

Exercise for Older Adults: Tips for Maximizing Health After 50

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Whether you've recently turned 50 or it's getting distant in your rearview mirror, you might have lamented about your age a time or two. Age really is just a number; what really matters is how young you feel, and how young you feel depends largely on your overall health. That's why physical fitness is so crucial at all ages, allowing you to maintain your vibrant youth and energy long after you've reached the big 5-0. If you're ready to embrace a healthier lifestyle, here are a few need-to-know tips to maximize your results.

Any Activity is Better Than a Sedentary Lifestyle

The benefits of physical activity are touted for people of all ages, but the idea of starting a rigorous fitness regimen post-50 may seem daunting. The important thing to realize is that any activity at all always trumps a sedentary lifestyle.

Even just walking for [30 minutes](#), four days per week can have a positive impact on your health. So, you don't need to strive to become the next cover model for a fitness magazine, but you should make an effort to increase your activity levels.

Don't Limit Yourself to Activities Designed for Older Adults

While there are plenty of valuable articles that share the most doable activities for [older adults](#), there's no reason to limit yourself to these types of activities if you have the strength and stamina to do more. Of course, you shouldn't push yourself to an intensity that's not safe for you, either. That's why it's important to discuss your fitness plans with your doctor before you begin a new program.

That said, if you start walking but don't feel as though you're really exerting yourself, try jogging or running. Every person is different, so one person in their 70s might be capable of running a 5k, while another person in their 50s might struggle to run for a few hundred feet. Listen to your body – and to your healthcare provider – to develop a routine that's sufficiently exerting but not crossing the boundaries of safety.

Figure Out What Motivates You

[Motivation](#) is a big obstacle for many people who want to improve their fitness. When you're tired at the end of the day, going for a run might not seem like your idea of a relaxing evening. But the post-workout high you'll enjoy after you find the motivation is well worth it.

To stay motivated, figure out what motivates you most. Do you stick to your plans if you've committed to working out with a friend? Maybe you find it difficult to get to the gym regularly. You really only need a few pieces of equipment to create an in-home gym, so consider investing in [a few essentials](#) to eliminate the roadblock of having to travel to a fitness center.

Diversify Your Routine

Fitness encompasses a variety of activities of varied intensity levels, requiring varying degrees of strength, flexibility, and stamina. When you repeat the same routine over and over, you develop muscle memory and build strength, making the routine easier over time.

For the best results, try to avoid becoming complacent. [Diversify](#) your workout routines and engage in different types of activities, including strength training, aerobic activity, and stretching activities such as yoga or Pilates.

Engaging in a variety of physical activities will help you get the most out of your effort for your overall health and well-being, including an enhanced mood, healthy weight management, improved muscle strength, muscle tone, and balance, stronger bones, improved circulation, and more, all of which work to increase longevity and ward off chronic disease such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and even Alzheimer's disease. With so many benefits for people of all ages, there's no reason not to engage in a healthy fitness routine after 50.



Photo via [Pixabay](#) by stevepb

Resource links:

- [30 minutes](https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2013/05/exercise-dos-and-donts-beyond-age-50/) -- <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2013/05/exercise-dos-and-donts-beyond-age-50/>
- [Older Adults](http://www.invernessathome.org/frequently-asked-questions-about-seniors-and-exercise/) -- <http://www.invernessathome.org/frequently-asked-questions-about-seniors-and-exercise/>
- [Motivation](http://www.healthy-aging-for-women-babyboomers.com/importance-of-exercise.html) -- <http://www.healthy-aging-for-women-babyboomers.com/importance-of-exercise.html>
- [A Few Essentials](https://www.redfin.com/blog/2016/04/the-7-pieces-of-equipment-you-really-need-in-your-home-gym.html) -- <https://www.redfin.com/blog/2016/04/the-7-pieces-of-equipment-you-really-need-in-your-home-gym.html>
- [Diversify](http://www.healthline.com/health/variety-spice-fitness-diversify-your-workout) -- <http://www.healthline.com/health/variety-spice-fitness-diversify-your-workout>