

14 April 2015

Media Release – It's Never Too Late to Start Exercising
From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



It's Never Too Late to Start Exercising

The risks of sedentary lifestyles are well known and have an impact on the health of people at all ages. We understand that in order to live a longer and active life we need to be engaged in regular physical activity throughout our lives.

While we engaged in plenty of activity ourselves when we were younger and encourage our children and grandchildren to be active often we forget our own need to stay active. As we age our ability to perform high intensity activity reduces, however the need for regular active movement is always an important part of maintaining health.

In the New Zealand Ministry of Health 2013 Guidelines for Physical Activity in Older People, Dr Don Mackie, Chief Medical Officer stated, "Physical activity, along with good nutrition, is a key contributor to healthy living. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that a small, sustained increase in physical activity, along with a reduction in sedentary behaviour, can help in preventing and managing certain chronic diseases and conditions."

However only 55% of men and 47% of women between 65 and 74 years old are regularly active (a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity on most days of the week), dropping to 38% for men and 28% of women over 75. Older adults that are not active are missing out on many of the benefits of being active, and it's not just about being able to live a full life. There are very real benefits to all aspects of life that sedentary older adults are missing out on.

So before you decide to slow down too much, think about how maintaining activity can help you with the following:

Preventing Falls

The benefits of physical activity and exercise are not limited to those already active. ACC reports that those over 65 have a one in three chance of falling due to poor balance, weak muscles, low blood pressure, poor vision as well as other medical conditions, e.g. Parkinson's disease, stroke. Many of these falls could be prevented with regular exercise, at a level that is suitable for the participant. The addition of balance exercises can decrease the risks of falling by addressing risk factors including poor balance, weak muscles and slower reaction time.

Bone Density/Osteoporosis

Bone density can reduce annually by 1-2% in postmenopausal women; regular weight training and weight bearing activity can increase bone density, thus reducing this risk.

Diabetes, Stroke and other Lifestyle Diseases

Regular physical activity reduces the risk of lifestyle diseases regardless of age. Just because retirement age has been reached, these benefits don't stop. In many cases exercise can also contribute to the management of pre existing conditions associated with age, and even those of us who have been previously inactive can benefit.

Social Interaction

The benefits of regular physical activity are increased when a level of social interaction is added and not just for you. Encouraging others will give you an opportunity to be social but also offer support to those less likely to lead the way.

Whether your exercise and activity is through a community group exercise instructor, or using a trainer at your local gym, it is important that you get your exercise advice from a REPs Registered Exercise Professional. They have the relevant knowledge and skill to give you safe and effective exercise advice, and you can find REPs Registered exercise facilities (gyms, exercise centres, studios) and professionals in your area at www.reps.org.nz

Getting active can be as simple as 30 minutes of gentle exercise, with some exercises that are simple to do at home, but the sky is the limit when it comes to options.

References:

<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/growingstronger/why/>

<http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/guidelines-on-physical-activity-for-older-people-jan2013-v2.pdf>

http://www.acc.co.nz/PRD_EXT_CSMP/groups/external_ip/documents/guide/wim2_059285.pdf

Contact Details:

For interviews and further information, please contact Richard Beddie Chief Executive, Exercise New Zealand richard@exercisenz.org.nz, telephone 0800 66 88 11, or Stephen Gacsal REPs Registrar, at stephen@reps.org.nz telephone 0800 55 44 99 - www.reps.org.nz

Who is the NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)?

REPs is an independent non profit organisation administrating the New Zealand exercise professionals register to ensure that the public receive safe and effective exercise advice.

Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "Warrant of Fitness Check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

