

5 Ways to Deal with Negative People

By Kate Rockwood | October 12, 2021



For some, pessimism is a way of life. Here's how to manage it with friends and family—without hurting your relationships or your mental health.

Everyone is entitled to bouts of crankiness now and again. But spending time with someone who is constantly down or negative can start to take a toll on you.

“Negativity has a sneaky way of rubbing off on people,” says Andrew Lima, Psy.D., a clinical psychology postdoctoral fellow with the Manhattan Psychology Group in New York City.

Some of that, Lima says, is due to negativity bias, which is the tendency in humans to give negative information more importance than positive or neutral information.

Other people’s constant negativity doesn’t just harm your relationships with them—it can also start to impact your own outlook on life.

“If you find yourself feeling depressed, stressed, angry, and overall more negative after being around certain people, it’s a sign that you are beginning to internalize their negativity,” Lima says.

It’s not always possible to simply spend less time (or none at all) with the negative people in your life. But it is important to draw boundaries. Fortunately, there are ways to handle negative people while also protecting your mental health. Here are five coping strategies to consider.

Strategy #1: Be Honest but Nonjudgmental

You don’t have to avoid talking about someone’s negativity, even if they’ve been that way forever. It’s fine to let them know that you’ve noticed their bitterness and that it bothers you.

“The key is to frame it in a way that is caring and curious so that the person doesn’t feel attacked,” Lima says. He suggests opening the conversation by saying, “I’ve noticed you’ve been pointing out a lot of negative things lately, and I’ve started to do the same. Is there something else going on? How are your stress levels?”

Coming from a place of compassion will go a long way toward having a constructive conversation. It’s also important to separate the behavior from the person, says Virginia Gilbert, L.M.F.T., a marriage and family therapist with a practice in Los Angeles.

“Don’t use blanket statements about their personality,” she says. Instead, identify the problematic behavior (frequent complaining about a mutual friend, for example) and how it is negatively impacting you.

Strategy #2: Flip the Script

When possible, try to counter some of this person's negativity with positivity, Lima says. That doesn't mean you have to be a ball of sunshine at all times or never allow your friend or family member to complain.

Instead, use redirection. If they're going down a negative path, point out a positive aspect of their situation. For example, if they're complaining about a bad travel experience, you might say, "That sounds unpleasant, but what did you enjoy about the trip?"

Encouraging the person to focus on the things they're grateful for, without explicitly telling them what you're doing, can be helpful. A 2018 study published in *Psychology, Health & Medicine* found that when people spend time thinking about something they're grateful for, they feel less stressed and lonely.

Strategy #3: Resist the Urge to Fix Everything

It's not your job to solve every problem in this person's life. Doing so will only leave you feeling drained and exhausted. It's also helpful to realize that many negative people aren't always looking for you to fix their issues. Often they just want to blow off steam or receive affirmation of their feelings, Lima says.

You can also acknowledge what your friend or family member is saying—sometimes by simply repeating their take on a topic— without agreeing with them.

Strategy #4: Give Yourself Space

When a negative person is wearing you down, don't be afraid to set limits. "Rather than focus on trying to change this person's mindset, set boundaries and limit your time around them," Lima says.

If you've made a request or set a limit and the person doesn't respect that boundary, "end the conversation and don't feel guilty about it," Gilbert says.

You should also give yourself permission to let their phone calls go to voicemail sometimes or to wait a while before responding to a text or email.

Strategy #5: Recommend Help

Not everyone who is overly negative or cranky is depressed, but it can be a symptom of mental health issues, Lima says.

"Some mental health disorders, like major depressive disorder, make it extra difficult for people to attend to positive information," he says. Depression doesn't always come across as sadness or hopelessness. In men and teens in particular, irritability can be a sign of depression.

All of this means that negativity isn't always a choice. And while you run the risk of alienating someone by suggesting that they talk to a therapist, it might be one of the best things you can do for them. If they're interested but aren't sure where to start, suggest that they talk to their primary care physician, who can likely connect them with the right people.

Active Leisure Improves Heart Health and Longevity

How you spend your free time may affect how much life time you have to spend. While nothing beats regular exercise, a new Swedish study reports that older adults who are more active in their leisure time were less prone to cardiovascular problems and lived longer than their sedentary peers. The benefits were seen regardless of whether the seniors also engaged in vigorous exercise.

"Every time you move around rather than sit, you challenge your heart to beat a little faster, training it to be stronger and fitter," explains Miriam E. Nelson, PhD, a professor in Tufts' Friedman School and author of the "Strong Woman" series of books. "That is, the more you push your heart and the rest of your cardiovascular system to do, the more they can do."



ACTIVE VS. SEDENTARY: In the new study, Elin Ekblom-Bak, PhD, of the Karolinska University Hospital in Stockholm, and colleagues followed 3,839 men and women who were about 60 years old when the research began. They were given a physical exam and answered 24 questions to assess their types and levels of physical and sedentary activities.

Over the next 12.5 years, 383 of the participants died from all causes and 476 suffered a fatal or nonfatal first-time cardiovascular event. As might be expected, those who regularly engaged in moderate-to-vigorous exercise had a higher probability of survival than sedentary participants. But so did those reporting a high level of non-exercise physical activity.

Compared to people spending their leisure time in sedentary ways, those in the "active leisure" group were at 30% lower risk for all-cause mortality and 27% less likely to suffer a first-time cardiovascular event. That healthy edge remained even after deaths and cardiovascular events from the first three years of the study were excluded.

Active-leisure seniors were also metabolically healthier. Both men and women who were active in their free time tended to have a smaller waist circumference, higher "good" HDL cholesterol levels and lower triglycerides. Among men, active leisure was further associated with better insulin and blood-sugar levels. Active leisure was not linked to lower blood pressure, however.

SIT LESS, LIVE MORE: Reporting their findings in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, Ekblom-Bak and colleagues concluded, "A generally active daily life had important beneficial associations with cardiovascular health and longevity in older adults, which seemed to be regardless of regular exercise habits... For future health, promoting everyday non-exercise physical activity might be as important as recommending regular exercise for older adults."

The researchers speculated that spending your spare time sitting rather than moving around might cause the body to release fewer molecules called myokines, which in turn play a role in endocrine function.

The findings provide further incentive to get up and get moving, Tufts' Nelson says. "We're talking about things you've heard a lot about but that few people actually do: taking the stairs instead of the elevator; not driving around the supermarket parking lot to find the space closest to the door but parking instead wherever you first see a space; walking rather than driving to destinations you can reach on foot within 10 minutes (which will ensure walking a mile there and back); getting up to turn the television on and off manually rather than using the remote; and so on.

"It may not seem like it adds up to much," Nelson adds, "but it does."

A potentially life-saving prescription for fighting heart disease, diabetes and stroke could be as close as those eswalking shoes gathering dust in your closet. According to an unusual new study, the benefits of exercise in reducing mortality from those leading causes of death match or even exceed the effects of prescription drugs for the same conditions. Patients with heart disease who exercised, for instance, had the same odds of surviving the condition as those given medications such as statins or antiplatelet drugs.



"This doesn't mean you should stop taking your medications," comments Miriam E. Nelson, PhD, a professor in Tufts' Friedman School and author of the "Strong Women" series of books. "But it does suggest how effective exercise can be whether or not it is added to whatever drug regimen your physician prescribes."

MOVING VS. MEDS: In the new study, published in the journal *BMJ*, So Huseyin Naci, a graduate student at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and John Ioannidis, MD, DSc, director of the Stanford Prevention Research Center, looked at 305 previous experiments totaling almost 305,000 participants. All were randomized clinical trials, considered the "gold standard" of scientific research. Most, however, focused on medications, with only 57 involving almost 15,000 volunteers testing the benefits of exercise - reflecting, researchers said, how "we need far more information" on the effectiveness of exercise against chronic conditions.

Nonetheless, the pool of prior research was enough for Naci and Dr. Ioannidis to develop an elaborate cross-comparison of outcomes for drugs, exercise or, more rarely, both. Most of the exercise studies involved rehabilitation programs; walking or other aerobic exercises were most commonly studied, but some trials looked at weight training or other routines.

The available studies tracked mortality among patients with heart disease, diabetes, stroke or chronic heart failure. Overall, the results were almost identical for patients assigned to medications and those who exercised. As the researchers put it, "All interventions were not different beyond chance."

When analyzed by specific diseases, patients with heart disease and diabetes had the same relative risk of dying whether they exercised or took medications. Those who had suffered a stroke actually did better if they exercised, compared to drug treatment - possibly because stroke patients who exercised were healthier to begin with. Only patients with chronic heart failure did not live at least as long in experiments where they exercised compared to those where they were assigned to drugs such as diuretics.

ADDING EXERCISE: "Our results suggest that exercise can be quite potent" in treating such conditions, Dr. Ioannidis said. Co-author Naci added, "Maybe people could think long and hard about their lifestyles and talk to their doctors" about incorporating exercise into their care along with prescription drugs.

Tufts' Nelson agrees, advising, "You may never have exercised regularly before, or it may be a long time since you did. For that reason, the key to long-term success is to take it slowly but deliberately, increasing the duration and intensity of your exercise a little bit at a time. That will allow you to gain the greatest benefit without burning out. And for aerobic exercise, in particular, choose exercises that you enjoy. That's also crucial for sticking with it."

BE PREPARED

1-4. Establish baselines: Blood pressure, Waist-to-height ratio, C-reactive protein (Inflammation marker), A1C: Blood sugar level

5. Update your insurance

6. Get to the dentist

7. While you're at it, floss

8-12. Schedule these 5 screenings: Colonoscopy, Mammogram, Hepatitis C, Skin cancer, Prostate cancer

13-18. Check the mirror for these 6 things: Eyes: Yellowing=liver problems, Eyelids: Drooping=Bell's palsy stroke, Lips: Cracked/dry lips=vitamin B deficiency, Teeth: Acid reflux, Tongue: A white tongue=Thrush, black fuzzy tongue=infection, Face: Dry/discolored patches/changing moles=skin cancer

19. Get some sleep

20. But not too much sleep



21. Snap a selfie

SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF (IN YOUR BODY)

22-27. Understand these 6 scientific terms: Telomeres, Inflammaging, Microbiota, Immunosenescence, Sarcopenia, Osteopenia

28. Increase your 'aging advantage'

29. **If you exercise already, keep at it**

30. **Do something, Anything**

31-33. Measure your physical vitality: Get-up test, Grip strength, Flexibility–To improve: **Take a yoga class**

34. Join a team

35. **Do squats and lunges**

36. **Practice balance**

37-41. Enjoy high intensity interval training benefits: Improve blood pressure/heart performance, Slow aging Lower inflammation, Increase telomere length, Improve insulin response/metabolic health, Reduce risk of many diseases/some cancers

42. Have your own back. **Strengthen your core, fortify your back with plank-style exercises**

43. Go slow and steady. Tai chi

EATING THE GOOD STUFF

44. Feed your muscles

45. Build unbreakable bones

46. Eat fiber, cheat death



47. Eat fruits and vegetables ...

48. ... And nuts and seeds ...

49. ... Or maybe eat just a little bit healthier

50. Back off on calories

51-55. Cut down on 5 inflammation-causing foods: Sugar, Refined flour, Fried foods, Omega-6 fatty , Artificial sweeteners

56. Drink your milk

57. Order the guacamole

58. Boost your lentil health



59. Book a Mediterranean eating tour

60. Cut meat, add beans

61. Make time for tea

MANAGING YOUR TEAM

- 62. Throw a party
- 63. Say some hard goodbyes
- 64. Be a caregiver for yourself, too
- 65. Apply all of this relationship info to social media
- 67. Make time for romance between the sheets

CONTROL YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- 68. Use your smartphone's full potential ...
- 69. ... But not in the car
- 70. While we're on the subject, beware the left turn
- 71. Wash your hands
- 72. Don't skip the flu vaccine
- 73. See the bad guys coming

RISE TO CHALLENGES

- 74. Ask yourself: Do I react well to stress?
- 75. Find financial support
- 76. Don't drink and climb



77-82. Beware of 6 financial stress symptoms:
Back pain, digestive issues, migraines and anxiety
Absenteeism and less engagement at work
Your existing health issues are getting worse.
You self-medicate with alcohol and drugs
Difficulty in quitting smoking
Your relationships with loved ones are damaged

- 83. Don't cling to a dying profession
- 84. Don't ignore that little pain

SAVE YOURSELF

- 85. Ride in the back
- 86. Grab your life jacket
- 87. Calm that doggie: Remain motionless, hands at sides, and avoid eye contact with the dog, Slowly back away, If the dog attacks, feed it your jacket, purse, bicycle or anything, If you fall or are knocked to the ground, curl into a ball with your hands over your ears and remain motionless. Try not to scream or roll around.
- 88. Don't get lost, but if you become disoriented in the wild: Stop: Stay calm, stay put, Think: How did you get where you are? Observe: Are you still on a trail? What landmarks should you be able to see?, Plan: If you're unsure, or night is coming, stay put. Bring a whistle when you hike.

- 89. Think young

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- 90. Define what drives you
- 91. Raise your hand ... volunteer
- 92. ... But only if you really want to
- 93. Find your bridge – part time job
- 94. Take a bath in the woods
- 95. Put your best skills to the test — often
- 96. Kick around a bucket list
- 97. Hang around kids
- 98. Dust off that library card
- 99. Pray for longer life



Aging and inflammation go hand in hand. Learn what most of us are doing every day to make the process worse, and what we can do to fix it.



The visible effects of aging are different for everyone, which is super unfair, if you ask us. But rather than lament early crow's feet or thinning hair, we decided to ask doctors what aging really is—what causes declining health over time—in the hopes of learning how we can slow down the unpleasant bits of growing older while enjoying the wisdom and greater clarity that often show up around the same time as your first gray hairs. What we found out suggests that our lifestyles need to seriously change if we plan to keep a youthful look well into our golden years. So if you want to get carded at the gas station for the rest of your life, watch out for these things, which have all been associated with wear and tear on our bodies themselves:

Aging affects us on a genetic level.

1. Your Contemporary Job

The sedentary lifestyle is literally killing us. Studies suggest that women who spend at least six hours a day in a chair are 34 percent more likely to die early, and their cancer risk increases by 10 percent. The risk of early death for similarly sedentary men is 17 percent. Either way, the picture is bleak.

And the problem goes deeper than a simple lack of exercise, says Heather Hamilton, MD, a family medicine physician at Memorial Hermann Convenient Care Center in Houston. "This is not just about getting regular exercise, but also pertains to prolonged periods of sitting," Hamilton tells HealthyWay. "Recent studies show that sitting too long can lead to higher mortality and early death. One study even indicated that standing up every 30 minutes throughout the day can have similar health benefits as quitting smoking."

One study even indicated that standing up every 30 minutes throughout the day can have similar health benefits as quitting smoking.

Maybe you've heard that "sitting is the new smoking." That's pretty much what this study says, just with a lot more data and hard-to-read scientific lingo. There's no shortage of studies showing how important it is to get off of our heinies every once in awhile. But it's not that simple. So many of our jobs require us to sit at computers for eight hours a day. What can we do to mitigate the damage our careers are dealing to our bodies?

Reporting by the Washington Post that included interviews with doctors, researchers, and biomechanists offers a few solutions. Sit on an exercise ball at work, they say. When you're watching TV, get up and walk around every time there's a commercial. Whatever you do, **make sure you get up and move every half hour**, as Hamilton mentions. If you have one of those seat-warming jobs, do whatever you can to get out of the chair, she recommends. "This is applicable to many people with sedentary jobs," Hamilton says. "People can simply stand and move at [their] work station, walk down the hall, or take a bathroom break." These are small things, but they add up over a lifetime—which may be considerably longer if you follow these suggestions.

2. Skipping the Cheese



You've probably heard that the "sunshine vitamin" helps our bodies build calcium into bone. In fact, vitamin D is crucial for preventing inflammation-related disorders that come with age. Registered dietitian Maryann Tomovich Jacobsen reviewed and approved a list of the risks of a vitamin D deficiency that was published on WebMD, and they're pretty scary. The hazards of low levels of this crucial nutrient include aging-related dementia, cancer, and an increased risk of fatal cardiovascular disease. Ideal vitamin D levels differ from patient to patient, so ask your doctor if you're getting enough through diet and time in the sun.

"Physicians recommend getting at least 10 minutes of sunlight (with sunscreen) every day and a balanced diet rich in vitamin D," Hamilton says. "Some people may need to take...vitamin D supplements." There's some good news for people who need to get more vitamin D into their diets, at least. Cheese is packed with the stuff. Not as much as cod liver oil, maybe, but which would you rather eat?

