
EXERCISE & A HEALTHIER

Heart disease is responsible for 1 in 4 deaths. It's the leading cause of death for both men and women in the U.S. Adults over the age of 65 are more likely than younger people to have heart disease and are at a higher risk of complications that lead to death.

Consistent exercise can make a huge difference in building a healthier heart. There are so many potential benefits, people should actually be looking forward to physical exertion...especially seniors.

Studies have shown that for heart rehabilitation, older adults typically have the most to gain by engaging in regular exercise. However, they often fall through the cracks. It's quite common for them to think of exercise as something they shouldn't do, or think you cannot do. In fact, those with the worst physical impairments at the outset of starting an exercise regimen have been found to benefit the most.



Walking a dog can be an enjoyable type of consistent exercise with physical and mental health benefits.

CREATING A ROUTINE

The keys to a sustainable exercise routine are a positive attitude, choosing something you enjoy doing, practical scheduling, and setting achievable physical and mental health goals.

Here are some of the positive health changes that can be monitored and add to one's motivation to continue their physical exertion program.

- ◆ A slower heart rate.
- ◆ Lowering of blood pressure.
- ◆ A drop in stress level, feeling of anxiety and symptoms of depression.
- ◆ Improved oxygen efficiency.

For many seniors, it helps for them to participate in physical activities with a group of their peers. So they join classes and clubs at senior centers, health clubs, YMCA's/YWCA's, churches, local recreation centers and community colleges. The added social contact (and peer pressure) enhances their enjoyment and their commitment.

OTHER PLUSES

Regular exercise can offer seniors a variety of other health and personal benefits. Here are some of the possibilities.

- ◆ You tend to feel better and stay healthier. Also, exercise can help in keeping chronic issues under control. These may include:
 - ➔ Weight issues - too much and too little.
 - ➔ Diabetes.
 - ➔ Arthritis.
 - ➔ Osteoporosis.
- ◆ Provide the strength and energy to do (and enjoy) the things you love and/or need to do.
- ◆ Keep you more independent.
- ◆ Make it easier to fall asleep and helps you sleep more soundly.
- ◆ Visit the doctor less often, promote quicker recoveries and reduce the need for meds.

(Sources: National Institutes of Health, SeniorFitness.net, MedicalNewsToday.com)

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