

Exercise Essentials for Healthy Aging



By [Diana Rodriguez](#)



- By [Diana Rodriguez](#) | Medically reviewed by [Pat F. Bass III, MD, MPH](#)
- Aging is no excuse to give up exercise.
- Senior health means staying active — it can only improve the way you feel.
- Getting older should be about relaxing and taking it easy, right? Not exactly.
- Exercise is a necessary part of [healthy aging](#).
- You will benefit from just about [any type of exercise as you age](#), as long as you're not at risk of injury.
- **Low-impact exercises** are often the best choice, especially when coupled with **weight-bearing exercises**.
- Here are some options to **keep you fit, flexible, and feeling energized**.



- Choose at least one exercise from each group:

Cardiovascular exercise:

- **Cardio gets the heart pumping and blood flowing**, and may leave you a little sweaty and breathless.

Good cardio exercises to try are:

- **Swimming**
- **Walking or light jogging**
- **Water aerobics or other water classes or exercise**
- **Biking**
- **Hiking**
- **Tennis**
- **Golf (minus the carts)**



Balance training.

Keeping muscles stretched, flexible, and limber will help you feel better, and working on balance can prevent falls. Strengthen balance and flexibility with:

- Pilates
- Frequent stretching
- Yoga
- Tai chi

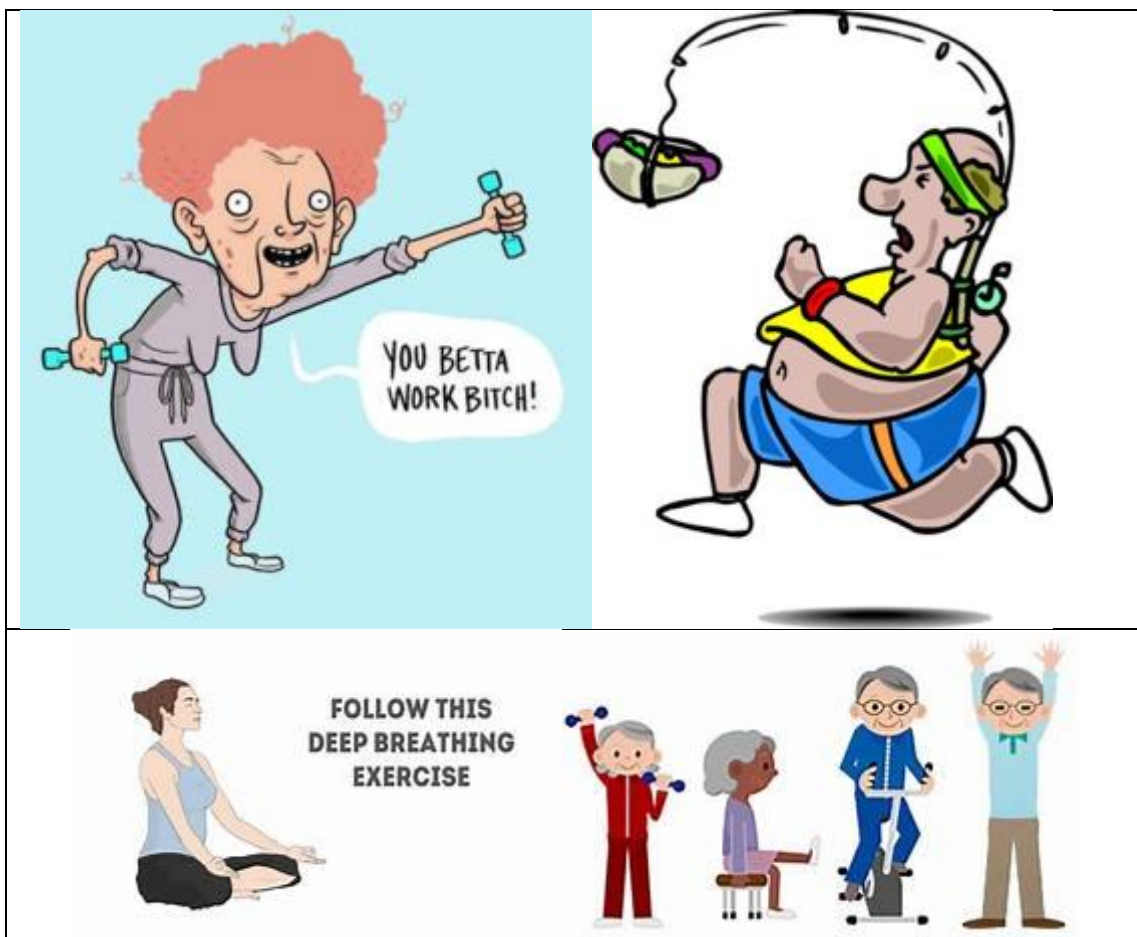




Strength training.