3. Laser-Focusing on Cardio

It's hard enough to get to the gym in the first place. Once you're there, it can be tempting to zone out on the bikes or the treadmill. Although cardio is great, there are real risks related to a lack of strength training.

"The aging process is associated with changes in muscle mass and strength with decline of muscle strength after the 30th year," write Karsten Keller and Martin Engelhardt in the journal *Muscles, Ligaments and Tendons*. While your muscles are wasting away, your metabolism slows down. This combination of factors can lead to unhealthy weight gain, which carries its own list of horrors. The point is, arm day may be more important than you think. **Don't neglect the weights!!!**



4. Trying to Wring Even More Hours Out of the Day



We have a very sad fact to share. Brace yourself: Coffee cannot replace sleep. We know, we know. We're grieving too. The truth is that doctors are serious when they tell you to get between seven and nine hours of sleep a night, every night, at least between the ages of 18 and 64. Less than that could affect your productivity and, worse, encourage your arteries to harden.

An article in the Harvard Business Review written by Harvard Medical School professor Charles Czeisler warns us that people who sleep less than five hours a night for five years in a row are three times more likely to develop hardened arteries.

The importance of sleep cannot be stressed enough.

"The importance of sleep cannot be stressed enough," says Hamilton. "Sleep allows your body to process nutrients taken in during the day and allows your mind to process events of the day." There isn't really a problem that insufficient sleep doesn't make worse.

"Memory loss and mood disorders such as anxiety and depression have also been linked to sleep deprivation," Hamilton says. Even worse, skimping on your Zs can wreak havoc on your genes themselves, leading to DNA damage that raises your risk of cancer. We don't know how to get more hours in the week either, but it's clear that skipping sleep is not the way to do it.

5. Hating Your Job

If you want to live a long, happy life, free from the damaging effects of growing inflammation, you need to follow your passion. That's not just a feel-good platitude; it's medical science. A systematic literature review published in the journal Occupational & Environmental Medicine found that "job satisfaction level is an important factor influencing the health of workers." Hating your job can even spark or exacerbate mental health issues, explains Hamilton.



"Mood disorders such as depression or anxiety can be linked to job dissatisfaction," she says. "There is an intricate interplay between health and job satisfaction in which both affect each other. When dealing with mental health, it is important to assess outlook on work as well as work-life balance." This all makes perfect sense when you think about it. When you hate your job, you spend every day stressed out and angry. According to the American Psychological Association, chronic stress makes existing health problems worse. It encourages the formation of bad habits, such as smoking and overeating. It can even increase your risk of cardiovascular disease.

According to the latest report from the Pew Research Center, a discouraging 15 percent of working adults say they are "somewhat" or "very dissatisfied" with their jobs. But it's important to remember that many of us do have other options. No matter how restricted you may feel, there's always another job (or career!) out there, and remaining stuck in an unpleasant environment can actually speed up the aging process.

Tying It All Together

Okay, so what have we learned? Sleep enough, get off your behind, find a job you like, and work out. But no one of these things alone is enough to stop the hands of the clock entirely. To hold off the visible signs of aging as long as possible, you need to adopt a holistic approach to health, says Ellie Cobb, PhD, a psychologist who focuses on a the mind-body connection in wellness.

Aging affects us on a genetic level, Cobb tells HealthyWay, citing research by Elizabeth Blackburn and Elissa Epel that suggests the telomeres at the ends of our chromosomes actually shorten as we age. And these shorter telomeres that cause the negative health effects of aging. That's because when these DNA caps reach a certain reduced length, the cells that contain them stop replicating. They die.

"The positive news is that scientific research also shows that we can change our telomere length by what situations we experience in life and how we chose to react to those experiences," Cobb tells us. So, like, how? "Some positive ways to reduce inflammation (and therefore reduce negative aging effects) are [to] aim to get regular sufficient sleep, adopt a consistent meditation practice, be conscious of eating healthy fats and vegetables like avocados and leafy greens instead of refined sugars, exercise moderately, and find joy and thankfulness in the little things in life," Cobb says.



So that's it! Mindfulness is like calisthenics for your telomeres. We'll see you and your lanky telomeres on the dance floor in many, many decades.



5 Amazing Things That Happen to Your Body When You Start Lifting Weights

AMAZING
BODY

By K. Aleisha Fetters | May 29, 2019



Even if building muscle isn't your main focus, strength training can help you hit your health and wellness goals.

Why do most people start lifting weights?

Build muscle? Lose fat? Feel more capable and confident on their feet to stay independent longer? Help boost brain power, protect their heart, and fight cancer?

Chances are you did not pick the last one. When most people start lifting weights, they're thinking about building strength and burning fat—even though the benefits of pumping iron go far beyond flexing. **"Strength training works literally every part of your body, from your musculoskeletal system and brain to your cardiovascular system and hormonal health,"** says Matt Kite, C.S.C.S., director of education at D1 Sports Training. "Seriously, no cell is left unturned."

With at least two to three strength sessions per week, that translates into some amazing health benefits—beyond building muscle. Here are five results of regular weight lifting that are often overlooked, plus tips on how to maximize each.

1. Your Brain and Mood Get an Instant Boost

Strength training is just as much mental as it is physical. With each workout session, your brain floods with neurochemicals that influence both your cognition and mood. More specifically, feel-good endorphins and dopamine in the brain promote stress relief and have an anti-anxiety effect. And brain-derived neurotrophic factor encourages the growth of new brain cells and helps protect existing ones. That's good news for your brain at any age, but lifting weights may be especially effective for older adults. A 2016 study in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society found adults ages 55 to 86 with mild cognitive impairment who did strength training two to three times per week for six months improved their cognitive test scores. "Muscle contractions needed for strength training start with the excitability of the brain," Kite says. "The more you train, the more efficiently your brain can fire."

For best cognitive benefits, the key may be to push yourself within what's safe for you. **Working at a higher intensity—compared to absentmindedly curling dumbbells—increases the flow of blood, oxygen, and nutrients to the brain, which may explain the improvement in cognitive test scores,** Kite says.

2. You Safeguard Your Heart

Cardio gets all the credit for boosting, well, cardio health. But recent research found strength training may be more strongly associated with reducing risk of cardiovascular disease than activities like walking and biking. Meanwhile, other research in the Journal of Applied Physiology found HDL, or good, cholesterol functions better in men who strength train than those who don't. Experts are still investigating exactly why this happens, but one possible explanation is that strength training increases blood flow to working muscles more than aerobic exercise does.

The two most important factors for getting your heart rate up and blood pumping during strength training are:

- The number of muscles any given exercise works
- The intensity at which you perform that exercise

For both, more is generally better. Choose multi-joint, compound exercises, such as pushups, squats, and stepups, and perform them to fatigue—meaning you do as many reps as you can with proper form before stopping. As soon as your form starts breaking down, that's a sign you've done enough.

3. You Fry Fat and Improve Metabolism

Any exercise burns calories, but **strength training goes one step further by increasing basal metabolic rate**, or the number of calories you burn just to live and breathe. That's because lean muscle mass, which weight lifting builds, is the single greatest factor in setting metabolic rate, Kite says. "Higher levels of lean body tissue lead to higher metabolism levels and increased efficiency of burning calories."

Lean muscle mass also functions as a "glucose sink," meaning it uses a huge amount of the glucose, or sugar, coursing through your blood. Research has found strength training not only increases lean muscle—it also improves how well your muscles can take in glucose. For the greatest metabolic benefit, the advice is the same as before: Prioritize compound movements that work multiple muscle groups, such as pushups, squats, and stepups, over isolation exercises, like biceps curls or calf raises.

4. You Move Easier—Free of Aches, Pains, and Injury

Strength training doesn't just help muscles. It strengthens your entire musculoskeletal system, including bones, ligaments, tendons, and other connective tissues, says James Lee, D.P.T., a physical therapist at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City.

Strength training is a prime example of what experts call weight-bearing exercise, meaning anything you do on your feet with your bones supporting your weight. Over time, this downward force of weight on your bones helps increase bone mineral density and strength, Kite says. Regular weight-bearing exercise is essential for the prevention of osteoporosis, which makes bones brittle. And for people with osteoporosis, it's important to do as much weight-bearing exercise as one can safely tolerate.

Stronger bones aside, lifting weights also promotes joint function and muscle flexibility to boost mobility and reduce risk of injury, Lee says. In other words, you'll move more easily and safely. Your body moves by a use-it-or-lose-it principle. To maintain mobility for decades to come, focus on moving through a full range of motion during weight training, meaning you don't cut any exercises short, Lee says.

Not sure what a full range of motion means for you? Try performing several reps of an exercise with a light weight or no weight at all. Pay attention to how far each joint can comfortably move while allowing you to maintain proper form. As soon as your form starts to break down, you've gone too far. Watch yourself in a mirror, take a video on your phone, or ask a trainer at your local gym to observe your body positioning. And keep in mind the more you exercise, the more range of motion you'll have available over time.

5. You Can Fight Cancer Head On

Observational research of more than 80,000 adults found **people who strength train regularly are 31 percent less likely to die from cancer**, compared with those who don't lift regularly. Any type of exercise can help reduce cancer risk, Kite says, but strength training has an edge by also improving the body's ability to survive cancer treatment.

Muscle mass is a strong predictor of how well people can tolerate the side effects of harsh cancer treatments like chemotherapy, according to a review in *Therapeutic Advances in Medical Oncology*. And low muscle mass may be startlingly common, scientists are discovering. In fact, a *JAMA Oncology* study found 34 percent of women who were newly diagnosed with nonmetastatic breast cancer had low muscle mass.

By adding two to three strength sessions to your weekly routine now, you'll increase muscle mass and better prepare your body to handle whatever life throws your way.

This workout will help you to sculpt shapely, sexy, toned arms and will also target your shoulders and back with a variety of exercises to ensure you target all the different muscle fibers. The more ways you target your arms, the better shape you'll achieve.

You want to ditch the arm flab and sculpt yourself a pair of sexy, shapely arms. That requires a combination of:

1. Reducing fat (to reduce size and jiggle)
2. Toning arm muscles (to increase shape and firmness)

First off, it is impossible to "spot reduce", that is to lose fat from a specific area. When you do exercises that target a specific area, you're actually targeting the muscles (not fat!) in that area. That means you're doing step 2, which is increasing the shape and firmness of your arms by toning your arm muscles. That will get you some results, but fighting jiggle arms requires more than just spot exercises!

To get the amazing arms you want and to ditch that flab from the back of your arms, you must also do step 1 (reducing fat). Therefore, be sure to include regular cardio workouts in your training routine, eat a healthy, balanced and nutrient-rich diet, and get at least six to eight hours of sleep to allow your body to repair and recover.

Not only will this workout help you to sculpt the sexy arms you're after, but will also help build strong, shapely shoulders and upper back, which will also significantly improve your posture and pull your shoulders back, helping to flatten your stomach.

This workout should be done in sequence. Aim to do 8 to 12 repetitions with moderately heavy weights.

BICEPS CURL – Targets: Front of Upper Arms (Biceps)



Hold a weight in each hand and stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.

The palms of your hands should be facing forwards.

Bend your elbows, bringing your lower arms up towards your shoulders.

Lower your arms slowly back and with control to the starting position.

TIP: Make sure you keep your elbows close to your sides.

ALTERNATING HAMMER CURLS – Targets: Front of Upper Arms (Biceps)

Hold a weight in each hand and stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.

Keep your arms slightly bent and the palms of your hands facing inwards towards your body.

Slowly bring your right arm up towards your shoulder.

Slowly lower the weight back down

Repeat movement with your left arm.

Continue to alternate movement between your right and left arms.

TIP: Keep your movements controlled, don't use momentum/ swing your upper body during the movement. Also, make sure you keep your elbows close to your sides.



RESISTANCE BAND BICEPS CURL – Targets: Front of Upper Arms (Biceps)



Place your feet on the resistance band.

With your arms down, grab the ends of the exercise band with your hands, holding it taut.

The resistance bands should not be slack, there should be tension in the bands.

Curl your arms up towards your shoulders, such that you're pulling/ stretching the bands.

Lower your arms slowly and controlled.

TIP: Keep your elbows close to your sides. Don't let the resistance band bounce back, keep your movements controlled.

DIPS – Targets: Back of Upper Arms (Triceps)

Sit on a chair or bench. With your arms straightened, place your hands on the chair/ bench next to your butt. Extend your legs straight out in front of you. Now, lift your bottom off the bench. This is your starting position.

To do the exercise, bend your elbows and lower your butt towards the floor.

Push up until your arms are straight again and repeat.

TIP: If you want to make this exercise a little easier, instead of straightening your legs, keep them bent.



TRICEPS KICKBACK – Targets: Back of Upper Arms (Triceps)



Kneel down on your hands and knees. Grab a weight in your right hand. Raise your right elbow until your upper arm is at the same level with your back. This is your starting position. Move your raised arm backwards until your hand, elbow and shoulder have formed a straight line. Slowly and with control bring your lower arm back down to the start position. Repeat one set on the right arm before switching to the left side.

TIP: Keep your elbow steady and in the same position throughout the movement. Don't lock your elbow in the straightened position.

SEATED OVERHEAD TRICEPS EXTENSION – Targets: Back of Upper Arms (Triceps)

Sit on a stability ball (or chair), and grasp one dumbbell with both hands. Extend your arms up to the ceiling, keeping them close to your ears. This is your starting position. Bend your elbows, bringing the dumbbell behind your head until it touches your shoulders. Straighten your arms, bringing the dumbbell back up to the ceiling.

TIP: Do not lock your elbows when you have your arms straight. Make sure you do the full movement (ceiling to shoulders) to target your triceps.



DIAMOND PRESS-UP – Targets: Rear Upper Arms (Triceps), Chest (Pectorals) & Shoulders (Deltoids)



Kneel down on your hands and knees. Place your hands close together, and form a diamond shape with your index fingers and thumbs. Bend your elbows and bring your upper body down to the ground. Keep your back straight and keep hands in the same position. Straighten your arms to push your upper body back up to the starting position.

REVERSE GRIP BENT-OVER ROW – Targets: Shoulders (Deltoids) & Upper Back (Rhomboids)

Stand and put your right leg and in front of your left leg. Bend your right leg, keep your left leg straight and lean your upper slightly forwards. Your left leg and upper body should form a straight line.

Grasp a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing up and nearish your knees. This is your starting position.

Pull your hands up towards your armpits and your upper arms up, squeezing your shoulder blades.

Slowly and with control, return to the starting position.

TIP: Make sure you keep your back straight and still throughout the exercise.



RESISTANCE BAND BENT-OVER ROW – Targets: Shoulders & Upper Back



Starting position is similar to the previous exercise:

Stand and put your right leg and in front of your left leg. Bend your right leg, keep your left leg straight and lean your upper forwards from your waist.

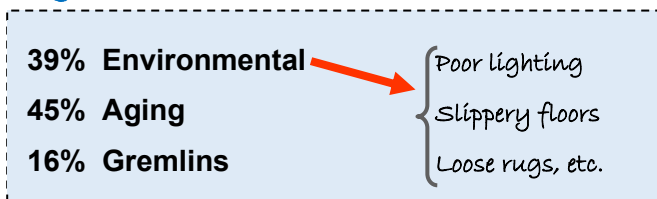
Put and resistance band underneath your right foot, and grab the ends of the resistance band in both hands.

Your arms should be extended in front of you, with a slight bend in your arms, and hands approximately and tummy level. This is your starting position.

Open your arms sideways and upwards (like a bird!) until your elbows are higher than your back.

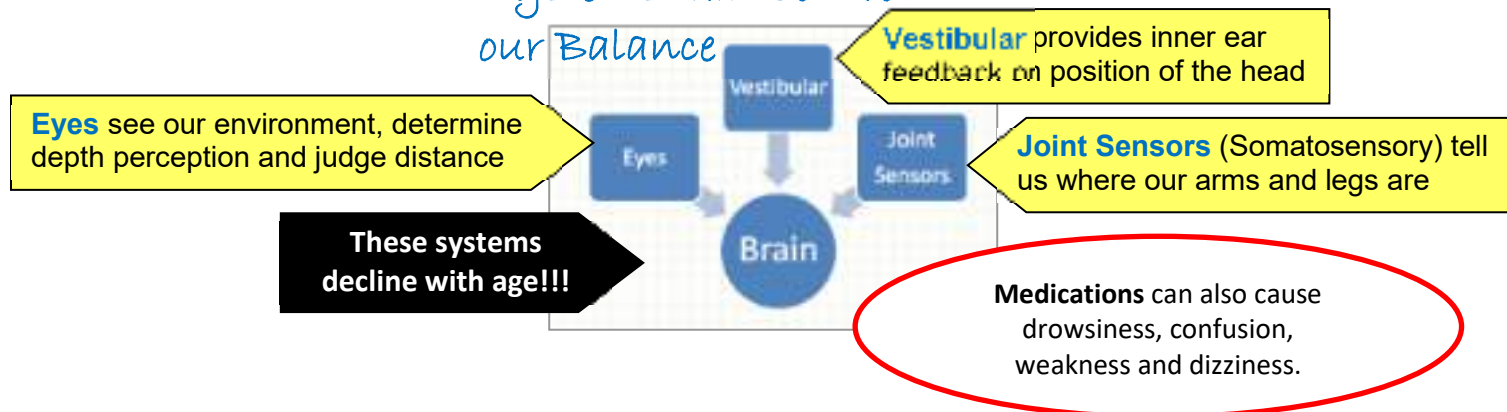
TIP: Squeeze your shoulder blades towards your spine as your lift your arms sideways and up.

