

AGING AND FITNESS

Aging gracefully doesn't necessarily mean you'll have the moves like Jagger in your later years. Our bodies develop limitations as we age. Adapting your fitness routine will help you to continue a healthy, satisfying workout. As you get more birthdays under your belt, I recommend shifting from heavy to lower weights with more repetitions and from high-intensity cardio to lower-impact exercise. You will experience pronounced perks from staying active as an older adult. Plus, your brain health will also get a boost! Exercise protects against numerous chronic conditions, cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, and some forms of cancer. Sometimes energy levels tend to decline as we age, sapping our motivation to stay active, but don't throw in the towel just yet!

BY HELEN PUFAHL • RESIDENT CONTRIBUTOR

ARTHRITIS

No one feels like exercising when they're in pain. However, working out can make your joints feel better by increasing blood flow. My rule of thumb is to try movements that don't cause too much pain. Remember that any new movements may feel a little uncomfortable initially, but if that discomfort stays



the same or disappears, you're likely in the clear! Sometimes, although you don't experience pain during the exercises, you may experience pain afterward. Swelling and

joint pain are common symptoms of doing too much. If you experience this, decrease the number of repetitions next time.

OSTEOPOROSIS

Weight-bearing exercise is the name of the game. Research has repeatedly shown that to build stronger bones, you have to put weight on them. It's also been shown that higher-impact exercise can actually rebuild bone strength, especially in the hips.

THINGS TO KEEP YOU ON A HEALTHY PATH

- Make sure you know how to do your intended exercise properly
- Include a proper warmup and cooldown
- Drink plenty of water before, during, and after workouts
- When working out alone, keep your cell phone handy in case of an emergency.
- Start gradually, two days per week of strength training and low-impact classes like yoga or tai chi
- Try short walks or swimming
- Incorporate balance exercises that can reduce the risk of falls

THE GOOD NEWS

Muscle burns three times the calories as fat, and maintaining a toned musculature prevents slips, falls, and even osteoporosis. Keep your body guessing and use different muscles. Simply adding sideways stepping and backward walking are two ways to add variety! If you're uncertain where to begin, consider working with a trainer who can advise you on safety and technique.

Rather than focus on the things you can't do, give yourself credit for overcoming obstacles and prioritizing your fitness.

Yours in Fitness,

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Helen's love of fitness began at an early age. She practiced dance and gymnastics as well as track and field. She's an Exercise Physiologist with over 35 years of experience. She is also a certified personal trainer, corrective exercise specialist, nutrition consultant and Senior fitness specialist.

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