



# Health Matters

## Overcoming Sitting Disease

### You Can Be Active at Home

If you have difficulty standing or walking you can still benefit from getting active. In most cases, you have more to lose by not exercising. There are plenty of ways to be active in the home as well. It's up to you. If you have limited mobility and strength, your physical activities should be focused on "functional fitness." For many, physical activity could mean maintaining your daily activities. Getting out of bed and into your chair without assistance is being active. If possible, try walking in the house for 10 minutes, 3 times a day. Cleaning, cooking, and chores around the house all count as activities. Try chair exercises like, arm-curls and leg raises. Soup cans are great if weights aren't available. Stand and hold on to a chair for support and stand on your tip toes and hold for a second. Bend your knee lifting your foot as far behind as you can, then repeat. Slowly bend one knee toward your chest without bending your waist or hips, then repeat.

Every area of your life can benefit from exercise and physical activity. Getting active will improve your mood and overall well-being. Physical activity can prevent or delay diseases like heart disease, osteoporosis, and diabetes. Muscle-strengthening exercises can improve balance. Better balance can reduce the risk of falling and fracturing bones. Exercise can improve the ability to live independently and helps make your activities of daily living easier. You can begin or build upon your at-home fitness plan. Activities of daily living can be a part of your fitness plan.



Always talk to your health care provider before beginning an exercise program.

**When beginning an exercise start slowly—listen to your body and your doctor.** You should always be able to catch your breath and speak comfortably while exercising. It is also normal to sense effort, and maybe even discomfort, but you should never sense pain.

Many types of exercise may be used to increase your activity. **Stretching exercises** increase your range of motion. Gaining more flexibility will make it easier for you to do everything from tying your shoes to reaching for things overhead. **Balance exercises** are needed to improve standing and walking. The goal is two or three times per week. **Strength exercises** involve using weights or resistance bands. Resistance exercise increases muscle strength. Weight bearing exercise also increases bone strength and density. The goal is two or three times per week. **Aerobic exercise** helps build endurance and a healthy heart. The goal is 30 minutes per day. Try 10 minutes, 3 times a day. This type will help you be able to do the things you love for longer periods of time. Like walking with friends or dancing. An exercise program should include all four of the above types for maximum benefits.



Resources:

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/exerciseforolderadults/benefitsofexercise/01.html>, accessed October 11, 2011.



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