Why do we fall?



Systems that Control

our Balance



Balance exercises on reverse side

Balance Exercises

Gaze Stabilization – Eyes

Improves ability to focus while your head is turning.

- Hold your thumb in front of your face.
- Move your thumb side to side.
- Follow with your eyes – for one minute
- Hold your thumb still.
- Move your head back and forth
- Focus on your thumb – for 1 minute.

Thumb Gazing



Tandem stance – Joint Sensors

Improves ability to relate to the ground and assess where your feet are.

- Stand with your right foot in front of left.
- Hold on to a chair and close your eyes
- Turn your head left and right.
- Turn your head up and down

Tandem Stance

Eyes closed
Head side to side
Head back and forward



Vestibular

Improves eye - hand coordination.
Improves ability to look around and tilt your head in different positions, activates vestibular system.

- Toss an orange in the air – for 1 minute.
- Toss it from right to left hand – for 1 minute.
- Stand and pass the orange around your back.
- Stare at orange as long as you can.
- Pass orange overhead and stare at it.

Ball Juggle



Balance information on reverse side

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November 1, 2017 by Ravi Teja Tadimalla

Are you finding it difficult to fit into your little black number? Is belly fat giving you sleepless nights? If your answer is yes, you need to make some lifestyle changes to get the figure of your dreams. No doubt, belly fat looks aesthetically displeasing. It can assume serious proportions and affect long term health, if not curbed at the right time.

Dieting and exercise go hand in hand. If you thought that only dieting will burn your belly fat, you are wrong. If you really want to lose weight, you need to include an hour of exercise in your daily routine for targeting and reducing belly fat. Here, we have compiled a list of 16 exercises that can help you reduce belly fat faster than you thought it would take.



Nothing burns belly fat faster than crunches

Crunches

Lie down with hands behind your head, knees bent and legs up, inhale. Exhale and lift upper torso off the floor. Do not jerk your head. 10 times for three sets.



Twist Crunches

Lie down with hands behind your head, knees bent and legs up. Lift right shoulder towards the left, keeping the left side of torso on the floor. Repeat on opposite side. 10 times.



Side Crunch

Similar to the Twist Crunch, except tilt your legs to the same side simultaneously with your shoulders.



Reverse Crunches

Similar to the Twist Crunch, except lift your buttocks and legs up and toward your shoulders. Keep your back straight to avoid pain and injury.



Vertical Leg Crunch

Lie down, extending legs upwards and one knee crossed over the other. Inhale and lift your upper body from the floor towards the pelvis. Exhale, bringing yourself down, inhale again, and exhale as you go up. 15 times for three sets.



Bicycle Exercise

Lie down with hands behind your head, knees bent and legs off the floor. Bring your right knee close to your chest, keeping your left leg away. Repeat with opposite leg as if you are paddling a bicycle.



Lunge Twist

With arms down at sides, extend right leg into a lunge. Both feet are forward and left heel is off the floor. Keeping the spine upright, twist your torso (not the legs) to the right and then to the left. Repeat on opposite side. 15 times.



Plank

Place knees and forearms on the floor. Look forward, aligning neck and spine. Lift knees up, supporting your legs on toes in plank pose. Hold for 30 seconds.



The Stomach Vacuum

Start on hands and knees. Inhale deeply, loosen your abdomen, exhale, tighten your abdomen. Hold for 15-30 seconds, repeat.



Captain's Chair

Sit forward on a chair with your spine straight and shoulders back. Position palms along the back side of your chair. Exhale, bring your knees up and toward your chest. Hold for five seconds. Don't bend forward or arch your back. Bring your legs down slowly. Repeat.



Bending Side To Side

Stand with your feet together (preferred) or apart, with arms down at sides. Place your right hand on your right hip, bend your body to the right. Extend your left arm up and to the right. Stay in the position for 15 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Cardio exercises to reduce belly fat include walking, running, jogging, cycling, and swimming. Be sure to eat right, drink water, move in short bursts, say no to sugar, reduce sodium intake, increase Vitamin C intake, eat fat burning foods, healthy fats, and breakfast, and get proper sleep.

Dumbbells are inexpensive, versatile and easy-to-use weights that let you create a variety of workouts to improve your health. Depending on the amount of weight you use, number of repetitions you do and pace at which you use them, dumbbells can help you improve cardiovascular fitness, burn calories, build muscle or increase muscular endurance for sports.



Dumbbells

Dumbbells are small weights, shaped like a Roman letter I, resembling mini, single-piece barbells. You purchase dumbbells in different weights, starting with lightweight versions -- less than five pounds -- to use during aerobic workouts or while using a treadmill or exercise bike. Heavier dumbbells let you bodybuild.

Muscle Building

You can build muscle with dumbbells using heavier weights. Increasing muscle mass helps burn more calories throughout the day, since a pound of muscle burns more calories than a pound of fat. The Centers for Disease Control recommends combining resistance training that builds muscles with cardio exercises. You can bodybuild with dumbbells or just tone muscle.

Cardio Health

Using dumbbells to raise your heart rate helps you improve cardiovascular health. Starting at a slower pace, beginners to exercise can improve cardio stamina by using lighter weights for 30 minutes or longer. Raising the rate at which you use the dumbbells can move your heart rate into the aerobic zone, providing even more cardio benefit. Frequent aerobic exercise also helps improve blood cholesterol.

Weight Loss

Using dumbbells to create aerobic workouts helps you burn calories by raising your heart rate. Using aerobic exercise to lose weight decrease your risk of diseases and conditions such as diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, lower back pain and high blood pressure. This type of weight loss workout not only burns calories, but improves muscle strength, muscular endurance and heart health.

Muscular Endurance

If you participate in sports, you can use dumbbells to improve muscular endurance, or your ability to use your muscles over time, such as during a tennis match or volleyball game. You use less weight and perform more repetitions of each exercise when doing muscular endurance workouts than when doing bodybuilding exercises.

Bone Health

Weight-bearing exercises help to increase bone density, decreasing your risk of a fracture. Dumbbells are an ideal way to improve bone health for seniors, because you can use them sitting or lying down and choose weights that are easy to lift and manipulate.

How Much Weight Do I Need for Dumbbells?

LIVESTRONG.COM

BY DENISE STERN



Using dumbbells, or free weights, in your exercise program yields benefits such as strengthening and toning targeted muscles and muscle groups. Using dumbbells may also increase your muscular and cardiovascular stamina and endurance. However, you must use dumbbells properly to reduce your chance of injury. Factor in poundage, the number of repetitions and your overall health and exercise experience when choosing dumbbell weights. Consult your doctor before beginning any new weightlifting or other exercise regimen.

Form and Technique

If you've never used dumbbells before, it's best to start with lower weights so you can adjust to the shape of your dumbbells, become accustomed to holding them in your hands during exercise and learn proper form and technique before advancing to heavier weights. Practice an exercise like an overhead shoulder press without weights, then with light weights. You'll notice that the exercise itself is more difficult, and that you need to engage more muscles to help you lift that weight. Concentrate on holding your stomach in and using good posture and body mechanics lifting a 2- to 3-pound dumbbell to start.

Poundage for Beginners

Beginners should use light dumbbells to prevent injury or strain to muscles and joints, ligaments and tendons. If the dumbbells feel light to you, increase your number of repetitions or sets. For example, a beginner should start with 2- to 3-lb. dumbbells in each hand and perform up to 12 or 15 repetitions of exercises like single-arm rows, lateral raises, upright rows, hammer curls, biceps curls and triceps extensions. For increased focus and intensity, perform two to three sets of each exercise or exercise circuit.

Power vs. Endurance

Your dumbbell weight requirements will depend on why you're strength-training -- whether you're lifting weights for increased strength and endurance, for example, or for power. Women lifting to increase muscle mass and strength, the Brian Mac Sports Coach website advises, can use free weights between 5 and 8 pounds, while men can use 8- to 10-lb. dumbbells to start. Build up to about 15 repetitions with the lighter weights. Gradually increase your poundage over three to four weeks until you're lifting 10- to 15-lb. weights if you're a woman and 12- to 20-lb. weights if you're a man. The higher the weight, the fewer your reps, with a maximum of between eight and 12.

Toning

Men and women who want to tone their muscles but not add bulk should keep their dumbbell weight lower than higher. For example, two to three sets of 10 repetitions using a 5-to 10-lb. weight provides enough resistance to engage the muscles without experiencing the tearing of muscular fibers that results in increased muscle mass, according to the Brian Mac site.

Exercise and Your Brain: Should You Sweat It?

Sorting out the confusing research on physical activity and cognition.



While observational studies have shown an association between physical activity and lower rates of mental decline, findings from randomized clinical trials have been mixed. And now the largest and longest such trial has reported surprisingly disappointing results: The Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders (LIFE) study, a 24-month trial involving 1,635 sedentary adults ages 70-89, found no difference in cognitive scores among those assigned to a physical activity program and a control group. Nor was there any meaningful difference in incidence of Alzheimer's and dementia.

WEIGHT AND RISK

Could a trimmer waistline in middle age help you avoid Alzheimer's later in life? That's the suggestion of a study, published in *Molecular Psychiatry*, from the National Institute on Aging. Researchers analyzed data on 1,394 participants in a long-running study of aging, followed for an average of 14 years, who regularly underwent cognitive testing. A total of 142 participants developed Alzheimer's disease during the study.

After adjusting for other factors, each additional point of body-mass index (BMI) at age 50 was associated with an earlier onset of Alzheimer's of 6.7 months. "Our findings clearly indicate that higher adiposity at midlife is associated with a long-lasting effect on accelerating the clinical course of Alzheimer's disease," Madhav Thambisetty, MD, PhD, and colleagues concluded.

But don't trade your running shoes for the TV remote just yet. "It's not unusual for results of randomized clinical trials to be inconsistent with observational studies," cautions Tammy Scott, PhD, a scientist at Tufts' HNRCA Neuroscience and Aging Laboratory. She notes that the control group was assigned to regular interactive seminars for health education, which may have had its own brain benefits: "The education intervention was both cognitively and socially stimulating, both of which have been shown to be beneficial in maintaining cognitive health."

Indeed, as the LIFE researchers acknowledged, neither the physical-activity group nor the control group showed declines in cognitive scores over the 24 months.

TOUGH ENOUGH?: Roughly half the participants, who were sedentary and at risk for mobility disability, were assigned to the moderate-intensity exercise program. The goal was to progress toward a goal of 30 minutes of walking, 10 minutes of strength training and 10 minutes of balance and flexibility activity, five to six times weekly.

"We don't actually know if cardiorespiratory function improved," comments Roger A. Fielding, PhD, director of Tufts' HNRCA Nutrition, Exercise, Physiology and Sarcopenia Laboratory, "although I would expect that an intervention of this type would improve cardiorespiratory fitness in this group of individuals. It may be that the improvement was not sufficient to induce changes in cognitive function."

OLDER AND WEAKER: Physical activity may also have brain benefits for specific groups. The LIFE researchers, led by Kaycee M. Sink, MD, of Wake Forest University, reported that participants ages 80 and older and those with lower initial physical functioning levels did see improved "executive function" from the exercise program. Executive function - the ability to plan, organize and prioritize - is crucial to independent daily living, they noted.

In an accompanying editorial in *JAMA*, Sudeep Gill, MD, and Dallas Seitz, MD, PhD, of Queen's University in Canada, wrote, "The effects of exercise on cognition also may differ in adults without cognitive concerns (as was the case in the LIFE trial) when compared with individuals with cognitive concerns, mild cognitive impairment or dementia.... Optimizing physical activity should be encouraged at every age—not just when symptoms of cognitive decline appear."

BRAIN SCANS: Other recent findings, in fact, continue to support a role for physical activity in protecting the brain. In results reported at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference - and so not yet published in a peer-reviewed journal - previously sedentary older adults who started exercising showed brain improvements in MRI scans. The 71 participants were split between a control group and one assigned to exercise; all wore heart-rate monitors to ensure different activity levels between the groups.

Scans of the exercise group showed improved blood flow in brain regions important to thought processing and memory, and exercisers also improved in tests of executive function. Most intriguing were spinal-fluid tests that in the exercise group indicated a reduction in the telltale "tau" proteins associated with Alzheimer's disease. The researchers are now launching a similar 18-month national study that will test exercise benefits in people with mild cognitive impairment, often a precursor to Alzheimer's.



Keep Active to Protect Your Brain

Exercise may delay mental aging, preserve gray matter.



Two new studies provide important evidence of how physical activity might reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of cognitive decline. One study reported that participants who were most active showed the least decline - the equivalent of 10 years of mental aging. In a second study, the most active older adults were found to have the largest volume of gray matter in brain regions typically affected most by Alzheimer's.

"Physical activity has consistently been shown to be beneficial to cognitive and brain health," says Tammy Scott, PhD, a scientist at Tufts' HNRCA Neuroscience and Aging Laboratory, "and there is increasing evidence that regular exercise lowers the risk for dementia and cognitive decline."

INTENSITY MATTERS: For the first study, published in the journal *Neurology*, researchers looked at data on 876 people enrolled in the Northern Manhattan Study who were asked how long and how often they exercised during the previous two weeks. Most - 90% - reported no exercise at all or only light exercise such as walking and yoga. The remaining 10% reported moderate to high-intensity exercise, such as running or aerobics.

An average of seven years later, each participant was given tests of memory and thinking skills and a brain MRI. Five years after that, they took the memory and thinking tests again.

Among people with no initial signs of memory or thinking problems, those in the low-activity group showed a greater decline on tests of how fast they could perform simple tasks and how many words they could remember from a list. Compared to the higher-activity 10%, the difference was equal to that of 10 years of aging. That disparity remained after adjustment for other factors that could affect brain health, such as smoking, alcohol use, high blood pressure and body mass index.

"Our study showed that for older people, getting regular exercise may be protective, helping them keep their cognitive abilities longer," says lead author Clinton B. Wright, MD, of the University of Miami. He cautions, however, that "more research from randomized clinical trials comparing exercise programs to more sedentary activity is needed to confirm these results."

EXPENDED CALORIES COUNT: Further evidence linking activity to brain health comes from another population study, published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*. To evaluate the long-term effects of physical activity on brain health, researchers analyzed data on a subgroup of almost 900 participants in the Cardiovascular Health Study, launched in 1989. The men and women, at least age 65 when the study began, had complete medical and cognitive tests, answered questionnaires about their physical activity, and underwent MRI scans of their brains.

The study used the questionnaires to estimate how many weekly calories participants expended in exercise, including walking, jogging and moderate cycling, as well as activities such as gardening and dancing. After five years, compared with more sedentary subjects, the most active one-quarter of participants had significantly more gray matter in parts of the brain associated with memory and higher-level thinking. This difference was observed regardless of cognitive status.

For participants who were cognitively normal at the time of the initial scan, the volume of gray matter in those areas of the brain was associated with subsequent risk of developing mild or severe cognitive impairment: Greater gray-matter volume predicted lower risk. Even among those diagnosed with dementia or mild cognitive impairment at the outset, the extent of brain atrophy was less in the high-activity group than for their more sedentary peers.

If you're not already physically active, another finding of the study should encourage you to get up and get moving: Among the small number of participants who increased their activity levels, significant increases in gray-matter volume were observed in those same key parts of the brain.

TAKE CHARGE!

What you eat may also affect your risk for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of cognitive impairment. A study of the MIND (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) diet recently reported that adherence to the diet was associated with a slower rate of cognitive decline - equivalent to 7.5 years of younger age. Those with the highest MIND diet scores were 53% less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease than those with the lowest scores. (See the October 2015 newsletter.)

