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Media Release – Exercise is the Magic Pill as We Age

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



## Exercise is the Magic Pill as We Age

**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 and exercise.**

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 wellbeing that is not seen population wide. The effects of inactivity are well known, and the reduction in everyday function and 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.

A term that many do not recognise is 'mobility disability'. It's a term that is used to refer to older adults who, without a specific injury or health condition, are unable to move freely enough to maintain independence. A recent study from USA found that women who spent the most time performing light-intensity physical activity had a 46% lower risk of mobility loss compared to women who participated in lower levels of physical activity.

In NZ only 55% of men and 47% of women between 65 and 74 years of age are regularly active (a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity on most days of the week). This drops to 38% for men and 28% for women over 75, so mobility disability is an issue that impacts on older NZ'ers as well. 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.

### Preventing Falls

The benefits of physical activity and exercise are not limited to those already active. ACC reports that those aged over 65 have a one in three chance of falling due to poor balance, weak muscles, low blood pressure, poor vision, as well as medical conditions, e.g. Parkinson's disease, stroke. 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

In many cases exercise can contribute to the management of pre-existing conditions associated with age. Even those of us who have been previously inactive can benefit.

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

Reference: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/02/210223164445.htm>

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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](http://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.*

