

# Live Healthy Georgia – Seniors Taking Charge!



May 2010 Newsletter

## Physical Activity: Getting and Staying Active



Physical activity is important at every age and is essential for healthy aging. It is never too late to start exercising! Adults 65 and older gain valuable health benefits from regular exercise, which extend throughout their lives.

### Key Guidelines for older adults

- Avoid inactivity. Any amount of exercise is better than none!
- For significant health benefits, aim for 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) a week of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity
- For additional health benefits, perform strength training activities that involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week
- If you have a chronic condition and cannot get 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week, be as physically active as your condition allows

- Also participate in exercises that maintain or improve balance
- Remember to consult your doctor before beginning a new physical activity plan

### Examples of Moderate Aerobic Activity

- Walking briskly
- Hiking
- Light gardening/yard work
- Dancing
- Golf
- Bicycling (less than 10 mph)

### Examples of Vigorous Aerobic Activity

- Running (5 mph)
- Bicycling (more than 10 mph)
- Swimming
- Aerobics
- Walking very fast
- Heavy yard work

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## Examples of Strength Training

- Lifting weights/heavy loads
- Working with resistance bands
- Push-ups, sit-ups
- Climbing stairs

## Examples of Balance Activities

- Backward walking
- Sideways walking
- Heel walking
- Toe walking
- Standing from a walking position

## Health benefits of physical activity

Even small amounts of regular exercise have tremendous health benefits such as...

- Lowers risk of heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure
- Lowers risk of certain cancers (breast and prostate)
- Lowers the risk of high blood pressures (diabetes)
- Prevents weight gain
- Increases bone density and helps prevent osteoporosis
- Improves cognitive function
- Reduces depression



- Prevents falls

## Real-life examples of seniors getting their exercise for the week

*Mary: 75 year-old woman living independently in her own home*

- She participates in an exercise class at her senior center 3 days a week, which includes 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic dance and 20 minutes of strength training
- On Sundays she walks (45 minutes) a loop trail with some friends at her favorite park
- She adds another 30 minutes of walking each week in various ways such as walking her grandson to school, walking to a friend's house, and walking at the mall

*Manuel: 85 year-old man living in an assisted-living facility*

- He has problems with falls so he cannot get the recommended 150 mins of aerobic exercise, but is as physically active as his condition allows
- With help, he follows a program 3 days a week for 30 minutes that includes strength and balance-training activities (uses ankle weights and balance exercises)
- Walks 10 minutes every day