The MIND diet score assigns a maximum of one point for each of these components, up to a total of 15 points:

- Whole grains, at least 3 servings/day
- Green leafy vegetables, at least 6 servings/week
- Other vegetables, at least 1 serving/day
- Berries, at least 2 servings/week
- Red meats, fewer than 4 servings/week
- Fish, at least 1 serving/week
- Poultry, at least 2 servings/week
- Beans, at least 3 servings/week
- Nuts, at least 5 servings/week
- Fast/fried food, less than 1 serving/week
- Olive oil as primary oil
- Butter/margarine, less than 1 Tbsp/day
- Cheese, less than 1 serving/week
- Pastries/sweets, less than 5 servings/week
- Alcohol, 1 serving/day (not excess)



Your glutes are much more than just cushy pillows to sit on:

They're the most important muscle group in your body.

"The glutes are our stabilizers," says Briana Kline, Pilates instructor and founder of Roots of Integrity in Chicago. "They're what push us forward when walking, help us stand on one leg without our knees caving in, and keep our pelvis from leaning forward or swaying backward." In other words, your glutes play a key role in just about everything you do. So keeping them strong is essential for staying active and independent longer. And when they're lacking in strength, your body will let you know.

Here are four common problems that may be the result of weak glutes.

Sign #1: Low Back Pain

If low back pain often puts a damper on your day, consider it a warning that your glutes are sleeping on the job.

"Our brains will call on whichever muscles are needed to perform a function," says Alice Holland, D.P.T., director of Stride Strong Physical Therapy in Hillsboro, Oregon. "If one group of muscles isn't up to the task, your brain will order another group to pick up the slack."

In other words, to help you complete everyday tasks—like bending over to lift something up off the floor—your brain will shift the brunt of the work onto the lower back to compensate for weakness in the glutes. Over time, the added stress on your lower back builds up, leading to soreness, pain, muscle spasms, and possibly injury.

Recent research backs this up. A study published in the journal PLOS One found that middle-aged women with chronic low back pain had much smaller butt muscles than their pain-free counterparts. And **the smaller the muscles, the more medical visits women made to address low back pain.**

Sign #2: Knee Pain

Achy knees are often written off as an inevitable side effect of getting older. And while it's true knee pain has many age-related causes (namely, arthritis), chances are weak glutes are a big part of the problem, Kline says. If you've been diagnosed with arthritis, strengthening your glutes can at least help offset some of the pain you might experience, she says.

Your glutes—the gluteus medius in particular—play a starring role in stabilizing your knees as you walk, stand, and chase after your grandkids.

"If you don't have musculature above the knee to stabilize where that knee is in space, it will just go catawampus," Holland explains. For most people, the tendency is to let the knees fall inward, as that's where they feel most stable, she says. But then, unfortunately, they start to feel pain.

Sign #3: Balance Problems

"When my patients have poor balance," says Holland, **"it usually means they have weak glutes as well."**

This is because your glutes provide a stable base from which your arms and legs can move. If that base is weak and unstable, your limbs become weak and unstable as well.

Sign #4: Trouble Climbing Stairs (or Keeping Up on the Tennis Court)

The glutes are a powerful, thick, and fibrous muscle, Holland says. As such, they play a major role in generating power. If you look at sprinters, gymnasts, football players, and other power athletes, you'll notice they all have noticeably strong behinds.

Your daily to-do list may not require you to chase wide receivers, but it surely involves climbing stairs, going for walks, or playing tennis with friends. All of these activities require power, and power requires strong glutes.

If you get easily tired or winded from climbing stairs, or you can't return a volley as quickly as you used to, chances are your glutes need work. "Everyone chalks loss of power up to old age," says Holland. "But it's often because of weakness in the glutes."

Do These 4 Essential Exercises to Strengthen Your Glutes



Exercise #1: Bodyweight Squat

Stand tall with your feet shoulder- to hip-width apart. Hold your arms straight out in front of you at shoulder level, and brace your core.

From here, push your hips back, and bend your knees to lower your body into a squat, not letting your knees cave in as you do so. Pause at the bottom for two seconds, then squeeze your glutes to return to standing. Perform two sets of 10 reps three to four times per week.



Exercise #2: Standing Hip Extension

Stand tall holding onto a wall, kitchen counter, or back a chair. Keeping your back straight, brace your core, and allow both legs to bend slightly.

From here, lift one leg straight behind you as far as you comfortably can, making sure not to further bend your knee as you do so. Don't worry about how high you can lift your leg; what matters is that you're able to squeeze your glutes without using your back muscles to compensate.

Pause for three seconds, then slowly lower your leg to return to starting position. Do 10 reps on both legs. Perform two sets total three to four times per week.



Exercise #3: Clamshell

Lie on one side with your legs stacked and knees bent at a 45-degree angle. Keeping your hips steady and your top foot down, lift only your top knee as high as you can. Lower your top knee back to the starting position. Do 10 reps on both sides. Perform two sets total three to four times per week.

Reminder: How high you're able to lift your knee doesn't matter. What's important is that you activate your hip muscles without rotating at the pelvis.



Exercise #4: Single-Leg Stand

Stand tall with your feet together, and brace your core. From here—holding onto a wall, counter, or sturdy chair for balance, if necessary—lift your right foot just off of the floor so that you're standing on your left foot. Imagine a string through the crown of your head is pulling your spine straight toward the ceiling, and engage your core to avoid leaning to one side. Hold this position for 30 seconds on both sides.

Think Strong!

Secret to Sticking to Your Gym Routine

By Tyler Schmall, SWNS

FITNESS SUCCESS



Struggling to exercise? When it comes to working out, dressing for success really does work, according to gym lovers.



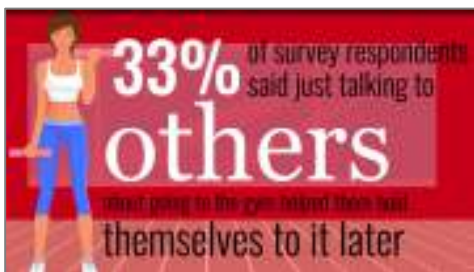
A new study of 2,000 regular gym-goers explored the secrets of maintaining a good routine and found seven in ten (69 percent) say simply getting in your gear is the real key to motivation.

In fact, the “fake it to make it” theory may also prove true — nearly nine out of ten gym-goers (88 percent) agreed that the simple act of **putting on their gym clothes** provides the biggest surge of motivation.

The survey, conducted by Barbell Apparel, found a high number (79 percent) believe owning good gym clothes to be an important first step toward accomplishing your fitness goals.

But it’s not just dressing for success that leads to gym glory, talking the talk really can help you walk the walk, apparently.

Those that need help getting to the gym for that summer bod, weight loss goal or other aims should simply try talking about going to the gym, according to exercise enthusiasts.



33 percent of survey respondents said just **talking to others** about going to the gym helped them hold themselves to it later.

34 percent have stayed motivated by taking a class at their gym and 11 percent said having a crush on a fellow gym member was enough to get them through the door.

Music was also a big factor, as 39 percent reported that listening to a psych-up playlist gets them in the right frame of mind to go to the gym.

Over half of American gym-goers (58 percent) believe that listening to music during your workout is vital.



“Confidence is half the battle and having workout gear that highlights your hard work really helps motivate you to get your sweat on,” said Alex Hanson, co-founder of Barbell Apparel.

“The results show that just putting on some workout clothes can greatly increase motivation. We’ve always intentionally designed our gym wear to help highlight the best parts of your body.”

The motivation brought on by the clothes doesn't only get people through the door, it helps them during their routine as well, according to the data.

Nine out of ten (90 percent) gym-goers agree that just owning performance-based gym clothes allows them to push themselves more during their workout.

But it's not just a comfort thing. Looking the part really is half the battle, according to the data.

85 percent reported that having cool looking gym clothes gave them more confidence, while 79 percent said that feeling like their gym clothes looked cool actually helped them physically perform better as well.



There was also a strong correlation with those who rated their gym performance well and those who owned good gym clothes and shoes. 80 percent of those who rated their gym performance a 10 out of 10 reported that they have **good gym clothes and shoes**.

One in four (24 percent) also reported that they perceive people with good gym clothes as someone who knows what they're doing.

"Your fitness isn't a result of what you do today, it's the culmination of what you're willing to do every day," said Hanson. "We founded our company with the belief that expertly made clothing could help support and motivate people to reach their full potential in the gym. Sometimes all it takes to tackle that next workout, is putting on an amazing fitting piece of clothing that motivates you. At the end of the day, those who get the best results are rarely the most talented, but almost always the most motivated."

Top 15 things that keep people motivated to hit the gym:

1. Seeing results in their body 58.7 percent/1174
2. Putting on gym clothes 58.2 percent/1163
3. Drinking a lot of water 46.3 percent/925
4. Going with partner 44.8 percent/895
5. Eating a healthy lunch 43.3 percent/866
6. Setting achievable goals 40.2 percent/804
7. Listening to a psych-up playlist 38.8 percent/775
8. Joining a class at their gym 34.3 percent/685
9. Working out in the morning 33.8 percent/676
10. Eating a healthy snack beforehand 33.6 percent/672
11. Talking about going 33.0 percent/659
12. Eating a healthy breakfast 32.5 percent/649
13. Telling your partner you're going 32.1 percent/642
14. Being able to track your progress 32.0 percent/640
15. Telling a colleague you're going 29.7 percent/593

The secret: Tweaking a few daily habits, says the author of *Love Your Age*

by Barbara Hannah Grufferman, from *AARP The Magazine*, February/March-2018

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I stood on First Avenue in Manhattan with my two daughters and my husband, a few friends and neighbors, and lots of strangers. It was a glorious fall day, and we were watching packs of runners go by, caught up in the excitement of the New York City Marathon.



Yet despite the beauty of the day, all I could think about was how far I felt from the determined athletes passing just a few feet away. Facing 50 and not exactly loving this new age, I was feeling sluggish, low energy and anything but strong and ambitious. I didn't like how my clothes fit or how my hair and skin looked. Having packed on a few new menopausal pounds didn't help, though neither did the fact that I wasn't doing anything about them. On that day, I vowed to make some changes.

I couldn't have imagined it at the time, but adopting the habit of running three times a week — rain or shine, all year long — became the foundation of a whole new life. My one new habit led to others.

As each small step built on the last, I realized that my former grumpy, frumpy, lumpy state of being wasn't the inevitable result of getting older. It was the inevitable result of continuing to make the same **unhealthy choices** I'd been making for years.

These days, at age 61, I feel fantastic. I'm living proof that the little steps we take each day don't stand alone: They all combine to determine how good we'll feel today, tomorrow and in five years. While it's never too early — or too late! — to let healthy habits into your life, you have to choose them over and over again every single day. That's how the small steps add up.

Give your face an ice bath. Instead of starting the day bleary-eyed, try an ice bath for your face. Fill the sink with water and ice, dunk your face ... and then do it twice more. Result? Radiant and glowing skin. Bonus: Some longevity experts claim an icy dunk helps build the immune system, too.

Stick with protein. Instead of carb loading at breakfast, start your day with protein. Recent studies have demonstrated that eating a sizable portion (25 to 35 grams) of protein in the morning makes us feel fuller and decreases snacking for the rest of the day. A benchmark: A 4-ounce chicken breast has 35 grams of protein.

Try office glasses. Instead of squinting at the screen at work, try office glasses. A computer screen is typically farther from you than a magazine or book is when you read it, so your usual reading glasses frequently don't work. Instead, use cheaters with half their magnification. (If 2.0 works for you with books, try 1.0 for the screen.) And after 20 minutes on the computer, make sure to take a break and look at something far away for 20 seconds, to rest your eyes and prevent headaches.

Fitness breaks. Instead of skipping your workout to do work, turn your coffee breaks into fitness breaks. Every few hours, I do exercises such as push-ups, squats and planks. If your work environment is a little more formal or public, get creative by taking short walks, either inside or outside, or spend five to 10 minutes of every hour standing up while you work.

Switch up your snacks. Instead of denying yourself treats, switch up your snacks. Dark chocolate (the kind that's at least 70 percent cacao) helps lower your blood pressure naturally. Milk chocolate doesn't. If you love frozen yogurt, try stirring a bit of honey and 2 teaspoons of unsweetened cocoa powder into some Greek yogurt.

Avoid mouthwashes. Instead of using mouthwash for bad breath, rinse with water and nibble on mint or parsley. Most mouthwashes have too much alcohol, which can dry out your mouth and make it more susceptible to bacteria and bad breath.

Choose healthy fats. Instead of eating low-fat foods, choose healthy fats in small amounts. Concerns about dietary fats have led many of us to switch to processed low-fat foods, which are often full of sugars, starches and additives. Instead, go for modest levels of beneficial fats such as olive oil and avocado, to add flavor to meals. If you're a bacon or cheese lover, buy the real thing but use just a bit.

Beef up your brain. Instead of vegging out after dinner, beef up your brain. Although cat videos may be addictive, they don't improve your focus the way puzzles or knitting or woodworking projects can. And if you don't have the energy to do more than watch TV, stream an online course or TED talk — to feed your mind.

Preserve your bedroom. Instead of making your bedroom command central, reserve the master suite for S&S. Sound sleep is essential to good health and a sense of vitality. Make your bedroom conducive to it: Reserve it solely for sleep and sex. If your bedroom also serves as an office, TV room or internet hub, your brain will associate it with higher levels of stimulation and you'll have a harder time winding down.



Focus on the good stuff. Instead of replaying bad memories, bring the good stuff into focus. We can train our brains to emphasize positive memories. Start by catching yourself when your mind turns negative, then switch the script. It takes practice, but eventually happy thoughts will become your default.

Embrace technology. Instead of being a technophobe, use your devices to the max. Set calendar reminders to alert you to your next doctor's appointment or fitness walk. Use the alarm on your phone to tell you when to feed the parking meter, and use your phone's camera to photograph where you parked. Use the notes function to write your shopping list or that book recommendation. A modern phone is filled with great tools. Use them!

Enjoy your empty nest. Instead of crying about an empty nest, turn your home back into a love nest. If the kids have moved out, give your house a romance makeover. Spruce up your boudoir, upgrade the couch and replace the school photos with images that remind you of your playful side.

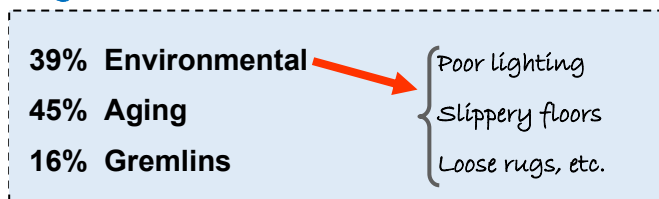
Limit alcohol. Instead of wondering if you've had one too many, admit it. Experts agree: Women should have just one glass of alcohol per day, two only on occasion. Red wine has its place in a healthy diet, but if you over imbibe, the benefits fade quickly. If drinking has become an unhealthy habit or a stress reliever, try better ways to cope (such as fitness). If it's a challenge to succeed, talk with your doctor.

Go public. Instead of making changes silently, make a public commitment. Let lots of people know you want to make a change in your life. Once it's "out there," it's much harder to go back. It's a mind game you can play with yourself and always win.

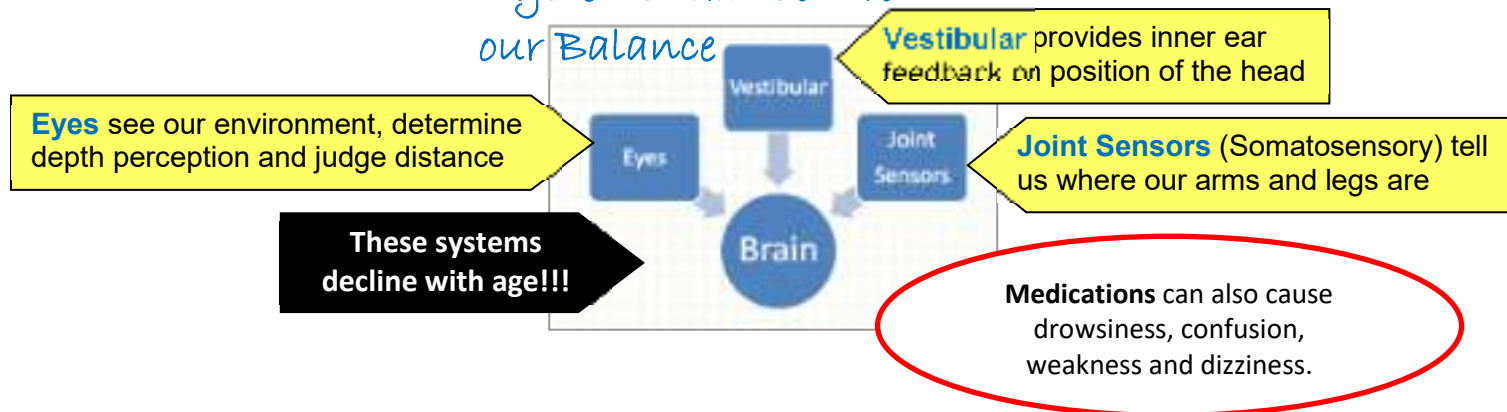
Be persistent. Instead of quitting after two weeks, give a new activity 90 days. Research shows that most life changes take at least three months to become a habit. That was true for me. When I started running, I pledged to stick with it for three months. Sure enough, in that time I saw my health and life markedly improve.

