

Aging Well – A Focus on Fitness

“Exercise” is a word that incites either excitement or pure dread in most people. Intellectually we know it can be good for us, but it is often difficult to motivate ourselves to get moving for a variety of reasons. This is especially true as we age. When we tire more easily and have various aches and pains often associated with aging it just becomes easier to not exercise.

However, exercising doesn't have to be something you go to the gym to do and it doesn't even have to be a specific set of repetitive movements as we traditionally think. But some form of physical activity is a necessary part of a healthy well rounded lifestyle at any age. Simply getting up and moving can be the first step on your road to better health. You can actually experience healthy physical activity throughout your daily routine and it likely won't feel like exercise at all.

Physical activity has a broad range of options. Keep in mind that doing “something” is better than doing “nothing.” Finding an activity that you enjoy doing and gets you moving, no matter the intensity level, can be considered physical activity. Swimming, participating in a class such as Tai Chi or a seated program, gardening, walking, or even simply cleaning the house are a few options that can be easily added to anyone's daily routine to promote physical activity.

If physical activity still seems like a daunting task, consider the health benefits that can be reaped by being active. As we age a number of health diagnoses emerge that can contribute to a decline in mobility. Arthritis, heart disease, hypertension, osteoporosis, diabetes mellitus and depression are a few common diseases that can contribute to a decline in health. However, physical activity can be very instrumental in helping to manage the disease processes and symptoms that arise from many health issues. It helps protect against loss in bone mass and decreases the risk of osteoporosis; helps lubricate the joints, thereby reducing overall pain and

stiffness that is a hallmark of arthritis; helps lower risk of heart disease and hypertension by managing blood pressure, blood glucose, and cholesterol levels; helps manage your weight and decreases your risk of obesity; improves your overall mood; and helps with insomnia. Overall physical activity is an important factor to add into a healthy lifestyle to help manage ailments and disease that can develop as we age.

While the medical health benefits of physical activity are numerous, an often overlooked benefit is maintaining mobility. As we age we tend to lose muscle strength, balance, and coordination, which can then affect how we function, get around in our home, or participate in hobbies and activities that we enjoy. Leading a sedentary lifestyle is the primary cause for muscle weakness which can hinder and cause difficulty with simple activities such as getting out of a

chair, getting out of bed, or going up and down the stairs. The old adage is true, “If you don't use it you lose it.”

At CentraCare our goal is to help older adults live as independently as possible for as long as possible. Our physical therapy program has helped scores of seniors become stronger, more mobile, and, as a result, more independent. For example, one individual came to us wheel chair bound and unable to walk. However, after participating consistently in physical therapy she now is able to walk with only the assistance of a walker, ride the stationary bike, and participates in various classes, and has regained her mobility, which she thought she had lost forever. We see this scenario very often as we work with our participants.

It's never too late to add some activity to your daily routine. You will be glad you did!



Caregivers,
Are You Tired?
We
Understand!
Let Us Help.

For dates, times, and to register, please contact Donna at (269) 441-9319

CentraCare's experienced staff **will lovingly care** for your elderly loved one at our Battle Creek Day Center location to give you relief. **At NO CHARGE* to you!**

WE PROVIDE: Transportation, Nutritious Meal & Snack, Socialization, Assistance with Personal Care, and Cognitively Stimulating Activities.



200 W. Michigan Avenue | Battle Creek, MI 49017 | 269-441-9319 | www.mycentracare.com

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