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Media Release – Age is no Barrier to Exercise

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



Age is no Barrier to Exercise

Not ready to retire to a rocking chair yet? Don't let age stop you being active.

If you are planning to remain strong and physically active as you age, then it's not too late to start, and there's no set age you should stop.

Thankfully the days of retiring and spending the rest of your days knitting in a rocking chair are long gone. For most, plans for older age include making the most of the extra time and possibilities for an active life that continues well beyond retirement.

Traditionally older adults have been recommended to do light aerobic activity to improve heart health and balance, and to decrease the chance of falls. While these two components are still regarded as important, there is also a benefit in participating in strength training, using a form of resistance while exercising.

This can include exercises with weights, but there are plenty of other options too.

The benefits of regular aerobic exercise are well known in all ages; in more recent years the positive benefits have been shown to extend more and more to older exercisers. Improvements can include increase in muscle strength and endurance, improvement in bone density, improved postural stability, reduced risk of falls, and an increase in flexibility.

These benefits can allow an older person to maintain independence, and function more ably in everyday life.

Fortunately, at the same time we are learning the benefits of strength training, and the range of exercise and physical activity options for older adults have increased and become more user friendly. Exercise facilities are reporting more and more older members, and personal trainers are seeing an increasing number of older clients who want to maintain good health with the best advice and support. Many exercise facilities offer services and classes for a range of ages, abilities and fitness/exercise levels with the added advantage of a social environment with like minded people.

The benefits of strength training are not just proven for those who remain active and injury free. There is increasing understanding that exercise, including strength training can benefit a range of specific health conditions that are prevalent in older adults such as arthritis, and Parkinson's disease.

There are limitations for some of the more sedentary older population, and those with issues that make some exercises higher risk, but for adults with a level of mobility (and medical approval) the benefits far outweigh the risks. As we continue to live longer and remain more active, the need for exercise to improve health and activity becomes more important, with people, quite rightly, not willing to give up the freedom that goes along with an active life.

The current NZ Ministry of Health guidelines on physical activity recommend 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on 5 days or more per week. They also suggest to try to add 3 sessions of flexibility and balance activities, and 2 sessions of muscle-strengthening activities per week (some of this can be combined, eg, hill walking may count towards aerobic and muscle-strengthening).

If this seems like a daunting amount or you are not sure what sort of exercise is right for you, then it's worth investing in some advice from a qualified and experienced exercise professional. REPs Registered Exercise Professionals can help you with advice and to get started.

It's been said that we are only as old as we feel; keep active and participating in exercise and physical activity and you may just find you don't feel old at all.

References:

<http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/food-and-physical-activity/physical-activity/how-much-activity-recommended>

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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

