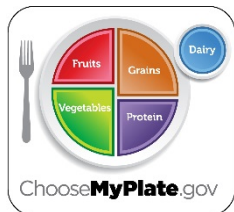


Aging Healthfully Newsletter

Illinois Department on Aging



September is Healthy Aging® Month!

There is more to aging healthfully than eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise. This month and every month going forward, focus on your total health by incorporating the following tips into your routine to maintain or improve your overall health.

1. **Stay Balanced** – Try doing gentle yoga or Tai Chi to improve your stability and balance, which can help to prevent falls.
2. **Add Bulk to Your Diet** – Beans, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables are good sources of dietary fiber and can help improve your heart and digestive health.
3. **Get Enough Sleep** – If you are having trouble sleeping through the night, talk to your doctor or a sleep specialist to see if they can help!
4. **Stay Active** – Exercising regularly has been shown to help maintain lean body mass (muscle), which declines with age, and improve mood/memory.
5. **Spice Up Your Meals** – Add spices, garlic, herbs, vinegars, and salt-free seasonings to your meals to boost flavor and awaken lazy taste buds without adding any sodium.
6. **Walk for Your Health** – Adding in daily walks this month can help improve both your heart and lung health. You may even decide to stick with the routine into the next month or until the weather turns cold.
7. **Banish the Blues** – If you have been feeling down for a while, you should consider seeing a doctor. Depression is common and can be treated.
8. **Stay Hydrated** – Sense of thirst declines with age, so make a point to have a water bottle or cup with a straw filled with water, sparkling water, or unsweetened decaffeinated tea with lemon to sip on throughout the day.
9. **Boast Your Memory** – Make reminder lists, stay organized, and follow routines.
10. **Stay Socially Connected** – Call friends and family regularly or have a virtual/video call with friends to play games or take walks together.





Benefits of Including a Variety of Exercises

Exercise is important for everyone at any age! Research has shown that it is beneficial to incorporate all four types of exercise for maximum health benefits, to prevent boredom, and reduce your risk of getting injured.

*Before starting a new exercise regimen or program you should consult your primary care physician or a doctor to determine what types and level of physical activity is appropriate and safe for you.

Four Main Types of Exercise and Their Benefits:

- 1. Balance** – exercises that can help prevent falls and fall-related injuries such as Tai Chi or using a chair to balance on one foot, etc.
 - *Benefits:* reduces risk of falling, which is a common problem in older adults and those that have had a stroke.
- 2. Endurance** – exercises that increase your heart rate and breathing such as biking, dancing, jogging or brisk walking, yard work (e.g. raking, mowing), and stair climbing.
 - *Benefits:* help to improve the health of your lungs, heart, and circulatory system, which in turn may help to reduce the risk for diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.
- 3. Flexibility** – exercises that improve your ability to move about such as reaching for your toes, wall sits, and yoga.
 - *Benefits:* decreased risk of injury, improved range of motion with your joints, and ability to perform a range of physical activity types.
- 4. Strength** – exercises that help build up and maintain muscles such as using resistance bands and lifting weights or common household objects (e.g. soup cans, water bottles).
 - *Benefits:* help to keep your muscles and bones strong, which can help with balance and prevention of falls and fall-related injuries.

Attachments:

- Diet and Exercise Choices for Today for a Healthier Tomorrow (NIH – English)
- Diet and Exercise Choices for Today for a Healthier Tomorrow (NIH – Spanish)
- Exercise is the Key to Healthy Aging Infographic (NIH)
- Get Fit So You Can Do More (NIH)
- Exercise Barriers Infographic (NIH)
- **Recipes:** Quick Sweet Potato Spinach Soup; Hawaiian BBQ Chicken Wraps

References:

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/endurance-exercise-aerobic>
<https://www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/features/health-highlights-september-healthy-aging-month>
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/four-types-exercise-can-improve-your-health-and-physical-ability>



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<https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/programs/nutrition/Pages/nutrition.aspx>