



Be active! Be healthy! Feel fit! Stay safe!

Why stay active?

It's important to stay active as you age. Lack of activity can be as bad for you as smoking!

Physical activity will help you stay healthy, feel better, have more fun, and be more independent. It will help you keep your bones and muscles strong, reduce aches and pains, and improve your balance and mobility. It will also lower your risk of falling—and of having a serious injury if you do fall.

What activities are best?

Be active and be careful. Some activities may be safe for someone else, but not for you. *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults* provides good advice on how to stay safe while you get more active. Your doctor or a fitness, healthcare or recreation provider can also help you find activities that improve your strength, flexibility, and endurance without being hurt.

Strength and balance activities include things you may already do regularly such as carrying groceries and laundry, climbing stairs, and standing up from your chair! (Next time you stand up from your chair, sit down and stand up several times before walking away.) They also include simple things that you can do at home, such as wall push-ups and lifting cans of food—or you can take a formal weight-training class.

Flexibility activities include stretching, bowling, dancing, gardening, golf, Tai Chi

and yoga. Chores like mopping the floor, washing your car, and yard work count too!

Endurance activities include dancing, walking and swimming. Cross-country skiing, cycling, hiking and skating may be appropriate for some people.

How do I avoid injuries?

- Start any new activity slowly and build up gradually. You may want to increase your activity level as your fitness improves. But don't increase what you do by more than 10% each week.
- Use the right equipment. Start with shoes suited to your activity. And wear whatever other safety gear is appropriate (such as a helmet if you cycle).
- If you use any equipment, such as a bike, rower, or treadmill, make sure it's in good working order and adjusted for your safety and comfort.
- Warm up before you exercise. An easy way to do this is to walk at your normal pace while you emphasize your arm swing.
- Aim for 30 to 60 minutes of moderate activity every day. Break it up into periods of 10 to 15 minutes if you need to.
- Vary your routine, to exercise different muscles and avoid getting bored. Maybe you can walk one day, and swim the next.
- Listen to your body. If you experience severe pain or swelling, STOP and get professional advice.

Get a FREE copy of *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults*, at 1-888-334-9769 or www.paguide.com