

Get physical and feel good

Kia kori, kia ora



Age Concern information sheet for older people who want to be fitter and happier

Whatever your age, having a daily routine that keeps you physically active can do wonders for body and mind. Even small amounts of exercise can make a difference - what counts is that it's regular and varied. Here's what's recommended if you're over 65:

5 days a week...

do something that makes you **breathe harder and increases your heart rate** for half an hour. Good for your heart and lungs, but also for your brain.

This could be cycling, golf, brisk walking, housework, Kapa Haka, line dancing, stair climbing, swimming, table tennis, walking uphill, playing with grandchildren, Waka Ama, water aerobics or ZumbaGold.

3 days a week...

do something that helps **keep you flexible**. This could be bowls, modified Tai Chi, stretching,



Make it... fun
regular
social

You will... feel better
think better
sleep better

gardening, yoga, pilates or washing the car.

And do something that **improves your balance**. This could be dancing, cycling, standing on one leg, Poi Toa or Steady As You Go® classes.

2 days a week...

do something that **strengthens your muscles and bones**. This could be carrying shopping, weight training, Steady As You Go® classes, water aerobics, stair climbing or hill walking.

Give it a go!

You'll feel better, think better, sleep better. You'll find it easier and more enjoyable to do everyday tasks. If you choose group activities, you'll probably also make new friends.

Tip: it's so much easier to get started and keep going if you make the activities fun, weave them into your daily and weekly routines, and do them with others.

We asked SeniorVoice e-panel members how they like to stay physically active.

Their suggestions included:

aquarobics, walking, gardening, vacuuming, window cleaning, working out at the gym, yoga, Tai Chi, croquet, Scottish country dancing, Zumba dancing, swimming, mowing the lawns, Pilates, cycling, table tennis, ballroom dancing, kayaking, indoor bowls, home and garden maintenance, fishing, doing odd jobs for others, using the stairs, Somatics, farming, hanging out washing, arthritis exercise sessions, Feldenkrais, badminton, aerobics classes and lifting weights.

SeniorVoice gems:

“I’ve been going [to the gym] regularly for five years. I really enjoy it and am now committed to it as a regular part of my life. My fitness and wellbeing have improved tremendously. I’m now 75 and have never been so fit - miles fitter than I was in my 30s and 40s, which gives me a great buzz!”

“I play social golf croquet twice a week all year round with a group of older people. We have plenty of laughs and social interaction where having fun is the main object as well as using our mental and physical skills.”

“Before I started yoga, I used to sit on a stool

to put on my shoes. I don’t need to do that any more.”

“My physical activities are walking on the flat (enjoy the fresh air and chatting to people), gardening (find this very relaxing and enjoy having flowers in our house/eating vegetables out of our garden), housework (satisfying to see everything neat and tidy) and washing my car (looks great when finished and our granddaughter helps me with this task so it is a special time together).”

“What exercise, challenge, companionship and fun I have at my croquet club twice a week!”

“Walking along a beach with a rod in hand is my favourite exercise. The return journey is especially enjoyable if you are carrying a fish.”

NB: *Speak to your doctor before starting or increasing physical activity. Start off slowly and build up to the recommended daily “dose”.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Age Concern New Zealand wishes to thank:

- Members of our **SeniorVoice** e-panel for sharing their thoughts
- **Ministry of Health** for information and funding.

To join Age Concern’s SeniorVoice, visit ageconcern.org.nz/seniorvoice

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