



Tips to Healthy Ageing

Exercising regularly has significant life improving and lengthening benefit at any age, from early childhood through to later years.

While there are natural parts of the ageing process that cannot be prevented, we are seeing more research indicating that many areas of ageing can be reduced or delayed with regular physical activity. As adults 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.

Exercising in older age is not just a matter of reversing the ageing process, but more about maintaining a level of health and fitness levels that is not seen population wide. The effects of inactivity are well known. The reduction in everyday function and the likelihood of lifestyle diseases accelerates over time. While the ageing process accounts for some of this decline, much of it can be attributed to long term inactivity.

You can't out exercise old age but through regular exercise and a healthy lifestyle, you are certainly more likely to be able to keep up an active life.

Some important things for you to consider as you age:

Strength training

The benefits of strength training are not just proven for those who as a result 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 specific issues which make some exercises higher risk, but for adults with a level of mobility (and medical approval), the benefits far outweigh the risks. Current guidelines from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends from between 2 strength training sessions, to a maximum of 4 sessions of 20- 45 minute duration per week. A registered exercise professional can provide the appropriate advice and guidance.

Keeping disease away

Maintaining healthy weight, exercising moderately, and regularly eating a well-balanced diet will help with preventing high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity in the short term, and in the long term reduce your dementia risk.

Just 30 minutes a day, five days a week is all that's needed to ward off a range of lifestyle diseases and conditions, and is the minimum level recommended to reduce dementia risk.

When we think of exercise we should also include mental activity as well as physical. By learning new skills, and also completing mentally challenging activities can help keep you alert.

Social contact is one of the benefits of group exercise. Whether it's walking with company, joining a class, or heading to an exercise facility, getting amongst like-minded people while getting active is a fantastic way to keep socially active and healthy.

Pelvic Floor

After many years of people simply accepting incontinence into old age, there is more understanding that pelvic floor health is something that can be managed, both in younger years and older adulthood.

Bladder weakness and continence issues are not the most common health topics talked about, and can cause embarrassment for sufferers, despite being common in ageing. The good news is that with the right advice and education, pelvic floor weakness can be managed or even better, prevented.

While you can't out-wit ageing, you can certainly manage many of the symptoms through exercise, good nutrition, and a focus on your mental health and wellbeing.

References:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-47331544>

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NZ Register of Exercise Professionals, Registrar Stephen Gacsal

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NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. 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 safe 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

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Exercise Association of New Zealand - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

