



## ➤ Healthy aging

September

### Exercise for healthy aging

As an adult, it's more important than ever to keep your body in good working condition. Along with a healthy diet, exercise is an essential way to keep your muscles, bones and joints strong and prevent many health issues that arise as you age.

If you're generally fit, you need at least two and a half hours of moderate-intensity exercise a week combined with muscle-strengthening exercises two days a week. Moderate-intensity exercise includes activities like brisk walking, riding your bike or pushing a lawnmower – anything that gets your heart beating faster for at least 10 minutes at a time.

There are several ways to strengthen your muscles. Heavy gardening like digging or shoveling, lifting weights or yoga can keep your muscles strong and your body more agile.

Remember, you only have to be active for 10 minutes at a time – so choose activities you enjoy, get up and get moving!

Source: CDC

### Need help quitting smoking?

You've probably tried to quit smoking before. But it's never too late to try again – and succeed! Quitting has benefits at all ages. Your quality of life will improve almost immediately after quitting. For example, just 20 minutes after quitting your heart rate drops to a normal level. After 12 hours, the carbon monoxide level in your blood returns to normal and within 2 weeks to 3 months, your heart attack risk decreases and your lung function improves. Along with reducing your risk of a heart attack, stroke and lung cancer, you will most likely save a lot of money, have fewer wrinkles and increased energy!

Quitting smoking is a process, and sometimes a very challenging one. Talk to your doctor and research programs that you feel comfortable with. Friends and family can be great a support system, as well – so reach out. Quitting smoking is the greatest gift you can give yourself, so get started today.

Source: NIH Senior Health, CDC, American Lung Association

### Trivia time:

*What never stops growing as you age?*

*Answer: Your ears and nose!*



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### Keep your bones healthy!

Strong bones are important at every age. They support us and allow us to move as well as protect our heart, lungs and brain from injury. Keeping our bones healthy starts when we are young and continues throughout our entire life. Loss of bone strength can lead to osteoporosis, a condition where bones become weak and are more likely to break.

The good news is you can improve your bone health at any age. A healthy diet (including foods with plenty of calcium and Vitamin D) combined with 30 minutes of physical activity each day are great ways to help keep your bones strong. Older adults typically need 1,000 to 1,200 mg of calcium per day – dark leafy greens, cheese and low-fat milk are all great sources. Avoid smoking, limit the use of alcohol and keep your weight at an optimal level to ensure good bone health and an active lifestyle for years to come.

Source: NIH, Ortho Info

### Active mind, healthy mind

People with healthy, active minds live rich and fulfilling lives. Be one of them! There are lots of great ways to keep your brain healthy.

- **Challenge your brain** – Learn something new, study a foreign language, travel, go back to school.
- **Get mental exercise** – Keep up with current events, play word games, do puzzles and read, read, read!
- **Get physical exercise** – It increases blood flow and oxygenates the brain.
- **Eat right** – Choose foods that promote brain strength like fresh fruits and veggies, fish and whole grains.

Sources: NIH, OEDB, Help Guide

### Heart health 101

Your heart is a hard working muscle about the size of your palm. Taking care of your heart is one of the most important things you can do for your health – at any age. Start with eating a healthy diet, full of fruits, vegetables and lean meats. Make sure to get plenty of exercise, keep your weight at a healthy level, avoid smoking and alcohol and keep stress managed for a healthy heart and a happier you!

Source: American Heart Association, ODPHP, NIA

### Trivia time:

*What's the average life expectancy?*

*Answer: In the U.S. it's almost 79 years, but it was only 49 years in 1900. Thank you, modern medicine!*