

# Active vs. Inactive

*Don't Let Covid-19 Crisis Lure You Into Being Idle Or Lazy*

Taking it too easy can be risky. The U.S. Surgeon General's office has reported that inactive people are nearly twice as likely to develop heart disease as those who are more active. They also report that a lack of physical activity can lead to more doctor visits, more hospital stays and/or more use of medications.

In addition, a lack of activity can have a negative effect on a person's personal freedom. Being sedentary can speed up the loss of the ability to do for oneself, and lead to person being more dependent on others.

On the other side of the coin, research has found that being physically active on a regular basis can help to prevent (or delay) many diseases and disabilities. These ailments include arthritis, high blood pressure and diabetes. At the same time, activity can improve a senior's mood and attitude, and help them to decrease and manage their stress.



*Healthy activity can take on different forms and lead to a variety of accomplishments.*

## Common Barriers

There is a wide variety of obstacles that can keep seniors from being more active. Here are some of the common impediments. In individual cases, these can be valid barriers, or used as excuses.

- ◆ Attitude to activity and belief in one's ability.
- ◆ Illness and chronic conditions.
  - ➔ Pain and discomfort.
  - ➔ Fatigue and lack of endurance.
  - ➔ Disability (physical and mental).
- ◆ Fear of injury
  - ➔ Poor balance.
- ◆ Cognitive and decision-making issues.
- ◆ Financial limitations (real and perceived).
- ◆ Current habits, routine, comfort zone.
- ◆ What is considered "normal" by seniors, their family members and/or society.

## Overcome Challenges

Yes, being active can be challenging for seniors. It can be hard to motivate yourself when energy is low, you are worried about falling down, or your joints ache a bit. And yes, exercise can be boring. Plus, restrictions due to the Covid-19 crisis are making shared activities more difficult.

Here are some suggestions.

- ◆ Use safe exercise machines - treadmills with handrails, stationery bikes, ellipticals, etc.
- ◆ Exercise using resistance bands.
- ◆ Take a lesson or class online - exercise, stretching, yoga, dance.
- ◆ Gardening, indoor or outdoor.
- ◆ Household chores - vacuuming, dusting, laundry, cooking, etc.
- ◆ Any activity you enjoy doing that gets you moving and/or is mentally stimulating.

(Sources: NIHSeniorHealth.gov, AgingCare.com)

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