

ACTIVE AGEING

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Benefits of being active

Regular activity will help:

- + your heart and lungs work more efficiently;
- + maintain a healthy weight;
- + strengthen your muscles and bones;
- + improve your flexibility, balance and bones;
- + improve your posture;
- + maintain your mobility and independence;
- + cope with basic everyday tasks;
- + you relax, sleep and handle concerns/worries better;
- + you meet new friends and prevent loneliness;
- + give you a sense of achievement; and

Consult your Doctor!

If you are enjoying good health and do not suffer from heart problems, pains in the chest, joint or bone problems, then you can gradually build more activity into your daily routine.

However, it is advised that you should always check with your doctor before starting any form of exercise, especially if you have been inactive for some time or if you have had an illness.

Getting Started

This may seem like a big change but here are some ideas to help you get started and take one step at a time:

- + Find a seniors club near to you, this is a good way of getting started and check what they do.
- + Build physical activity into your daily routine.
- + Start slowly and progress gradually. Enjoy!

- + If you do not have a seniors' club near to you, ask a friend to join you because it will be more motivating.
- + Be flexible and set realistic goals.
- + Vary the activities to keep it interesting.
- + In warmer weather, you may want to get out and about more. When it's colder you may want to be more active around the house.
- + Try activities that will help improve strength, mobility, balance, co-ordination and mental health.

Is this physical activity right for me?

- + The majority of people can benefit from physical activity – whatever the age!
- + Wear loose, comfortable clothes, flat shoes for the best support. Do not take part if you are tired, unwell or have just eaten.
- + Always warm up thoroughly by gradually easing your body into activity for the first few minutes.
- + If you can talk to someone else while being active – you are working at the right level.
- + If you are *experiencing any pain or discomfort – stop straight away and consult your doctor.*

Most common concerns

There are many reasons why we find it hard to be active, some of these are:

- + **Time constraints**
Activity can quite easily be introduced as part of your daily routine i.e. get off the bus a few stops earlier, use the stairs instead of lift or escalator or walk to the local shops.
- + **Exercise vs Sport**
Walking, dancing and gardening can help keep you active; it does not have to be a specific sport.
- + **Injuries**
Activity doesn't need to be vigorous. Start moderately and build up gradually. Just 30 minutes a day of moderate activity such as brisk walking is all it takes to feel the difference.
- + **Feeling "too old"**
You are never too old to feel the benefits of healthy activity. If you've been inactive for some time, you will still feel the benefits.
- + **Cost factors**
Don't buy special clothes or equipment. Walking is the best activity and it's free! If you do want to join a group or class, check for special rates or offers.

This might sound like a lot, so try building up – step by step, a few minutes at a time. The important thing is that you *START*.