You don't need to become a bodybuilder, but strengthening muscles can make everyday chores and activities easier, plus it helps your bones. Boost muscle strength using:

- Elastic resistance bands
- Light free weights or dumbbells
- Weight machines
- Using pieces of furniture or walls at home for resistance



How Exercise Helps Overall

Exercise keeps you moving, healthy, and feeling energized. But staying active also benefits your mind, spirit, and body by:

- Keeping you **independent** and able to take care of yourself at home
- Helping you **stay strong and fit** so you can play with grandchildren
- Helping you **sleep better**
- **Preventing weight gain** and contributing to the loss of extra pounds
- **Reducing the risk of falls and broken bones**
- Improving your **self-confidence and feelings of happiness and self-worth**
- **Lowering your risk of serious illnesses** like heart disease and diabetes
- Keeping **your brain and memory functioning** well

Making Exercise Part of Your Schedule

It can be tough to make exercise a habit and a regular part of your day, but the benefits are well worth the effort. Make a commitment to exercise, and use these tips to help you ease into a workout program:

EXERCISE TIPS



**DON'T PUT
IT OFF**



**KEEP IT
FUN**

**SET GOALS BUT
BE REALISTIC**



**"WARM UP" YOUR BODY
BEFORE YOU EXERCISE**

**Try to be active
1 hour a day**



**BREAK YOUR
HOUR UP INTO
SMALLER CHUNKS**



**EXERCISE WITH YOUR
FAMILY OR FRIENDS**



**STAY
HYDRATED**



**EAT
HEALTHY**

**DO SOME STATIC STRETCHING
AFTER EXERCISE**



- **Talk to your doctor.**
- Make sure it's safe for you to start an exercise routine, and learn which exercises are best and how much you can push yourself.



- **Get equipped.**
- You'll need sturdy, **supportive shoes** for whatever exercise you choose, whether it's walking or biking.
- Also make sure you have **clothing that's comfortable** and will help wick away sweat.



- **Make the time.**
- **Set aside time every day for exercise**, even if you start just by taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or with a **walk around the block**.
- Gradually work your way up to longer workouts on most or every day of the week.

- **Turn tasks into exercise.**
- You don't have to hit the gym for it to count as exercise.
- **Scrub your house** from top to bottom, mow the lawn, or tackle big projects like **cleaning out clutter in closets, the basement, or garage**.

- **Get motivated.**
- Consider getting a workout buddy to keep you on track or **hiring a personal trainer to develop a program**.
- A trainer will encourage you to stick with it and help you chart your progress.

- **Make it fun.**
- Exercise doesn't have to be an exhausting, sweaty chore that you dread. **Enjoy your workout!**
- Go dancing, swimming, bike with your friends, or take up a new sport or game.
- While you're exercising, listen to music, chat with a friend, or just escape into your own thoughts.

You'll be amazed at how easy it is to work in small bits of exercise each day and how you'll come to enjoy it and look forward to it.

Everyone wants to stay healthy, active, and independent as they age, and regular exercise is the key.



5 Components To Physical Fitness

Cardio Respiratory Capacity

Cardiorespiratory ability is the capacity of the heart, lungs, and blood vessels to supply oxygen and nutrients to the muscles for a sustained period

Muscular Strength

Muscular strength and endurance is the ability of certain muscle groups to generate force. Muscular strength is the maximum amount of force generated by muscle groups.

Body Composition

Body Composition is a measure of the amount of lean and fat mass found in the human body

Flexibility

Flexibility is the capacity of a joint to move freely throughout a full range of motion.

Muscular Endurance

Muscular endurance is the capacity of muscles to sustain forces for prolonged periods

Strong Today...Stronger Tomorrow...