

# Safe Exercises for Older Adults

Contributed by Webmaster

As we get older our bodies begin to break down. This is an unfortunate fact of life we can't avoid. Many people who used to exercise stop because it just seems too hard or because they're afraid they'll injure themselves. Many older people don't exercise because they never did when they were young. Research suggests that older adults can actually benefit more from daily exercise than most of their younger counterparts. It is important for seniors to get at least four different types of exercises. These include balance exercises, stretching exercises, strength exercises, and endurance exercises. Here are five ways to get all four types of exercise and stay healthy and strong for a long time. **Walking.** Walking is a great way to get your body moving without a lot of impact or stress. If you don't get a lot of physical activity, starting a walking routine can build muscle mass, or at least keep muscles from degenerating. It also helps keep bones strong and healthy by putting some weight on them, even if it's only your own body weight. The best part is, walking can be done anywhere and it's a great social workout.

**Stretching.** Stretching is a simple way to keep your body flexible. Just take a few minutes, two or three times a day to do some stretches. Pick several stretches so you can work the different parts of your body. It's simple, easy, and safe. If you're in decent shape and a bit adventurous you can try dynamic stretching. You simply stretch as you move instead of stretching and holding. If you try this be sure to only move as far as you'd normally be able to - don't try to overextend. **Yoga and Tai Chi.** Yoga and Tai Chi are a great ways to improve strength, flexibility, and balance. They can also help you relax and unwind after a stressful day - a great benefit for your physical and mental health. Many classes for seniors include simple poses and moves that are easy to remember. There's even a form of yoga that involves posing with a chair which is safe and beneficial even as you age. **Dancing.** Want to get a workout and probably not even realize it? Then get your spouse or a group of friends and go out dancing. Not only do you get a great cardio workout, you also work many of your major muscle groups all at the same time. You don't have to spin around crazy on the floor to get a workout; just dance however you feel comfortable. The best thing about dancing is that it's fun, so you'll want to do it all the time. **Lifting Weights.** As we get older, we begin to lose muscle mass. Weightlifting can help you stop and even reverse this muscle loss. Regular weight bearing exercise also helps keep your bones strong and healthy. You can work on machines at the gym, lift free weights at home, or even do reps with items you have around the house. It's important to talk to your doctor before starting any exercise routine. He or she can tell you what workout is best for you. First go to your doctor, then get up and get some exercise.