

Four Types of Exercise Can Improve Your Healthy and Physical Ability

Most people tend to focus on one type of exercise or activity and think they are doing enough to stay fit. Research has shown that it is important to get all four types of exercise: endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility. Each one has different benefits. Doing one kind also can ability to do the others, and variety helps reduce boredom and risk of injury. No matter your age, you can find activities that meet your fitness level and needs.

Endurance Activities. These are often referred to as aerobic, they increase your breathing and heart rates. These activities help you keep healthy, improve your fitness, and help you perform the tasks you need to do every day. Endurance exercises improves your heart, lungs, and circulatory system. They can also delay or prevent many diseases that are common in older adults such as diabetes, colon and breast cancers, heart disease and others. Physical activities that build endurance include brisk walks, jogging, yard work such as mowing and raking, dancing, swimming, biking, climbing stairs or hills, playing tennis or basketball.

Increasing your endurance. Build up to at least 150 minutes of activity a week that makes you breath hard. Try to be active throughout your day to reach this goal and avoid sitting for long periods of time.

Strength Exercises. Your muscular strength can make a difference. Strong muscles help you stay independent and make everyday activities easier such as getting up from a chair, climbing stairs and carrying groceries. Keeping your muscles strong can help with your balance and prevent falls. You are less likely to fall when your leg and hip muscles are strong.

You can choose weight to help improve your strength. You can start with light weights first, then gradually add more. You can also use resistance bands, stretchy elastic bands to help. If you are a beginner start with a lighter band. Start light and slow. When you can do two sets of 10 to 15 repetitions, you can add more. Try doing strength exercises for major muscle groups at least two days per week. But don't exercise the same muscle group on any two days in a row. Some example of strength exercises include: liftin weights, carrying groceries, gripping a tennis ball, overhead arm curl, arm curls, wall push-ups, lifting your body weight, using resistance band.

Balance Exercises. These exercises help prevent falls, a common problem with older adults that can have serious consequences. Many lower-body strength exercises help improve balance. Also exercises such as Tai Chi, standing on one foot, the heel-to-toe walk and the balance walk, and standing from a seated position.

Flexibility Exercises. Stretching can improve your flexibility. Moving more freely will make it easier for you to reach down to tie your shoes or look over your shoulder when you back your car out of the drive. Flexibility exercises include back stretches, inner thigh stretch, ankle stretch, and back of leg stretch.

Safety is always important to prevent injury. Talk to your health care provider before beginning an exercise program. Start light and build up. Listen to your body if you feel lightheaded, dizzy or have chest pain. Drink plenty of liquids. Find a partner to exercise with

The National Institute on Aging has some good resources on exercises. They have a booklet on Exercise and Physical Activity as well as a YouTube channel of exercises at NIA's YouTube channel.