

# Fit Facts

FROM THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE

## Active Seniors Enjoy Life More

### GOOD NEWS FOR SENIORS

Part of the prescription for a healthier, better retirement is exercise. That simple? Yes, it is! Physical exercise has been proven to discourage declines in health and fitness. Join the growing number of seniors who are actively demonstrating that exercise helps keep a body strong and on the go.

### THE BEST RETIREMENT ISA HEALTHLY ONE

Did you know that moderate physical activity can help you live longer? That it can actually reduce health hazards? It's **true**.

So is the fact that regular exercise helps control blood pressure, body weight and cholesterol levels, and reduces the risks of hardening of the arteries, heart attack and stroke.

A well-balanced fitness program holds other benefits for you, too. It conditions muscles, tendons, ligaments and bones to help fight osteoporosis, keep your body more limber and stabilize your joints, lowering the risk of everyday injury. Regular physical activity can even help you maintain your independence.

Physical exercise is probably the best all-natural laxative you'll find. It not only improves digestion, but exercise is also good for managing lower back pain, arthritis and diabetes. And recently, there's been more indication that an active lifestyle helps lower the risk for certain types of cancer.

But maybe the best reason for incorporating regular exercise into your life is that you'll feel better and enjoy life more. Exercise helps you sleep better,

manage stress better, and gives you **more** endurance to enjoy work and play.

### FITNESS IS GOLDEN

A good senior fitness program is one that includes aerobics, muscular conditioning, along with exercises to stretch your body and promote good posture. Start with a light regime and work your way up slowly.

The best aerobics for seniors are non-jarring ones, like walking, swimming, cycling and low-impact aerobic dance.



If you haven't been doing muscular conditioning, begin with the calisthenics you probably remember. As you get used to these exercises, add some gentle resistance, such as light hand weights or low-tension rubber exercise tubing. As your conditioning improves, you could incorporate variable-resistance exercise machinery, but be sure you do so under qualified supervision. Heavy-resistance routines are not recommended for

seniors. The key to safe and effective exercise for seniors is moderation.

Don't ignore the other elements that contribute to good senior health, including eating a well-balanced diet, not smoking and seeing your doctor whenever you need to.

### DISCOVER THE EXERCISE YOU LIKE BEST

There are plenty of choices out there for you. Favorites among seniors are aqua aerobics, yoga, Tai Chi, line dancing, square dancing, ballroom dancing, even taking your dog for a walk. There are also many group exercise classes you might enjoy that offer social benefits as well.

When you're deciding on the class or program that suits you best, we recommend you select one with an instructor certified by an internationally recognized professional organization, such as the American Council on Exercise. Also, check to be sure the instructor has completed specialty training in senior health and fitness.

Look at your retirement or senior years as an opportunity to do things you never did before. Enjoy yourself!

For more information, please call the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Physical Activity Hotline:  
**1-800-952-6637**

If you are interested in information on other health and fitness topics, contact:

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