

SAMPLE HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATION BLOG POST

Seniors: Staying Fit for Health and Wellness

It's summer—time for gardening, swimming, and walks outside. If you are not already engaged in a regular year-round fitness program, now is a great time to start! There are so many good reasons to stay fit while you age—and you can have fun while you do it.

Research shows that staying fit is important for aging adults as it helps maintain body weight, balance, and strength, and can be particularly key in stalling or even preventing common conditions in the older adult. Staying fit can help in many ways to keep your body healthy and mind in top form.

- Engaging in regular strength training maintains healthy bones, muscles, and joints. Studies show that seniors who engage in strength training decrease their risk of falling by 40%. Older adults with osteoarthritis found they had less pain and were more flexible after 16 weeks of regular weight-lifting.
- Aerobic exercise, such as walking, running, biking, dancing, and swimming, helps your heart work more efficiently.
- Staying fit helps with weight maintenance and, for diabetics, better blood sugar control, which leads to fewer complications.
- Staying fit helps your mind, too. Exercising reduces and eases depression and anxiety and keeps your mind sharp. Working out with a friend ensures you stay motivated with a bonus--having strong social networks has been shown to be a significant factor in healthy aging.

The best fitness programs combine aerobic activity with other types of exercise. [The National Osteoporosis Foundation](#) recommends the following for seniors and anyone wanting to help keep their bones healthy:

- Move! Engage in at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity most days of the week. This might include walking, swimming, tennis, or an aerobics class.
- Get those muscles working! Two or three days a week, power up with muscle-strengthening, or resistance exercise. This is any exercise that involves moving weights against gravity, such as lifting weights and using elastic exercise bands. You can also use your own body weight and still see results.
- Work on balance and coordination. Incorporate daily balance or functional exercises. This might include yoga or Tai Chi, or physical therapist-recommended activities that mimic daily movements, such as stair-climbing.

Getting Started

Before starting any fitness program, be sure to talk to your doctor. It's also important to start slow and to take a break if you feel any pain or are sore for more than 2 days. To help you get started on a fitness program that's right for you, CDPHP offers [Senior Fit](#)[®] to Medicare Choices members. This gives you free access to local gyms and fitness programs, including the YMCA, Curves[®], and others. You can also participate in [SilverSneakers](#)[®] Steps, a pedometer-based walking and fitness program that comes with equipment and motivation to stay fit. Don't know where to start? Connect with a [Health Ally](#)SM, who can help you find a CDPHP wellness program for seniors that is right for you.

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