Think better. Instead of thinking "younger," think "better." We all need to get real when it comes to aging. Cosmetic treatments and procedures might, in some cases, shave a few years off your appearance. But if you aim to look and feel "better" rather than "younger," you'll wind up taking good care of yourself, which is almost guaranteed to show.

Why do we fall?



Systems that Control our Balance



Balance Exercises

Gaze Stabilization – Eyes

Improves ability to focus while your head is turning.

- Hold your thumb in front of your face.
- Move your thumb side to side.
- Follow with your eyes – for one minute
- Hold your thumb still.
- Move your head back and forth
- Focus on your thumb – for 1 minute.

Thumb Gazing



Tandem stance – Joint Sensors

Improves ability to relate to the ground and assess where your feet are.

- Stand with your right foot in front of left.
- Hold on to a chair and close your eyes
- Turn your head left and right.
- Turn your head up and down

Tandem Stance

Eyes closed
Head side to side
Head back and forward



Vestibular

Improves eye - hand coordination.
Improves ability to look around and tilt your head in different positions, activates vestibular system.

- Toss an orange in the air – for 1 minute.
- Toss it from right to left hand – for 1 minute.
- Stand and pass the orange around your back.
- Stare at orange as long as you can.
- Pass orange overhead and stare at it.

Ball Juggle



North Fort Myers Yoga &
Strength and Balance
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5 Ways to Love Your Body in Your 50s and 60s

LOVE YOUR BODY

How to enjoy the good life as you age



Aging changes us. As we trade our youth for maturity, we may have a few more wrinkles, but we often have greater self-acceptance — which brings its own special beauty, especially in our 50s and 60s. At the same time, maintaining healthy habits not only helps us feel young, but also to look our best.

Aging is a double-edged sword when it comes to body image, says psychologist Leslie Heinberg, PhD, Section Head for Psychology in Cleveland Clinic's Center for Behavioral

Health Department of Psychiatry and Psychology and Director of Behavioral Services for the Bariatric and Metabolic Institute.

“On the one hand, we live in a society that values youth, fitness, thinness and muscularity. But as we age, we inevitably move away from that ideal,” she says. “On the other hand, most people become less invested in their appearance as they age. So they feel less pressure to meet that ideal.”

Here are five tips to live a good life, looking and feeling your best:

1. Keep moving (and swing a few barbells around too)

Dr. Heinberg says exercise is the No. 1 way to improve your body and body image as you age. And it's not just cardiovascular exercise that's important. **You also need weight training.**

Working your muscles will not only improve your muscle-to-fat ratio, but will also increase your metabolic rate so your body will burn more calories, even while at rest.

2. Enjoy good food, good sleep and good friends

People who feel healthy tend to have better body images. One thing you can do to improve your overall health is to eat a healthy diet. Eating right plays a key role in helping you maintain a healthy weight — which is another thing that helps boost your body image.

Other key healthy habits include getting a good night's sleep, drinking plenty of water and maintaining an active social life.

3. Explore hormone therapy options

A lot of the body changes that happen as you age relate to a decrease in certain hormones (e.g., estrogen, testosterone). Hormone replacement therapy can help. But Dr. Heinberg warns that you and your doctor need to weigh the potential risks against the benefits.

If you're wondering if hormone therapy might be an option for you, talk to your doctor.

4. Consider cosmetic treatments if you like

If you're struggling with wrinkles and think you'd feel better with some help from a dermatologist, there are wrinkle fillers (e.g., Botox®, Juvederm®) or other dermatologic interventions). Plastic surgery is also an option, but all these are very individual decisions. Realistic expectations are important predictors of satisfaction with these procedures.

5. Give yourself a break

There's more unnecessary pressure than ever for people in their 50s and 60s to look younger in today's world. Almost everywhere you look, you'll see celebrities gracing the covers of magazines to show off how well they've aged and you'll hear how “60 is the new 40.”

While you do things to be healthy that make you feel good, embrace your age. It's OK to love yourself just as you are.



Motivational Trick #1: Talk to Yourself Like a Friend

Is it possible you're being overly harsh on yourself? Now's a great time for a pep talk. Try this: Talk to yourself—but pretend you're cheering on a loved one. According to research in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, people who encouraged themselves with “you” statements (“You’ve got this!”) rather than “I” statements (“I can do this!”) had an easier time pushing through tough tasks.

Motivational Trick #2: Recall an Awesome Workout

Whatever your shining fitness moment, focus on it when things get tough. Recalling those positive memories can rev up your motivation to exercise, according to research in *Memory*. Sometimes that trip down memory lane can go all the way back to when you started your fitness journey. Whether it's to keep your heart healthy, avoid injuries, or just be in the best shape of your life, Ross explains that reconnecting with your underlying motivation can help you surge through a lackluster workout.

Motivational Trick #3: Watch Your Favorite Rerun

Walking on the treadmill, or doing a total-body chair workout at home? Put your treadmill screen or television to work by turning on your favorite old show.

When people watched reruns of their favorite shows, their willpower and can-do attitude increased, according to a study in *Social Psychological and Personality Science*. The researchers believe that the boost comes from “social surrogacy,” or virtual friendship,” you've formed with the show's characters.

Motivational Trick #4: Find What Feels Good

A little muscle soreness during or after exercise is okay—but pain is not. If any movement causes pain, that's your cue to adjust until you find an ouch-free alternative you can perform with good form. Luckily, there are a variety of simple adjustments you can make. You can use a lighter dumbbell, or no dumbbell at all. You can use smaller movements, so you don't have to lift as high or squat as low. Or you can swap the exercise altogether for one that feels good for your body. You may need to experiment a bit to find what works for you, and that's more than okay. In fact, that's smart training. Let any fitness instructors or trainers know if a movement causes pain so they can suggest a modification.

Motivational Trick #5: Count Your Wins!

You've given yourself a pep talk, and you've made your adjustments. But what if you're still struggling to finish those last few reps or minutes?

If your form is breaking down—you're using momentum instead of muscle to lift, for example—that's a sign you've done enough of that particular exercise for the day. Don't think of this as a failure. Instead, focus on what you did achieve, Ross says. Count the exercises you completed with good form or how long you worked out. Even if you didn't meet your initial goal, you've still done something great for your health.

By Jim Shadbolt | June 1, 2017



Think about the last time you did a strength workout. Was there any exercise that felt uncomfortable, too difficult, or maybe even a little painful? That's a sign that the exercise isn't right for you. But you don't have to give up on it entirely. You can still harness the benefits by trying a regression—that is, a tweak that makes an exercise easier and safer so that you can do it with good form. An easier exercise with good form will benefit you more than a harder exercise with poor form.

Rule #1: Change the Angle of Your Body

You can make an exercise easier (or harder, which is known as a progression) by changing the angle of your body. Exercises done in a pushup or plank position are the best example of this. **The more upright your body is, the easier it will be.**

For example, doing a pushup with your hands on a step, chair, or wall is a lot easier than it is with your hands on the floor. And easier does not mean less effective. “While a standing pushup might seem very basic,” Domke says, “it can actually teach deep core and shoulder stabilizer activation.”



Rule #2: Reduce the Impact

Jumping exercises are great for building strength and power, but they're not always great for joint health, particularly for those with arthritis or a history of injuries. The solution: Take jumps, hops, leaps, and bounces out of the equation.

Instead of jump squats, for example, keep your feet planted on the ground and do regular squats. “You can vary the speed and number of reps for a challenge without the added impact,” Domke says. Or don't move your body as far during an exercise. For squats, instead of bending your knees to a 90-degree angle, try lowering down only a couple of inches. Focus on good form by pushing your hips backward and keeping your chest lifted.

Rule #4: Increase Stability

If doing an exercise on one leg is too challenging, make it easier to balance by using both. You can also increase the stability of an exercise with a chair or wall. By holding onto a chair as you perform lunges, for example, you'll take some of the work off your core and be able to focus on working your lower body—and worry less about losing your balance.

Rule #5: Reduce the Resistance

This one might seem obvious to experienced exercisers, but it's one of the easiest ways to scale down any movement: Use lighter dumbbells, kettlebells, or medicine balls. You can modify further by using no added weight at all—just your bodyweight.



Deadlifts are another traditional exercise that's easy to scale back. Instead of doing the traditional movement with weights, which is essentially a hip hinge that can be performed with or without weight. You push your hips back, keep your back straight, and hinge at the hip. Once your upper body is parallel with the floor or as close to it as possible, bring yourself back up to the top, pushing your hips forward as you squeeze your glutes. This trains your glutes, hamstrings, and back muscles, just like you would during more challenging deadlifts.



A study led by a Cleveland Clinic cardiologist highlights the dangers of a sedentary lifestyle, which can be even more harmful to your health than smoking. Plus, there's a potential Northeast Ohio component to a global deal between Germany's BASF and Russian miner Norilsk Nickel, Goodyear's gearing up for a big project in Texas, and longtime Cleveland philanthropist Agnes Gund is part of a Wall Street Journal story on art collectors' recollections of their first big purchase. Keep moving. Or get moving.

That's the main takeaway of a new study led by the Cleveland Clinic's Dr. Wael Jaber that's highlighted in this MarketWatch story.

It finds that a sedentary lifestyle is worse for your overall health than even smoking, diabetes and heart disease. The study was published Friday, Oct. 19, in the journal JAMA Network Open.

"Being unfit on a treadmill or in an exercise stress test has a worse prognosis, as far as death, than being hypertensive, being diabetic or being a current smoker," Jaber, a cardiologist, tells MarketWatch. "We've never seen something as pronounced as this and as objective as this."

From the story:

The results are particularly troubling in the U.S., where we're certainly grappling with a fitness problem. The average body mass index for an American male is 28.6, up from 25.1 in the 1960s. Anything over 24.9 is considered overweight and over 30 is deemed to be entering obese territory.

Jaber explained that being unfit, at this point, should be treated like a disease that, fortunately, has a prescription: Exercise! He told CNN that researchers now face the task of conveying the risk — getting no exercise can have a severe impact on longevity — to the general population.

The results were drawn from more than 122,007 patients who underwent exercise treadmill testing between 1991 and 2014.

"People who do not perform very well on a treadmill test have almost double the risk of people with kidney failure on dialysis," Jaber says, adding that the risk associated with death is 500% higher for people with sedentary lifestyle than top exercise performers.

He tells CNN that the other big revelation from the research is that fitness leads to longer life, with no limit to the benefit of aerobic exercise. Researchers have always been concerned that "ultra" exercisers might be at a higher risk of death, but the study found that not to be the case.

"There is no level of exercise or fitness that exposes you to risk," Jaber says. "We can see from the study that the ultra-fit still have lower mortality."

Get Fit on the Sly

10 Ways to Sneak Fitness into Your Day

by Selene Yeager, AARP Bulletin, March 3, 2017

Build core strength with a stability ball.



You know that you should get at least 30 minutes of exercise a day. But somehow the time slips by, and you never seem to find that half-hour block. No worries. People who sprinkle activity regularly throughout their day — even in one-minute increments — may get the same blood pressure, cholesterol and waistline benefits as people who exercise in longer, more structured bouts, one study suggests.

Top trainers Chris Freytag, founder of gethealthyu.com, and Lindsay Hunt, founder of walkonthehealthyside.com, share their tips for being more active all day long.

- 1. While waiting around.** Nobody likes standing in line. Here's a full-body exercise routine to help pass the time. Squeeze your behind 10 times. Tighten your stomach muscles 10 times. Stretch your arms downward behind you and squeeze your triceps 10 times. Rise up on your toes and squeeze your calves 10 times.
- 2. While sitting around.** Improve your grip strength by keeping a tennis ball at your desk at work, and another by your favorite chair at home. At least twice a day, grab a ball and squeeze tightly. Hold for five seconds, then release slowly. Repeat 10 to 15 times with each hand.
- 3. At the supermarket.** Build strength by ditching the cart and using your reusable tote bags instead. Sling one over each shoulder and cruise the aisles grabbing what you need. The additional weight is like walking with a pack on, so it boosts your heart rate and your calorie burn.
- 4. When working at a desk.** Sitting is the new smoking: hazardous to your health. If your day includes a lot of chair time, swap a stability ball for your usual perch for 20- to 30-minute periods throughout the day. (Be sure to stand up and walk around frequently, too.) A stability ball builds core strength and may reduce back pain.
- 5. While brushing your teeth.** Balance deteriorates with age, but there's a trick to getting it back. When you brush your teeth, stand on one foot for 60 seconds and then switch. When that becomes easy, try balancing while lifting your leg to the side.
- 6. While making dinner.** Keeping your shoulders strong and flexible can relieve joint pain and stiffness. So the next time you're waiting for water to boil, do some arm circles. Keep your arms out to the sides and do 15 circles in a clockwise direction, then 15 circles counterclockwise.
- 7. While your beverages brew.** If you've ever had plantar fasciitis — stabbing heel pain that's common with age — you know it's important to keep your calves and Achilles' tendons from getting tight. Loosen up each morning while waiting for your tea to steep or coffee to brew: Stand at arm's length from the wall and place one foot behind the other, keeping heels down and knees straight. Lean toward the wall, bracing with your arms. Bend your forward leg to stretch the calf of your back leg. Hold for 30 seconds. Switch feet.
- 8. When getting out of a chair.** The ability to get in and out of a chair unassisted has implications for your health — and your longevity. Every time you stand up from or sit down in a chair, use just your legs — or use one hand at first for assistance. Do this 10 times a day and you've done 10 squats, without going to a gym.
- 9. When at a stoplight.** The muscles supporting your uterus, bladder and bowel can weaken over time, leading to incontinence. Counter gravity's effects by tightening your pelvic floor muscles (as if you have to pee and you're "holding it") when you're at a light. Hold for a 10-count, then release for 10. Repeat until the light turns green.
- 10. While watching TV.** This lower-body workout can be done when your favorite show is on: Lie on your side and do three sets of 15 leg lifts, then three sets of 15 leg circles — raising your leg and rotating it in a circular motion. Switch sides.

Does Muscle Really Weigh More Than Fat? **MUSCLE vs. FAT**

Prevention

by Chris Freytag

Question: *I have been exercising for a while. I can tell I've had weight loss but every time I get on the scale, it tells me that I weigh more. I can't be gaining weight although my pants and the scale tell me different. I've heard that if you gain muscles, you will weigh more. Is that true? Can you help because it's very discouraging.*



Answer: Often when starting a weight loss program, the scale will show an initial loss due to water weight and fluid loss. But many times the scale will start to go up even though your pants feel looser. The lesson is to focus on your body, not your weight. If you are working hard to get fit and see a weight gain, you may be adding calorie-burning muscles! When determining your overall health, focus on your body fat ratio to lean muscle mass. A pound of muscle weighs the same as a pound of fat. But the body fat is more "fluffy" and the muscle is more "dense and compact." Muscles take up less space in your body, so body weight may go up as you add compact, tight muscle mass.

Remember: Muscles need more calories a day, so the more muscles you have, the more calories you burn and the more weight loss you gain!

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Is It a Myth That Muscle Burns More Calories Than Fat?

LIVESTRONG.COM

by Stan Mack

A pound of fat and a pound of muscle weigh the same, but they have different energy requirements. Muscle burns more calories than fat. People who are heavily muscular typically have a high basal metabolic rate, or BMR, which means they burn a significant number of calories, even when resting.

Your Body Needs Energy. Your body burns calories when you move, but it also needs energy to maintain itself. For example, your lungs use energy when you breathe, and your heart uses energy to beat. You even burn calories at the cellular level as cells grow and repair themselves. The different body processes require various amounts of energy, so your particular body composition affects the number of calories you burn while performing everyday activities.

Muscles and Burning Calories. Research shows that 1 pound of muscle burns seven to 10 calories per day, while 1 pound of fat burns only 2 to 3 calories, according to the American Council on Exercise. It notes that the difference isn't huge, so gaining 3 to 5 pounds of muscle mass -- the typical results of a strength-training program that spans several months -- only has a net caloric effect of burning 15 to 30 more calories a day.

