

Staying Fit with Age-Related Pain



Getting enough of the right kinds of exercise can keep you stronger and healthier as you age. It's never too late to start exercising. Here are five tips from the National Council on Aging:

1. **Talk to your doctor.** Regardless of whether or not you currently experience any pain, be sure to check with your primary health care provider before beginning a fitness program (or adding to an existing one).
2. **Start slowly.** It's always a good idea to ease into physical activity, especially if you've been away from it for a while. Additionally, be sure to avoid "pushing through the pain," which is a popular form of exercise advice that's poorly informed and could cause further pain and harm.
3. **Find your motivation.** When you're busy, tired or achy, exercise may be the last thing on your mind. Whether you schedule a regular "workout time" with a friend, set specific goals and reward yourself for meeting them, or resolve to try one new activity each week or month. It's easier to prioritize exercise when you're motivated.
4. **Try what works.** For well-rounded fitness, be sure to get a combination of these three types of exercises:

Strength: Weight training helps keep your bones strong and your muscles healthy. If you don't have access to a gym or don't own dumbbells, don't worry: bodyweight exercises and resistance bands are a great alternative. Try searching online workouts for suggestions and guidance.

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Flexibility: Keeping your muscles flexible leads to better balance, posture, and overall physical functioning: all of which are important to maintaining independence as you age. It reduces your risk of falls and fall-related injury, eases joint pain and helps you better perform daily activities. Try gentle yoga or tai chi to get started.

Endurance: It's important to strengthen your heart and lungs, too: not only does it help prevent cardiovascular disease, but endurance exercises may help reduce pain and stiffness if you have degenerative joint disease like osteoarthritis. Low-impact activities like walking, swimming or riding a stationary bike are great options.

5. Rest. Recovery time is just as important to your fitness as active exercise. Resting helps your body repair itself and prevents injury and pain from overuse. Limit weight training to every second or third day and always listen to your body. Being a little tired and sore is normal, but if something truly hurts, stop and ask your doctor before resuming your routine.



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