ways to [stay active and fit](https://www.everydayhealth.com/senior-health/stay-fit.aspx). “There are any number of games — tennis, bowling, yoga, skiing — available on the Wii Fit that provide you with a variety of fun exercises,” Plummer says. “The Wii Fit also can keep track of [your weight](https://www.everydayhealth.com/senior-health/watching-your-weight.aspx) and general fitness level and give you feedback on your progress.”