



wellnews

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ASK THE EXPERT Healthy Aging

by Kathleen M. Connelly, BA, Certified Personal Trainer, Certified Health Coach



Did you know September is Healthy Aging Month? If you are caring for a loved one or looking at your own health, here are four important steps to take to maintain health and function as we age.

Physical Activity and Exercise Scientific evidence suggests that people who exercise

regularly not only live longer, they live better. Keep active with daily activities like taking the stairs, yard work or gardening. These play a major role in maintaining independence and physical ability. Moderate intensity exercise like strength training, balance exercises and endurance activities like walking, biking or dancing can help prevent/improve certain diseases that affect us as we age.

Keep a Healthy Weight and Shape Research shows monitoring weight gain or loss is important for older adults as well as a healthy muscle to fat ratio. For disease prevention, carrying more weight around your hips/thighs (a pear shape) can be better than carrying weight around your waist (an apple shape).

Healthy Nutrition Get recommended amounts of fiber, vitamins and other nutrients to help keep muscles, bones, organs and other parts of the body healthy.

Participate in Activities You Enjoy Studies have shown older adults who participate regularly in hobbies, social events, volunteering and leisure activities report being happier and healthier. These activities may also decrease risk of health problems like dementia and depression.

For more information, visit <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-do-we-know-about-healthy-aging>

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Hours:

Mon.-Fri. 8:30am – 4:30pm



FITNESS

How to Improve Balance

by Scott Haase, BA, Health Coach & Personal Trainer

You've been told balance is important, right? Did you know your vision could impact balance? Let's take a look at how vision and exercise both affect balance.

Vision

Whether it's "getting older" or skipping your vision exam a few times, good sight helps balance.

For those that struggle with vision and balance, try practicing your balance by moving closer to a wall or fixed object and locking eyes with that target. The closer you are to an object or wall, the easier it is for your eyes to focus. Slowly transition your center of gravity onto one foot and aim to balance for 15 seconds. Now, switch feet.

Based on feedback, try to match or beat your time each day. Once you can balance for 30-60 seconds with ease, step further away from the wall to challenge your vision again!

Pro tip: Try barefoot! Going barefoot allows you to have a better feel of the ground.

Exercise

The exercise science world talks a lot about "proprioception," but to the general population it's just a fancy word that refers to how well you are aware of your body in space. As exercise increases, our bodies move through all kinds of different motions. With each movement, our brain and body get more comfortable, improving our overall balance. You owe it to your balance, start moving more and get results!



NUTRITION

What is Nutritionally Special About Older Adults?

by Robin Stahl, RD, LD

BLACK BEAN CHILI

INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ lb. ground turkey or 90% lean ground beef
- 1 cup thick chunky salsa
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 (15 oz.) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 yellow bell pepper, chopped
- ½ tsp. cumin
- 2 (15 oz.) cans black beans, rinsed & drained
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper

DIRECTIONS:

1. Spray large stock pot with cooking oil spray.
2. Over medium/high heat, cook turkey, onion and garlic until meat is cooked through.
3. Add bell pepper and cook for 2 minutes.
4. Add beans, salsa, tomatoes and spices. Stir to blend all ingredients.
5. Bring to a simmer. Cover and cook on low for 1 hour.

Nutritional Information — Serves 6

Serving Size: 1 cup
 Calories: 158 Carbohydrate: 18g
 Protein: 18g Fat: 1g
 Sodium: 420mg Fiber: 6g

Let's face it, we are all going to be "older adults" someday, so we may as well prepare. Even though every person will age differently, there are some common health issues with aging. Consider the slowing of metabolism, eye health, blood pressure, blood sugar, digestion and oral health (teeth and gums).

Eating a balanced diet is primary in staving off many of the issues related to aging listed above.

Tufts University has developed a MyPlate for older adults. This visual is helpful at a time of life when calorie needs decrease and nutrient needs often increase.

Some of the unique nutritional considerations for older adults are listed below:

- Eat a fiber-rich diet to combat gastrointestinal struggles.
- Ask your healthcare provider about supplementing with Vitamin B12 as this vitamin is less well absorbed due to stomach acidity changes.
- Manage blood pressure through diet by avoiding excess sodium and including potassium-rich foods.
- Consume adequate lutein and zeaxanthin to decrease risk of macular degeneration and cataracts. Your health care professional may recommend supplements.
- Drink adequate fluids to stay well hydrated; do not wait to feel thirsty to drink.

Having a physician who specializes in geriatrics may be helpful if your health issues begin adding up. Experts say the need for specialized geriatric care begins at age 70-75.

As we eat better, think positively, stay social and move daily, we give ourselves the chance to live a life that is enjoyable with fewer doctor visits.

www.nutrition.gov/audience/older-individuals | hnrca.tufts.edu/myplate/





STRESS AND MINDFULNESS

Social Connection at All Ages

by Fredna Holmgren, MS, Health Coach

Research shows that social connection helps us live longer, have greater self-esteem, immunity, emotional regulation, and less anxiety, depression and cognitive decline. Social connection and caring involvement with others is an easy health strategy because it is inexpensive, requires no special equipment, and can be experienced in so many ways.

Consider yourself a loner or an introvert? No problem. Social connection is a subjective feeling. It is not about how many friends you have, but on how connected you feel internally.

As we age, risks of isolation increase due to changes in our ability to get around, our work status and income, our living arrangements, and loss of family members and friends.

Social connection can be nurtured and built through:

- Volunteering and altruism – give, share, support and do acts of service and kindness for others
- Managing stress – mindfulness practices, take a leisurely walk, seek counseling
- Taking a class or learning a hobby
- Joining community activities such as the local YMCA, center on aging, or place of worship
- Considering different housing arrangements where there are more opportunities to socialize
- Being active – build muscle to reduce fall risk, while interacting with others
- Using technology – post pictures, video calls, and email conversations
- Reaching out – ask to join friends or family for meals or ask a neighbor or friend to join you for a walk

You can now get information from your health coach through social media!

Click the links below:



For more information visit National Council on Aging at <https://www.ncoa.org/> or <http://ccare.stanford.edu>.