Men Vs. Women. Men generally require more energy to maintain their weight than women. Part of the reason is that men are more muscular than woman. Having relatively more muscle creates a greater need for energy, which leads to an increased need for calories in the diet. However, not all women or men have the same physical characteristics, so you should consider any daily-calorie recommendations to be rough estimates.

Your Body's Composition. A doctor can perform measurements to analyze your body's composition and then use the results to recommend how many calories you need to eat every day. Body-composition tests include skinfold measurements and water-displacement tests, which doctors use to determine how much of your body weight is due to body fat. Maintaining a high percentage of muscle and a low percentage of body fat is typically the healthiest way to live.

A Pound of Fat vs. a Pound of Muscle

LIVESTRONG.COM

by Linda Tarr Kent



When it comes to a pound of muscle versus a pound of body fat, gym myths abound. Muscle is more metabolically active than fat, meaning it burns more calories when you are at rest, but the level of this activity often is overstated. Another common statement, that 1 lb. muscle weighs more than 1 lb. fat, brings smiles to exercise physiologists who point out that 1 lb. is 1 lb., regardless of what it's made up of. Still, pound for pound, muscle does take up less space than fat.

Space

Muscle is denser than fat, which means it takes up less space than fat. While you may have heard that muscle takes up one-third the space of fat, the truth is a bit less dramatic. Muscle takes up approximately four-fifths as much space. Two people may be the same height and weight, but the person with a higher body fat percentage will wear a larger clothing size.

Weight

Since it is denser, muscle does weigh more than fat if you compare same-size portions. On average, the density of fat is 0.9 g/mL. The density of muscle is 1.1 g/mL. Using the averages, 1 liter of muscle weighs 1.06 kg, or 2.3 lbs., while 1 liter of fat weighs .9 kg, or 1.98 lbs. This may vary due to numerous factors including race, being extremely lean, or being extremely obese, according to “Exercise Physiology” by William D. McArdle, et al.

Metabolism

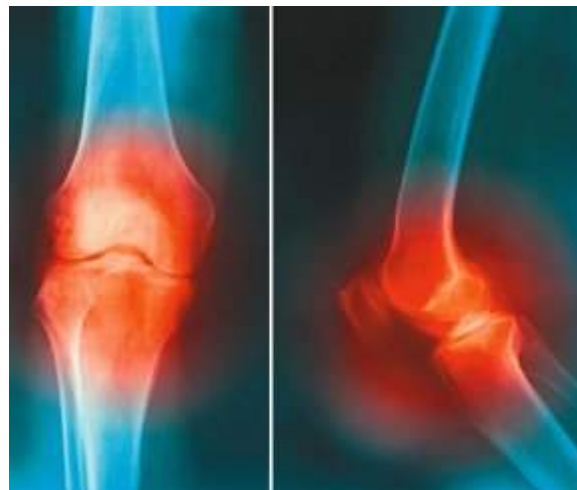
Common gym lore says that 1 lb. resting muscle will burn 30 to 50 calories daily compared to fat, which burns no calories. The truth is that muscle tissue will burn seven to 10 calories daily per pound. Fat burns two to three calories daily per pound. Replacing a pound of fat with a muscle, therefore, helps you burn an additional four to six more calories each day, says Cedric X. Bryant, chief science officer for the American Council on Exercise. If you utilize a strength training regimen, you can expect to gain 3 to 5 lbs. of muscle mass in three to four months, bringing your net caloric effect to 15 to 30 calories per day. The best way to benefit from the calorie-burning potential of your muscles is to actually use them. Your basal metabolic rate, or the number of calories your body uses when you are at rest, typically accounts for 60 to 75 percent of the calories you burn in a day.

Considerations

Though swapping fat for muscle might not raise your basal metabolic rate as high as gym myths indicate, it's still a good idea to stay lean. High body fat percentages are associated with raised risk for obesity-related diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, breathing problems, gallstones and certain cancers. For optimal health, the best body fat range for women is 18 to 30 percent. For men, it's 10 to 25 percent. You are considered obese if you are a woman and have more than 30 percent body fat or if you are a man and have 25 percent body fat.

Wear-and-tear arthritis (osteoarthritis) breaks down the cushion of cartilage that allows joints to flex without grinding bone-on-bone. As the cartilage breaks down, it brings pain, stiffness and swelling. People with osteoarthritis of the hip or knee may experience pain when walking, but actually walking and other forms of low-impact exercise can help to reduce osteoarthritis symptoms.

“Non-impact loading exercises like walking are generally very good for arthritis,” says Jeffrey S. Zarin, MD, chief of the division of arthroplasty at Tufts Medical Center. “It keeps the joints moving, it keeps the joints strong and, generally speaking, it helps your ability to keep functioning. It also helps diminish inflammation.”



Regular walking can reduce inflammation and pain from wear-and-tear arthritis in the knees and hips.

Guidelines from the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons strongly endorse therapeutic exercise, both at home and supervised by a physical therapist. In studies reviewed by the AAOS for its recommendations, aerobic exercise and strength training reduced pain and stiffness and improved overall daily functioning.

If you are not currently engaged in an exercise program, talk to the doctor treating your arthritis to establish safe limits. It’s best to start low and go slow, and gradually increase the amount of activity. “The mistake people make is walking too far, too soon,” Zarin says.

Experiencing some pain while walking is not necessarily a sign that something is wrong. “Generally speaking, it’s ok if there’s a little bit of discomfort, but it shouldn’t be making things worse,” Zarin says. “However, if someone has a very damaged joint, then walking could be causing problems.”

Zarin recommends 30 minutes a day of physical activity to his patients who are able to do it. Walking is not the only option. You can also mix brief walks with swimming or water aerobics, low-impact leg raises, muscle-tightening isometric exercises and stretches. It’s important to know your limits. “I encourage people to walk every day if they can, and for the amount that’s comfortable,” Zarin says.

For those who are overweight, weight loss can also make a big difference in osteoarthritis symptoms. “Every pound lost is 3 to 5 pounds of force off your knee or hip,” Zarin says. “Even losing 5 or 10 pounds can make a difference.”

Greater activity linked to lower odds of three of the most common cancers.

Need fresh motivation to lace up those walking shoes? A study of 1.44 million adults reports that physical activity is associated with lower risk of 13 types of cancer, including three of the four most common - breast, colon and lung cancer. Generally, meeting the recommended 150 minutes a week for moderate exercise, such as walking, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous activity, was associated with lower risk. But people who exercised more were found to have even lower risk.

"Minimizing your risk of many types of cancer, including several of the most common, yet again gives us all a great reason to strive to obtain the weekly recommendation for moderate-to-vigorous activity," says Jennifer M. Satchek, PhD, an associate professor in Tufts' Friedman School who specializes in studying physical activity. "Importantly, these effects were found to be independent of several key dietary factors."

TAKE CHARGE!

What about diet? The role of diet in cancer risk is complex, but the American Cancer Society recommends:

- Eat a healthy diet, with an emphasis on plant foods.
- Choose foods and drinks in amounts that help you get to and maintain a healthy weight.
- Limit how much processed meat and red meat you eat.
- Eat at least two and a half cups of vegetables and fruits each day.
- Choose whole grains instead of refined grain products.
- If you drink alcohol, limit your intake. Drink no more than one drink per day for women or two per day for men.



COMBINED DATA: The study from the National Cancer Institute, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, pooled data from a dozen US and European studies on adults ranging from age 19 to 98. The findings relied on self-reported physical activity and can't prove cause and effect, however.

The link between greater leisure-time physical activity and lower cancer incidence largely held even when smoking history and obesity were factored in. The lower risk was most significant for esophageal cancer - 42% - which researchers noted as important because such tumors are particularly deadly. Greater levels of physical activity were associated with a 10% lower risk for breast cancer, 16% for colon cancer, and 26% for lung cancer. Other cancers less likely among those exercising more were leukemia, myeloma and cancers of the liver, kidney, stomach, endometrium, rectum, bladder, and head/neck.

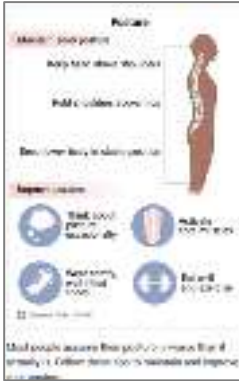
Two types were actually more common among the most physically active - melanoma and slow-growing prostate tumors. (Prostate cancer is the third most common type.) Researchers suggested this might be because people who exercise get more frequent checkups and thus are more likely to be diagnosed. They also spend more time in the sun, increasing skin-cancer risk.

MECHANISMS: It's not certain how physical activity might help protect against cancer. Lead author Steven Moore, PhD, said exercise might cause beneficial changes in hormone levels, inflammation levels, digestion and overall energy balance.

The connection between excess weight and cancer was clear in the study, but the news was positive even for those who have a hard time losing weight: Overweight and obese participants who exercised were much less likely to develop most cancers than their sedentary peers.

Our posture is the natural way you hold your body. It's usually an automatic adjustment that you might not notice, but being more aware of your posture throughout your day can help you support your spine better. Everyone's posture (just like their bodies) is unique.

What is posture?



Your posture is the natural way you hold your body. It's the position your body's in while you're sitting still and moving.

Your musculoskeletal system maintains your posture. Muscles, ligaments and tendons work with joints throughout your body to control your position at all times. They adjust your body to hold you in a stable, comfortable shape. It's how you're able to stay in one place when you're not moving without sliding out of your chair.

Changes to your posture also make certain movements possible. If your body couldn't change its shape, you'd be stuck in one position like a mannequin. Bending over to pick up a pen you dropped would be a lot harder if you had to tip your entire body onto the floor to grab it.

Everyone has a unique natural posture, but there are a few general rules you can follow to improve your posture and prevent common issues like back pain.

Types of posture

There are two types of posture:



- **Static posture:** Static posture is the way you hold your body when you're not moving. It's when you're standing, sitting or lying down (including sleeping). If someone's ever scolded you to sit up straight and not slouch, they were (maybe rudely) asking you to adjust your static posture.
- **Dynamic posture:** Dynamic posture is how you keep your body stable while you're moving. Even if you're not actively thinking about it, your body constantly adjusts itself while you're running, stretching to reach something or walking up and down the stairs. People who focus on their body position while they're playing a sport or doing yoga are concentrating on their dynamic posture.

What is proper posture?

There's no such thing as perfect or imperfect posture. Everyone's body is slightly different. Don't stress about having exactly perfect posture all the time. In fact, some studies have found that commonly considered poor or bad posture has more to do with self-esteem and thinking you look good rather than staying healthy or preventing pain. What that means is, you can be mindful about sitting or moving safely, but try not to worry about it all the time.

Even if there's not one type of posture that's best for everyone in every situation, there are still a few general rules you can follow to support your body. The best way to maintain good posture is to protect your spine's curves.

Your spine naturally has three curves — one in your neck (your cervical spine), the middle of your back (your thoracic spine) and in your lower back (your lumbar spine). These three curves give your spine a shape like a gently curved uppercase S. Your posture shouldn't be bent or flexed in a way that adds extra curve to any section of your spine.

Your body controls a lot of your posture automatically, but there are a few things you can do to maintain good, healthy posture:

- Keep your head above your shoulders: Don't crane your neck back or hang your head heavy in front of yourself.
- Hold your shoulders above your hips: Picture an imaginary line running from your hips to your shoulders. You want that line to be as straight as possible. That line will aim further off center if you slouch forward or back. If you're sitting down, try to keep a 90-degree angle (the angle in the corners of a square) between your back and hips.
- Keep your lower body in a stable position: The best place for your legs and feet depends on if you're sitting down or standing up. If you're sitting, keep your feet flat on the floor in front of you with your knees bent at 90 degrees and your ankles separated. If your feet can't reach the floor, use a footrest so they're not dangling unsupported. When you're standing up, keep your feet hip-distance apart. Position your body so most of your weight is on the balls of your feet.

Why is proper posture important?

Having good posture can help you avoid common aches and pains in your back, neck and shoulders. Having a safe dynamic posture (especially when you're working out or doing physical activity) can help prevent sports injuries.

Maintaining healthy posture can reduce wear and tear on your joints, especially in your spine. Good posture can't completely prevent joint issues like arthritis, but it can reduce stress on your joints.



How can I improve my posture?

Following the tips above to keep your spine aligned is the best way to maintain good posture, but thinking about your posture too often can make you think it's bad even when it's not. There are other ways to improve your posture without constantly worrying about your spine and where it is in relation to the rest of your body.

Some simple ways to improve your posture include:

- Thinking about your posture in short bursts: Check in on your posture every once in a while, instead of thinking about it constantly. If you're feeling stiff or sore, take a second to stretch and reset your posture before resuming your activities.
- Activate your core: Gently squeezing your core muscles (the muscles in and around your abdomen) can naturally straighten your posture and keep your spine in alignment. Again, you can do this every once in a while, without thinking about it all the time. Exhaling air out while you're lifting something is another way to activate your core and reduce stress on your spine.
- Wear well-fitting, comfortable shoes: Some types of shoes can force your feet and ankles into unnatural positions, which can affect your posture. Make sure your shoes aren't too tight, and don't make it uncomfortable to stand or move.
- Follow a diet and exercise plan that's healthy for you: Staying active and following a healthy diet can strengthen your muscles, bones and whole body.

What are symptoms of bad posture?

Having a less-than-ideal posture isn't a health condition or disease, so it doesn't always cause symptoms. It's common to have back pain, headaches or feel stiff if you've been in one position for a long time without moving. You can prevent some of these issues by improving your posture and staying active, but your posture doesn't always cause them.

Lots of people feel guilty about not having perfect posture. But studies have found that posture might not directly cause pain as much as many people think. It's likely that having poor posture is only one factor that leads to pain and other symptoms. Not stretching or being physically active also combine to cause these issues, probably more than just your posture on its own.

Can bad posture cause back pain or headaches?

Your posture can lead to symptoms like back pain and headaches, especially if you spend a long time in one position. Posture can affect:

- Back pain.
- Neck pain.
- Headaches.
- Your overall flexibility.
- Your range of motion (how far or comfortably you can move).
- Your balance.

Don't just sit there!

SITTING

by Bonnie Berkowitz and Patterson Clark, Jan. 20, 2014

We know sitting too much is bad, and most of us intuitively feel a little guilty after a long TV binge. But what exactly goes wrong in our bodies when we park ourselves for nearly eight hours per day, the average for a U.S. adult? Many things, say four experts, who detailed a chain of problems from head to toe.

ORGAN DAMAGE

Heart disease

Muscles burn less fat and blood flows more sluggishly during a long sit, allowing fatty acids to more easily clog the heart. Prolonged sitting has been linked to high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol, and people with the most sedentary time are more than twice as likely to have cardiovascular disease than those with the least.

Overproductive pancreas

The pancreas produces insulin, a hormone that carries glucose to cells for energy. But cells in idle muscles don't respond as readily to insulin, so the pancreas produces more and more, which can lead to diabetes and other diseases. A 2011 study found a decline in insulin response after just one day of prolonged sitting.

Colon cancer

Studies have linked sitting to a greater risk for colon, breast and endometrial cancers. The reason is unclear, but one theory is that excess insulin encourages cell growth. Another is that regular movement boosts natural antioxidants that kill cell-damaging — and potentially cancer-causing — free radicals.

MUSCLE DEGENERATION

Mushy abs

When you stand, move or even sit up straight, abdominal muscles keep you upright. But when you slump in a chair, they go unused. Tight back muscles and wimpy abs form a posture-wrecking alliance that can exaggerate the spine's natural arch, a condition called hyperlordosis, or swayback.

Tight hips

Flexible hips help keep you balanced, but chronic sitters so rarely extend the hip flexor muscles in front that they become short and tight, limiting range of motion and stride length. Studies have found that decreased hip mobility is a main reason elderly people tend to fall.

Limp Glutes

Sitting requires your glutes to do absolutely nothing, and they get used to it. Soft glutes hurt your stability, your ability to push off and your ability to maintain a powerful stride.

