

COTA VIC encourages all older Victorians to be more physically active, more often.

Older adults should include 30 minutes of moderately intensive physical activity in their daily lives to benefit their physical and mental health.

If you are not already active, start off slowly with low levels of physical activity and build up gradually with amount and intensity. Involve friends and family or join a group

### Levels of Physical Activity

- **Low** – Everyday activities like walking to the shops or gardening
- **Moderate** – Physical activity at a level that causes your heart to beat faster and some shortness of breath, but still you can talk comfortably while doing
- **Vigorous** – Physical activity at a level that causes your heart to beat a lot faster and shortness of breath that makes talking difficult between deep breaths

(Glasgow et al, 2005)

### Pre-Exercise Screening

“Pre Exercise Screening” is important to identify people who may have medical conditions that may require an exercise program to be modified.

Before commencing a new form of moderate physical activity, the benefits and risks should be discussed with your doctor or health professional, especially if you have not exercised for a long time, have a chronic disease or you are uncertain about doing some physical activity.

### What sort of activity should you be doing?

To improve general health, a mix of physical activity from the four types of activities listed. You should choose activities you enjoy and vary what you do.

#### 1. ***Fitness Activities or Aerobic or cardio or endurance.***

These activities increase your heart and breathing rate. They make you huff and puff. For example: brisk walking, walking the dog, dancing, tennis, swimming, cycling, gym, exercise programs, vacuuming, gardening and washing the car.

#### ***Benefits:***

- To do things for longer and more easily, eg. shopping, playing with the grandchildren, and
- To lose weight.

#### 2. ***Strength (or resistance) training.***

This includes use of weights like dumbbells, machine weights or lifting and carrying, climbing stairs or digging.

#### ***Benefits:***

- Greater independence and confidence in doing everyday tasks like carrying shopping or climbing stairs, getting out of a chair

- Prevent and /or better manage conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, (high blood pressure), osteoporosis and arthritis
- Better balance and posture
- Stronger and improved ability to engage in sporting activities.

Strength training, as provided through the Living Longer Living Stronger™ program, will help you regain and/or maintain the strength you need to stay independent and active.

### 3. *Flexibility Activities*

These flexibility activities stretching, bending and gentle reaching can be fun with dancing, yoga and tai chi. Don't bounce! You can include them in your daily routine of vacuuming and gardening. You should try to do some form of stretching every day – even if it is only while you are watching TV.

#### **Benefits:**

- These activities help you to move more easily
- Maintain your independence and ability to do everyday tasks, such as putting on shoes, reaching for things on high shelves or hanging out the washing.

### 4. *Balancing Activities*

These activities require you to maintain a stable position. Tai Chi, yoga, cycling, dancing are great activities and even standing on one foot, or walking heel to toe using support if needed. Practice 2-3 times a week.

#### **Benefits:**

- Can improve your balance and help prevent falls
- Maintain your confidence and independence.



#### **Remember:**

- Be Active every day!
- It does not have to be competitive
- Make a commitment to yourself
- Reward yourself after the activity
- The more physical activity you can do the more you will benefit
- 30 minutes of moderately intensive physical activity per day is recommended, although even doing 10 minutes a few times a day can be effective
- Sitting still for long periods of time is not good for you
- Fun and socialisation is a major drawcard to get people participating
- To live a better quality of life you can engage in being active
- The best way to stay active is to make physical activity part of your daily routine so that it eventually becomes a habit
- The loss of body functions generally attributed to ageing is actually a result of inactivity.

#### **For more Information**

- “Be Active Your Way” Peer education talk – Contact COTA Vic, Tel 9654 4443
- COTA’s information service - Seniors Information 1300 13 50 90
- Visit COTA VIC’s website – <http://www.cotavic.org.au/programs-events/>
- Your local council recreation or leisure department
- Your local community health centre
- Active Ageing Network – <http://www.activeageingnetwork.org.au/Pages/default.aspx>

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