F.I.T. WITH LYNNE

Exercise 101 for Older Adults



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I have never done any formal exercise; Why should I bother starting now?

As you get older, exercise can help you live a longer, healthier life and maximize your independence. Exercise has many benefits for seniors including:

- **Improving your strength.** This helps you stay independent. The stronger you are, the easier it is to do your day to day activities from the mundane (getting out of a chair, climbing stairs, housework) to the enjoyable (playing sports, maintaining hobbies).
- Reducing your risk of falls.
- Giving you more energy and helping you sleep better.
- Preventing or delaying diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, or osteoporosis.
- Improving your mood and reducing anxiety and depression.

What type of exercise should I be doing?

There are 4 main types of exercise you should be doing.

Aerobic Exercise — This is physical activity that focuses on strengthening your heart, lungs and circulatory system. Examples of aerobic exercise include walking, jogging, swimming, cycling and dancing. You should aim to build up to 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity exercise a week.

Strength Training — This is exercise that makes your muscles stronger. This includes doing body-weight exercises, using resistance bands or lifting weights. Strength training should be done at least 2 non-consecutive days per week. Your routine should include exercises to strengthen your major muscle groups.

Balance Training — This is exercise that helps to improve your balance and keep you staying upright. Balance training improves your stability and reduces your risk of falling. Balance training can be done every day.

> **Flexibility —** This is exercise that involves gently stretching your muscles to improve the range of motion in your joints. Improved flexibility helps you to move more easily. Flexibility training can be done every day.

All of this exercise sounds overwhelming and I am really out of shape, where should I start? Is exercising even safe for me?

It is a good idea to consult with your doctor before starting into any new exercise program especially if you are inactive or have a chronic illness. That being said, it is safe for most adults over 65 years old to exercise. Most people with chronic illnesses like heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis can exercise safely and can even improve their condition.

Start slowly. Sit less, move more! Set realistic goals for yourself. If you are currently inactive, it is not realistic to start walking 150 minutes per week. Begin with 5-10 minutes of walking most days of the week and build from there. Find movement you enjoy! Having a friend to exercise with can help you stay motivated.

If you are unsure of what to do when it comes to exercise, hire a personal trainer. Hiring a personal trainer can provide many benefits such as personalized workout plans tailored to your specific goals and needs, and guidance for proper form to prevent injuries. A personal trainer can offer support and encouragement to help you reach your fitness goals faster and more effectively than going it alone.

Start moving today! All of the little changes you make can add up to one big difference!