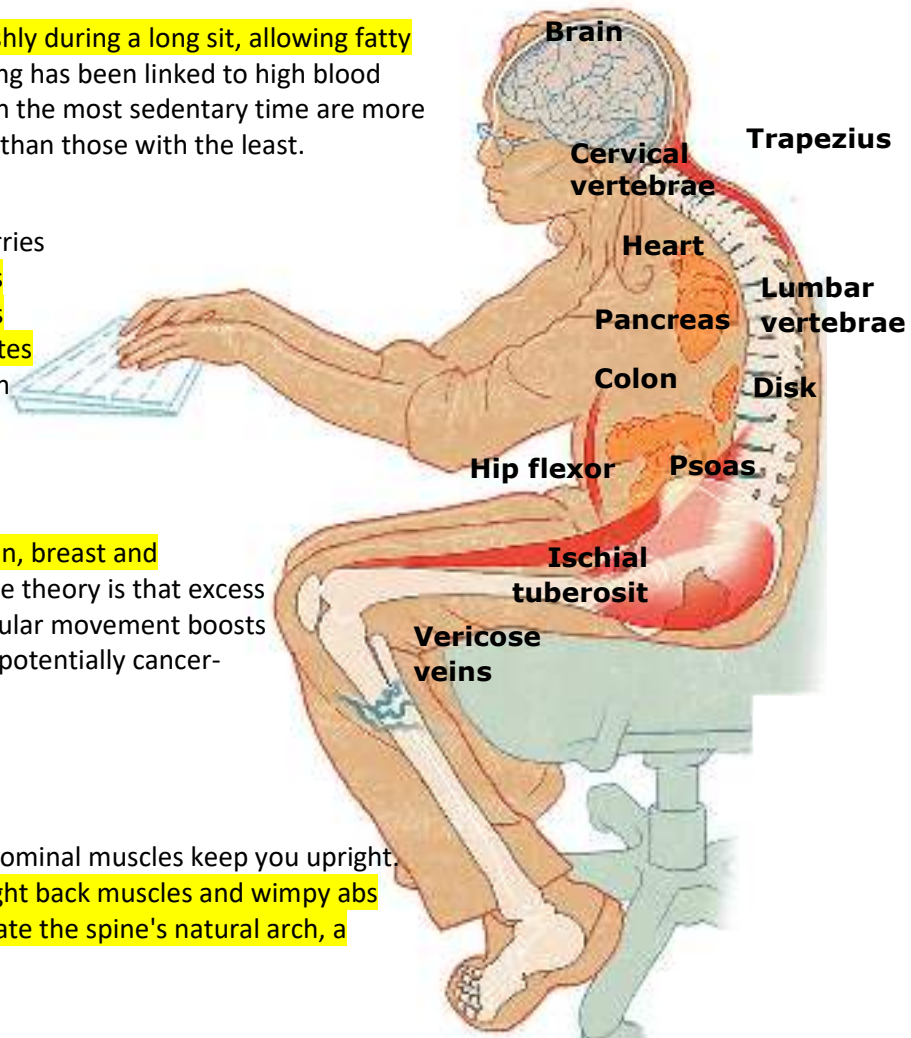
LEG DISORDERS

Poor circulation in legs

Sitting for long periods of time slows blood circulation, which causes fluid to pool in the legs. Problems range from swollen ankles and varicose veins to dangerous blood clots called deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

Soft bones

Weight-bearing activities such as walking and running stimulate hip and lower-body bones to grow thicker, denser and stronger. Scientists partially attribute the recent surge in cases of osteoporosis to lack of activity.



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TROUBLE AT THE TOP

Foggy brain

Moving muscles pump fresh blood and oxygen through the brain and trigger the release of all sorts of brain- and mood-enhancing chemicals. **When we are sedentary for a long time, everything slows, including brain function.**

Strained neck

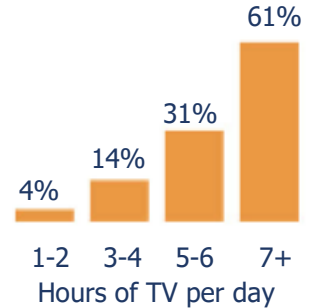
If most of your sitting occurs at a desk at work, craning your neck forward toward a keyboard or tilting your head to cradle a phone while typing can strain the cervical vertebrae and lead to permanent imbalances.

Sore shoulders and back

The neck doesn't slouch alone. Slumping forward overextends the shoulder and back muscles as well, particularly the trapezius, which connects the neck and shoulders.

Mortality of sitting

People who watched the most TV in an 8.5-year study had a 61 percent greater risk of dying than those who watched less than one hour per day



Lumbar region bowed by shortened psoas

BAD BACK

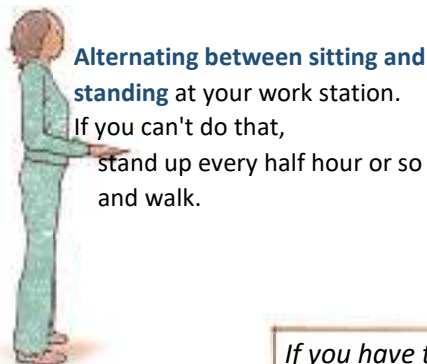
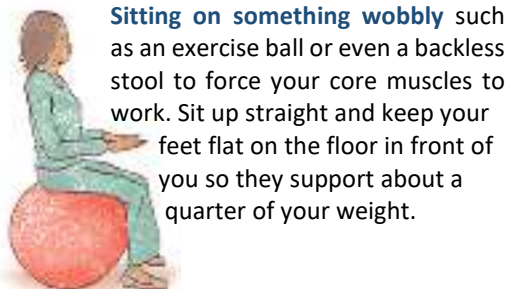
Inflexible spine

When we move around, soft discs between vertebrae expand and contract like sponges, soaking up fresh blood and nutrients. But when we sit for a long time, discs are squashed unevenly. Collagen hardens around supporting tendons and ligaments.

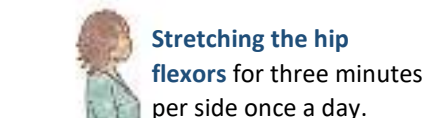
Disk damage

People who sit more are at greater risk for herniated lumbar disks. A muscle called the psoas travels through the abdominal cavity and, when it tightens, pulls the upper lumbar spine forward. **Upper-body weight rests entirely on the ischial tuberosity (sitting bones) instead of being distributed along the arch of the spine.**

So what can we do? The experts recommend . . .



Walking during commercials when you're watching TV. Even a snail-like pace of 1 mph would burn twice the calories of sitting, and more vigorous exercise would be even better.



Trying yoga poses — the cow pose and the cat — to improve extension and flexion in your back.



If you have to sit often, try to do it correctly.

As Mom always said, **"Sit up straight."**

Not leaning forward
Elbows bent
Feet flat on floor



The right way to sit
Shoulders relaxed
Arms close to sides
Lower back may be supported



Staying Highly Fit Slows Signs of Aging



Older people who are highly fit, such as recreational cyclists, are physiologically more similar to young people than to more sedentary seniors. That's the conclusion of a new British study that sought to explore the effect of physical activity on key indicators of aging. As one scientist put it, "Being physically active makes your body function on the inside more like a young person's."

Published in *The Journal of Physiology*, the study recruited 85 men and 41 women, ages 55 to 79, who were serious recreational cyclists. Participants were put through a battery of physical and cognitive tests, with results compared against standard benchmarks of normal aging. On most of the tests, the highly fit cyclists performed more like young adults. Even participants in their 70s scored decades "younger" in metabolic health, balance, memory and reflexes.

Roger A. Fielding, PhD, director of Tufts' HNRCA Nutrition, Exercise, Physiology and Sarcopenia Laboratory, comments, "We have known for a long time that regular exercise can reverse some of the age-related declines in aerobic fitness and muscle strength, and preserve physical functioning. This study reinforces this concept and highlights that lifelong regular exercise can sustain these improvements."

Typical of the cyclists' youthful performance were their scores on a standard test called Timed Up and Go. The test times how long it takes someone to stand up from a chair without using his arms, briskly walk 10 feet, turn, walk back and sit down again. Older adults considered on the edge of frailty might take 9 or 10 seconds to perform the test, while a typical score for a healthy senior is 7 seconds. But even the oldest cyclists in the study whipped through the test in an average of 5 seconds—"well within the norm reported for healthy young adults."

Fitness couldn't slow the aging clock for every physiological measure, however. Compared to cyclists in their 50s and early 60s, participants in their 70s had lower overall aerobic capacity and less muscle mass and muscular power. But those scores were still better than what would be viewed as average for their age.

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Newsweek

EXERCISE HAS ANTI-AGING BENEFITS AND MAKES YOU YEARS YOUNGER ON A CELLULAR LEVEL

by Hannah Osborne

It's not quite eternal youth but scientists have discovered how humans can slow down the aging process and shave almost a decade off their biological age—vigorous exercise. In a study of more than 5,000 adults in the U.S., a researcher found those who exercise regularly are younger on a cellular level than those who lead sedentary or moderately active lifestyles.

Research published in the journal *Preventative Medicine* in April considered data on 5,823 people who had participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey between 1999 and 2002. The participants were asked demographic and lifestyle questions, including how often they exercised.

They also looked at telomere length. Telomeres are protective caps found at the ends of chromosomes that help keep them stable—not unlike how the plastic sheath at the end of shoelaces stops them from fraying. Every time a cell divides, telomeres get shorter. Eventually they become too small to protect the chromosomes and cells get old and die—resulting in aging.

Shorter telomeres are related to many age-related diseases, including cancer, stroke and cardiovascular disease.



English women athletes training in Battersea Park, London, 21st September 1937. Regular, vigorous exercise makes people up to nine years younger.

In the study, exercise science professor Larry Tucker from Brigham Young University compared telomere length with levels of physical activity. His findings showed significant differences between those who did regular, vigorous exercise and those who did not.

“Just because you’re 40, doesn’t mean you’re 40 years old biologically,” he said in a statement. “We all know people that seem younger than their actual age. The more physically active we are, the less biological aging takes place in our bodies.”

He discovered adults with a high level of physical activity had a “biological aging advantage” of nine years compared to sedentary adults. When compared with those who did a moderate amount of exercise, the difference for highly active adults was seven years.

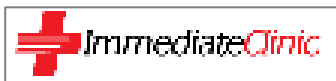
A high level of physical activity was constituted as running between 30 and 40 minutes per day, at least five days per week.

“Overall, physical activity was significantly and meaningfully associated with telomere length in U.S. men and women,” he wrote. “Evidently, adults who participate in high levels of physical activity tend to have longer telomeres, accounting for years of reduced cellular aging compared to their more sedentary counterparts.”

He said exactly why exercise appears to preserve telomere length is not known, but added it could be linked with inflammation and oxidative stress—exercise is known to suppress inflammation and stress over time.

“If you want to see a real difference in slowing your biological aging, it appears that a little exercise won’t cut it. You have to work out regularly at high levels,” he said. “We know that regular physical activity helps to reduce mortality and prolong life, and now we know part of that advantage may be due to the preservation of telomeres.”

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Study: Exercise May Help Slow the Signs of Aging

We get a lot of questions at our walk in clinic Lynnwood WA offices about whether a patient is "too old" to exercise. But new research suggests that exercise might help prevent the effects of aging in the first place.

A new study from the University of California San Diego School of Medicine found that older women who engage in more exercise and less sitting throughout the day were, biologically speaking, up to eight years "younger" than other women of the same age.



How could that be? Using a sample of nearly 1,500 women ages 64 to 95, the researchers looked specifically at women's physical activity levels, as well as the length of their telomeres. Telomeres are small caps on the end of our chromosomal DNA, which naturally deteriorate and shorten with age.

Shortened telomeres are associated with an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer; previous research has found that lifestyle habits such as smoking and obesity can shorten telomeres at faster rates.

This new research suggests that exercise may be another important factor in preserving telomeres. Women who engaged in at least 30 minutes of walking or other physical activity per day had longer telomeres than women of the same chronological age who sat for 10 or more hours of the day.

While the study clearly demonstrates the benefits of exercise at any age, one out of every 10 Baby Boomers today report that they only engage in physical activity a few times per month. But starting -- and sticking to -- an exercise regimen early on in life can help produce life-saving effects.

"Discussions about the benefits of exercise should start when we are young, and physical activity should continue to be part of our daily lives as we get older, even at 80 years old," said the study's lead author, Aladdin Shadyab.

Make sure you're properly fueled for a workout, but avoid mindless snacking.

If you start exercise low on fuel, you could end up feeling weak and run out of steam. Or, you may simply feel hungry, making it hard to focus on your exercise. However, unnecessary snacking before a workout may make exercise uncomfortable and add calories you don't need, counteracting the calorie burn of your physical activity.

"I think there's a misconception that you need to eat a snack before exercise, but this is generally only necessary if it's been at least 2 to 3 hours since your last meal," says Jennifer Satchek, PhD, an associate professor at Tufts' Friedman School who specializes in physical activity research. "For example, if you eat lunch at 11 a.m. and are going to the gym at 5 p.m., or you exercise first thing in the morning, you'll need to refuel before exercise." However, if you ate a late lunch at 2 p.m., and you're working out at 4:30 p.m., you shouldn't need a snack first.



What you're already eating for meals and snacks likely covers your exercise energy needs.

Timing Snacks:

Munching a snack while you head to the gym may not give you the benefits you're seeking. "People sometimes eat too close to exercise," Satchek says. "Eating 15 minutes before exercise is not ideal." She explains why:

- Your snack won't have time to be digested and absorbed, so its energy won't reach your working muscles during exercise.
- Blood flow will be diverted to your gut instead of increasing to arm and leg muscles to fuel movement.
- Undigested food sitting in your stomach may cause discomfort and interfere with more intense cardiovascular (aerobic) exercise, such as running or swimming laps.

On the other hand, a well-timed snack can help fuel exercise. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, when you consume a carbohydrate-rich snack within 1 to 4 hours before exercise, it can help replenish liver and muscle glycogen - the storage form of glucose, which is the main fuel for working muscles. It also can stabilize blood sugar levels, which helps fuel the brain and central nervous system. This helps keep you mentally alert during exercise.

Choosing Snacks:

Carbohydrate-rich foods should be the main focus of pre-exercise snacks but should be balanced with protein and fat. "Including a bit of protein, fat and/or fiber in a carbohydrate-rich snack helps with satiety and helps prevent a big blood sugar spike followed by a drastic fall during exercise," Satchek says. The addition of protein to snacks eaten before resistance exercise (strength training) also may promote muscle recovery after your workout.

Low-fat yogurt, cheese sticks, nuts, seeds and canned seafood in single-serve packs are quick sources of protein and healthy fat. Opting for whole grains or whole fruit is an easy way to get carbohydrate with fiber.

Selecting Snack Size:

"In general, the closer you are to your workout time, the less you should eat and the more you should limit fat, protein and fiber, so the snack will be more quickly digested and absorbed," Satchek says. This is particularly true before intense cardiovascular exercise as opposed to a moderately-paced walk or resistance exercise.

If it is 2 hours or more before exercise, Satchek recommends a snack with 200 to 300 calories, depending on your individual needs. Snacks eaten 1 hour before exercise generally should be simpler and lighter - typically 100 to 200 calories.

If you have just 30 minutes before exercise and need a snack, you may do OK with a small piece of whole fruit or other quickly-digested carbohydrate, such as whole-grain pretzels. Fruit is high in water, so it also contributes to hydration. Skip sugary sports drinks; opt for water to hydrate before exercise.

So, avoid unnecessary snacking, but if your energy lags during exercise, a smart pre-workout snack may give you a boost.

Walking and other moderate exercise linked to lower stroke and heart attack risk.



Continuing to exercise as you age really can make a difference. Researchers reported in the journal *Circulation* that even people in their 70s have much lower risk of stroke and heart attack with regular moderate exercise such as walking.

"When older men and women were more active, they did much better - especially with respect to heart and brain health," says lead author Dariush Mozaffarian, MD, DrPH, dean of Tufts' Friedman School and editor-in-chief of the *Health & Nutrition Letter*. "It reassures people that even after age 75, being active can make a big difference."

Moreover, the types of exercise researchers studied were activities many senior citizens can easily engage in: walking, hiking, biking, swimming, and mowing or raking the lawn. "You don't need to be an ironman," says Dr. Mozaffarian. "You can walk or garden - not only have fun, but know you're protecting your heart and brain."

NEVER TOO OLD: The cardiovascular benefits of regular exercise in young and middle-age are well established, but few studies have focused on whether physical activity pays off similarly in your 70s and beyond. Dr. Mozaffarian and his colleagues believe theirs is the first large, community-based study to include enough participants over age 70 to provide statistically strong evidence of the rewards of exercise in older populations.

They used data collected on more than 4,200 men and women enrolled in the Cardiovascular Health Study, average age 73 at baseline, who were initially free of cardiovascular disease. By the end of the 10-year study, participants had experienced more than 1,100 cardiovascular events.

