

Exercise recommendations for older people



Exercise is an important part of [taking control of your ageing](#). In fact, [regular exercise helps keep you independent](#) for as long as possible. That's the definition of healthy ageing.

The [Department of Health](#) recommends 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise every day, or most days. Alternatively, the [ACSM guidelines for physical activity](#) recommend 2.5-5 hours spread throughout the week. For example, this could look like 3 sessions of an hour each week. The truth is that any amount of exercise is better than none.

But what can moderate intensity exercise actually do for you? What could it look like for you? And how can you make it part of your daily routine?



Why exercise?

Exercise can help with many age-related health issues. Including the management of [osteoporosis](#), [osteoarthritis](#), [high blood pressure](#), [type 2 diabetes](#), and [falls prevention](#). It's also good for your brain and makes learning new things easier.

People who exercise regularly tend to fall asleep faster and stay asleep for longer. And they report [better quality sleep](#). And good sleep is an important factor to your health and peace of mind. Here are some [more tips for a better night's sleep](#).

Exercise is also a great way to boost your mood and reduce stress. Stress has a way of affecting your physical health. It can even shut down your immune system. So, part of looking after your physical health includes taking care of your mental health as well. You can check out [5 more tips for reducing stress here](#).

How to exercise?

Get started with whatever you can. Begin with easy exercises for 10 minutes a day, if you need. You can increase your intensity and duration as you feel able.

A good way to tell the intensity level of an exercise is the talk test. If you can talk comfortably while you do the exercise, but aren't able to sing while moving, it's of moderate intensity. If you can talk and sing easily, it's low intensity. If you can do neither, it's high intensity.

You can peruse LiveUp's [printable exercise sheets](#) for ideas and easy steps to follow. These are at the top of the healthy ageing articles page in the healthy ageing resources tab. And here are [10 tips for creating healthy habits](#) to help you keep up with your new exercise goals.

Assistive technology can help you stay active and able

Use aids if you need them to keep mobile. A walking aid, for example, might allow you to keep moving for as long as possible. And the only way to improve your fitness is to keep moving.

Using [dressing aids](#) or [assistive products in the kitchen](#) and other areas could help you. Doing tasks around the house for yourself is a good way to keep active and able as you age. Some simple [low-cost assistive technology](#) could help you stay independent for longer.

What are some ways to get started?

Low-risk exercise ideas

1. Go for walks

You could take a brisk walk through the neighbourhood or try a hiking trail with friends. You could also play golf and opt for walking between holes, rather than using the golf cart. Learn more about [walking for healthy ageing](#).

2. Do some gardening

Some garden work could be a good source of cardio, stretching, and gentle strength training. Learn more about [gardening for healthy ageing](#). In the same vein, you could do housework or wash the car. But gardening has the added mental health benefit of combining greenery with sunshine.

3. Chair yoga

Read about [the benefits of chair yoga for older people here](#). It's a low-cost, low-impact way to improve your mobility, strength, and balance. And it makes you feel great. To get started, you can follow this exercise sheet of [10 chair yoga poses to try at home](#).

4. Tai Chi

[Tai Chi](#) is also low-impact, low-cost, and high-reward. It's mostly performed in a semi-squatting position, with slow and careful movements. It practices your posture control, trunk rotation, weight transfer and strength. And it's been found to successfully decrease the rate of falls in older people.

5. Water aerobics

Moving in water is easy on the joints and rewarding to the muscles. In fact, water exercises have [physical and cognitive](#), as well as [psychological](#) benefits for older people. Improve your coordination, balance, strength, and mobility in a safe environment. It's also good for heart health, weight loss, and in managing arthritis or injuries. Start your aqua fitness journey by finding a local water aerobics class.

6. Dance classes

[Dance is a great way for older people to exercise](#). It helps with fitness, strength, flexibility, joint health, balance, and coordination. It's also associated with [reduced risk of dementia](#). Styles that involve improvisation and creativity are especially good for the brain. [Learn more about dance and healthy ageing](#).

Join some clubs

While these activities can mostly be done at home or on your own, you may benefit from doing them in group settings.

Join a walking group or community garden. It could add socialisation to your daily physical activities. A class setting can help guide you through activities like chair yoga and Tai Chi. And of course, water aerobics and dance classes are safest (and more fun) with friends!

There are many ways you can use physical activity to [keep connected with your community](#).

Things to consider

When exercising, you may need to drink more water than usual. Here are some tips on [staying hydrated](#).

You can also make exercise easier by eating well. A good diet will keep you nourished and give you the energy you need to get moving. Here are some tips on [eating for good health](#).

More helpful information

It's never too late to get started. If you need more information, take the [LiveUp quiz](#) or get in touch with one of our helpful navigators on **1800 951 971**.

Click on the links below for more detailed information:

[Department of Health Guidelines](#)

[Exercise Right](#)

[Safe Exercise at Home](#)

Read more of our healthy ageing articles [HERE](#)

CONTACT US

Website: liveup.org.au

Email: communities@liveup.org.au

Phone: 1800 951 971

Facebook: facebook.com/LiveUpAus

LiveUp is a healthy ageing initiative funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.