Even among the oldest people in the study, more physical activity was associated with substantially lower risk of heart attacks and stroke. The scientists paid particular attention to walking, noting that while any walking at all appeared to lower risk, intensity and duration of physical activity still counted.

Study participants who were able to walk faster than three miles per hour experienced about half as many cardiovascular events as those who could not. Walkers who covered greater distances or spent more time walking per week were also at lower risk.

BEST ADVICE: Dr. Mozaffarian cautions that the study was not designed to prove cause and effect. It can't be fully ruled out, he says, that the healthier people without cardiovascular disease were simply able to exercise more. Still, the findings proved to be robust in several sensitivity analyses, including excluding all participants who reported known diseases or any ill health.

Considering all that plus the strong relationship between exercise and heart health in younger adults, Dr. Mozaffarian knows what advice he'd give an older member of his family.

"Some people might say to their 80-year-old grandmother or grandfather, 'Do whatever you want, eat whatever you want, it doesn't matter anymore,'" he says. "Our research suggests there's a continuing substantial benefit to maintaining healthy lifestyles at all ages."

GET MOVING TO LIVE LONGER: Getting up and moving even an extra 10 minutes a day could help you live longer, according to new research published in the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*. Unlike studies relying on self-reported activity levels, subjects wore ultra-sensitive activity trackers, called accelerometers, for seven days. About 3,000 participants, ages 50 to 79, were then followed for mortality over the next eight years.

The least active people were five times more likely to die during that period than the most active participants and three times more likely than those in the middle range for activity.

"When we compare people who exercise the same amount, those who sit less and move around more tend to live longer," says lead author Ezra Fishman of the University of Pennsylvania. "The folks who were walking around, washing the dishes, sweeping the floor tended to live longer than the people who were sitting at a desk."

The trackers used for the national health and nutrition survey that generated the data were highly precise, Fishman adds. "Because the device captures the intensity of activity so frequently, every minute, we can actually make a distinction between people who spent two hours a day doing those activities versus people who spent an hour and a half."

Though the scientists didn't discover any magic threshold for the amount a person needs to move to live longer, even adding just 10 minutes per day of light activity seemed to make a difference. Replacing 30 minutes of sedentary time with light or moderate-to-vigorous physical activity produced even better results.

"You didn't have to even get a good sweat to experience the reduced likelihood of mortality," Fishman says. "Activity doesn't have to be especially vigorous to be beneficial. That's the public health message."

How to Stay Fit and Maintain a Trim Weight After Age 40

Tips to help you combat the loss of muscle mass

Cleveland Clinic

healthessentials



You have exercised all your life, and this is how you have always stayed trim. But now that you're past age 40, you find the weight doesn't stay off as easily as it used to — even though you're still exercising as much as ever.

Most of us have heard that our metabolism slows down after age 40, but is there any truth to it? And what can you do about it?

Why it's harder to lose weight

It is true that your body's metabolism changes as you age, but there is a good reason why this happens, says health coach Erica Stepteau.

"After age 40, your metabolism actually does start dropping a little bit, but it's not for the reason that you think," she says. "It's because we are losing the muscle mass in our body — from 3 percent to 5 percent every decade after you're 30 years old."

That loss of muscle mass affects your body's ability to burn calories, Ms. Stepteau says.

This is why after age 40, some people begin to see some weight gain even though they exercising the same as when they were in their 20s and 30s, but don't get the same results, Ms. Stepteau says.

Staying ahead of the curve

The good news is that it's possible to beat the metabolism drop-off. **You can stay ahead of the metabolism curve as you get older by adding weights and some resistance training with an exercise band to your workout routine,** Ms. Stepteau says.

If you weren't very active in your 20s or 30s, Ms. Stepteau recommends starting with a moderate exercise such as brisk walking or stair climbing. Keeping the blood flowing goes a long way toward preventing cardiovascular disease and other conditions, she says.

"In your 40s, it is critical to pick up a couple of weights just so that you can create the muscle mass and keep restoring it because you are losing it every decade naturally," Ms. Stepteau says. "We're all going in that same direction."

A balanced diet

Nutrition also plays a key role in staying fit after age 40, Ms. Stepteau says. She recommends eating a balanced diet that includes proteins, healthy fats, a little bit of carbs and minerals and vitamins from fruits and veggies. "When you're exerting energy, you want to make sure that you restore those calories and restore those components of the nutrition in a way that benefits your body best," Ms. Stepteau says.

Two new studies seek the “sweet spot” for activity and intensity.

Nobody questions the health benefits of even just a little exercise, but you may wonder about what might be called the “Goldilocks” question: How much physical activity is “just right”? And is it possible to get too much or to overdo the intensity? Two large new studies, both published in JAMA Internal Medicine, attempt to answer such questions and identify the “sweet spot” of the ideal amount of exercise.

Miriam E. Nelson, PhD, associate dean of the Tisch College and a professor in Tufts’ Friedman School, author of the “Strong Women” series of books, served as vice-chair of the committee for the US government’s first-ever Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans in 2008. Those guidelines call for at least:

- 150 minutes per week of moderate activity OR
- 75 minutes per week of vigorous activity OR
- Some equivalent combination.

“This amount is the base level to promote health; greater improvements in health will come with more activity.”

MORE IS MOSTLY BETTER: The first new study compared adherence to these guidelines with data combined from six National Cancer Institute studies totaling 661,137 men and women, average age 62 years, who were followed for an average of 14.2 years. During that time, 116,686 participants died.

As expected, engaging in any leisure-time physical activity was better than being sedentary; in fact, the biggest relative benefits were associated with just getting moving. Those who reported some activity—but less than recommended levels—saw a 20% lower mortality risk than those with zero activity. Meeting the minimum guidelines, up to twice as much exercise (the equivalent of 300 minutes weekly of moderate activity), was associated with 31% less mortality.

Risk continued to drop with ever-increasing activity levels: 37% lower at two to three times the minimum guidelines and 39% lower at three to five times. But at that point—the equivalent of 450 to 750 minutes of moderate weekly activity—the association plateaued. There was no additional mortality benefit for even more exercise, but neither were there any negative associations.

Similar relationships were observed for mortality due to cardiovascular disease and to cancer.

Researchers concluded, “Health care professionals should encourage inactive adults to perform leisure time physical activity and do not need to discourage adults who already participate in high activity levels.”



GETTING VIGOROUS: The accompanying study countered suggestions from other recent research that overdoing exercise, with frequent, strenuous workouts, might actually contribute to mortality risk. Australian scientists examined data on 204,542 adults, ages 45 through 76, who were followed for an average 6.5 years; 7,435 deaths were recorded.

Adding a little vigorous activity to a regimen of moderate exercise was linked to a lower risk of dying. Compared to those reporting only moderate exercise, those who spent up to 30% of their workout minutes exercising vigorously were at 9% lower mortality risk. Boosting the vigorous activity to more than 30% of workout time was associated with a 13% lower mortality risk. Nor was there any excess risk associated with even the greatest amounts of intense physical activity.

Researcher Klaus Gebel, PhD, of James Cook University, said the findings show that anyone who is physically capable should try to “reach at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week and have around 20 to 30 minutes of that be vigorous activity.” If you’re up for even more, there’s no apparent downside.

Brief Walks May Counter Health Dangers of Too Much Sitting



Multiple studies have warned about the health risks of sitting too much. Hours spent sitting, whether at desks or in front of the television, have been linked to increased odds of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and kidney problems. But modern life can make it difficult to stay out of chairs, and alternatives such as "standing desks" don't appeal to everyone.

A new study may offer hope to sedentary sitters: Using data on more than 3,600 adults, researchers found that brief periods of simply walking around the room substantially reduced mortality risk among people who spent long periods sitting. As little as two minutes of gentle walking per hour was associated with a 33% lower risk compared to non-stop sitting.

"We know that exercise is good for us and yet, despite this, our society has become more sedentary than ever," says Miriam E. Nelson, PhD, associate dean of the Tisch College and a professor in Tufts' Friedman School, author of the "Strong Women" series of books. "We are built to move, and when our bodies move on a regular basis, they are healthy; when they don't, when we're largely sedentary, our bodies deteriorate."

MEASURING MOVEMENT: In the study, published in the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*, Srinivasan Beddhu, MD, of the University of Utah, and colleagues analyzed data from the annual National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). In recent surveys, selected participants have supplemented their questionnaire answers by wearing activity monitors called accelerometers; this gives a more accurate record of a person's movements than depending on individual recall. Most of the participants were generally healthy, although a subgroup of 383 people had chronic kidney disease.

Researchers divided participants into four groups based on minutes per hour of different levels of accelerometer activity: sedentary/sitting, low (such as standing up but not walking around much), light (such as strolling around a room or walking into another room), and moderate/vigorous (jogging or other exercise). The study then compared activity levels to records of deaths three or four years after the assessment.

ADDITIVE ACTIVITY: There was little difference in mortality between the sedentary and low-activity groups. But people who interrupted their sitting with light activity were at significantly lower mortality risk than those who were completely sedentary; this difference was even sharper among the kidney-disease subgroup (41%). As little as two minutes an hour of light activity was enough to be associated with lower risk.

Boosting activity levels to moderate/vigorous further reduced risk, but the number of such active participants was too low to be statistically significant. Adding additional minutes of light activity, however, did make a significant difference. Getting up from your chair for two minutes or five minutes more light activity rather than sitting time, Dr. Beddhu said, could further reduce risk of premature death.

He cautioned that the study was observational, and so can't prove cause and effect. And Tufts' Nelson notes that a quick break from your chair is no substitute for regular physical activity. But if you've been worried about the health risks of sitting too much, apparently every little bit helps.

Benefits of Drinking Water

MedicalNewsToday

Lubricates the joints – Insures the joints' shock-absorbing ability.

Forms saliva and mucus – Saliva helps us digest food and keeps the mouth, nose, and eyes moist. Water keeps the mouth clean.

Delivers oxygen throughout the body – Blood is more than 90% water, and blood carries oxygen to different parts of the body.

Boosts skin health – Water intake improves the skin barrier. Without water, the skin is vulnerable to skin disorders.

Cushions the brain, spinal cord, and other sensitive tissues – Dehydration leads to problems with thinking and reasoning.

Regulates body temperature – Water stored in the skin comes out as sweat when the body heats up, and it cools the body

Digestive system depends on it – Dehydration leads to digestive problems, constipation, and acidic stomach.

Flushes body waste – Water helps removal of urine and feces.

Helps maintain blood pressure – Dehydration causes blood to become thicker, and leads to decreased blood pressure.

Airways need it – Dehydration restricts airways, which can worsen asthma and allergies.

Makes minerals and nutrients accessible – These dissolve in water, and allows them to reach different parts of the body.

Prevents kidney damage – The kidneys regulate fluid in the body. Insufficient water can lead to kidney stones and other problems.

Boosts performance during exercise – Consuming water enhances performance during strenuous activity.

Weight loss – Water may prevents overeating by creating a sense of fullness.

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How to Choose the Right Dumbbell Weight

Selecting the right dumbbell weight is an important process that should not be overlooked. Different exercises, skill levels, and physical abilities will necessitate different dumbbells. Remember that it is always better to start light and add weight in small increments. Starting too heavy may cause strain or injury.

Part 1 – Evaluating Your Strength



1. Decide what your weight lifting goals are. Are you trying to develop a single muscle group? Gain stamina? Perform a better curl? Setting your goals will guide your dumbbell selection process. Heavier dumbbells are good for building muscle, while lighter ones are better for stabilizing muscle to support tendons and joints.

In general, the larger the muscle group, the more weight it can lift. Use small to medium dumbbells for your biceps, triceps and deltoids, and medium to large weights for working your chest, leg, and back muscles.

Write your goals down before and during your dumbbells training. This way, you can stay focused and modify or adjust your intentions if a goal has been met. For instance, you might write, "I want to be able to do a set of eight bicep curls with 35 pound dumbbells in the next two months."

2. Choose the dumbbell weight corresponding to the exercise and skill level. Depending on the exercise, you might want dumbbells of different weights. For instance, if you're doing a basic curl, you might be able to curl 15 pounds. If you're doing a squat with your dumbbells, however, you might choose a 20 or 25 pound dumbbell set. Likewise, if you are learning a new exercise, you will want to start light and focus on building proper form before adding weight.



Don't settle for just one set of dumbbells. Ensure you have a range of different weights to accommodate the various exercises you want to perform. Most beginners should have three sets of dumbbells, a light one, a medium one, and a heavy one, to accommodate different types of exercises.

Begin any new exercise with a lighter dumbbell set to learn proper form and technique. After two to four weeks of regularly practicing the moves, you may be ready to move on to a heavier dumbbell set for that exercise.



3. Set up a session with a personal trainer or join a workout program. Get a qualified professional to evaluate your strength and advise you as to which dumbbell weight is right for you. Many gyms and workout programs have such professionals on hand in order to provide you with guidance and show you how to perform certain exercises properly. Don't be shy -- just let the trainer know directly that you're new to the world of dumbbells and are interested in their thoughts regarding which would be best for you.

Part 2 – Putting Your New Dumbbells to Use

1. Choose the weight based on your strength level. Practice working out with very light dumbbells until you've mastered proper form for each exercise you're doing. Start out slowly with an easily manageable dumbbell at first, then add weight in small one or two pound increments as you build strength.

For instance, you might start out with weights at five pounds, then find that they are not providing you with enough of a challenge. Add weight gradually, working up in small increments. If five pounds is not enough, try six or seven before jumping up to ten.



Keep a journal recording how many reps of each exercise you did, the weight you chose for that exercise, and your feelings about whether it was too light, too heavy, or just right.

Always choose the weight that's right for you. Listen to your body to decide what's right for you. Do not select a weight based on what others of your age or gender are lifting. The only person you should be trying to beat in a dumbbell-lifting competition is you.

2. Know when to add weight to your dumbbell workout. Once you have found the right dumbbell weight for an exercise, start to increase one or two pounds at a time to meet the needs of your growing muscles. If you aren't feeling a moderate to intense muscle strain after performing 15 reps of a given exercise, it's time to add some weight or procure heavier dumbbells, or otherwise change the exercise.

Carefully monitor how many sets and reps you can do continuously and, if you find that you can do more than your target number of repetitions, increase the amount of weight you're lifting by one to two pounds.

Incorporating different exercises for the same muscles can change how the muscle is targeted. If you are not feeling strain with one exercise, try another to develop more complete strength.

3. Recognize when you're trying to lift too much. Normally, this shouldn't be a problem, since as a smart and safe weightlifter you've started out at the low end of your dumbbell weight-lifting range and worked your way up. Never start out with a heavy weight and work your way down to the weight you need to be at.



When first starting with a particular weight, if you cannot do more than seven reps of a given exercise, it is too heavy for you. Set the weight which is too heavy aside and select a dumbbell one to three pounds lighter, depending upon what is available. Adjust in small increments to get the best possible weight for your exercise.

Picking a weight that is too heavy can cause you to develop bad form and, more seriously, injure yourself.

Part 3 – Exercising with Dumbbells



1. Learn to squat. A dumbbell squat involves holding the dumbbells in your hand at hip or shoulder level. Hold the dumbbell with your palms facing your shoulders or hips. Grip the dumbbells in both hands while leaning back on your heels and lowering yourself down as if you're sitting. Bend at your knees until they come to a ninety degree angle, then return to a standing position.

To keep the knees safe, keep them aligned vertically above the ankle. The knee should never extend past the toes.

2. Perform a glute bridge chest press. A chest press can help you build stronger chest muscles. Lie on your back with your feet placed firmly on the floor, knees bent, and heels tucked in close to your rear end. Lift your rear off the floor. Then, straighten your back and maintain a straight line from your shoulder to your knees. With your dumbbells in hand, put your hands straight out in front of you from the shoulder. Bring one arm down laterally so your elbow makes a ninety-degree angle, but keep your forearm in a vertical position. Your arm should come down and towards you as if you are opening a cabinet door. Re-extend your hand and arm to its starting position and perform the same movement with your opposite arm.



1. Try a dumbbell tricep extension. Sit on a flat bench or box. Hold your dumbbells a few inches apart in a vertical orientation behind your head. (To accomplish this pose, imagine you had your fingers interlocked behind your head and have just started to unbind them and turn each hand into a fist.) Bending your elbows, lift the dumbbells up and over your head until your arms are fully extended above your head. Keep your back straight and your head facing forward throughout.

4. Practice the dumbbell bent over row. Hold the dumbbell in your hands and stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees slightly, then lean forward from your hips, keeping your back straight. Hold your arms straight below your shoulders, and slowly raise them until your elbows line up parallel with your spine. Slowly lower the weights back to your starting position, then repeat for the desired number of reps.

