

EXERCISING WITH FRAILTY



Staying physically active is one of the best ways to maintain your independence as you get older. It's never too late to start. Exercise can help you increase your muscle strength and endurance, enhance mobility and reduce the risk of falling. Regular physical activity can also help improve your balance and coordination, reduce reliance on assistive devices, and enhance your overall quality of life. The key is to determine what type of exercise is best for you and to follow a program that accommodates your individual needs and concerns.

IN THE SERIES:

- > Cardiovascular Diseases
- > Pulmonary Diseases
- > Metabolic Diseases
- > Immunological/ Hematological Disorders
- > Orthopedic Diseases and Disabilities
- > Neuromuscular Disorders

Getting Started

- Talk with your health care provider before starting an exercise program and ask for specific programming recommendations.
- Take all medications as recommended by your physician.
- The goals of your program should be to improve mobility, your ability to perform activities of daily living and your overall fitness.
- Choose activities that you enjoy and will do regularly. If walking is too difficult, cycling, swimming and chair activities are good alternatives. Group classes can also provide a social element to your workouts.
- Perform low-level strength-training exercises using light weights such as wrist and ankle weights. Incorporate flexibility, eye-hand coordination, reflex training, and fall prevention activities.
- Start slowly and gradually progress the intensity and duration of your workouts. An extended warm-up is recommended.

Exercise Cautions

- You may be susceptible to dehydration and insulin insensitivity—be alert to the warning signs of these conditions.
- If you have osteoporosis, you may be more prone to bone fractures. Avoid exercises that overload your joints or increase your risk of falling. Begin each exercise in a stable position and monitor your response before proceeding.
- Don't hesitate to ask for demonstrations or further explanations about how to perform exercises properly.

Your exercise program should be designed to maximize the benefits with the fewest risks of aggravating your health or physical condition. Consider contacting a certified health and fitness professional* who can work with you and your health care provider to establish realistic goals and design a safe and effective program that addresses your specific needs.

*If your health care provider has not cleared you for independent physical activity and would like you to be monitored in a hospital setting or a medical fitness facility, you should exercise only under the supervision of a certified professional. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has two groups of certified fitness professionals that could meet your needs. The ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Specialist (CES) is certified to support those with heart disease, diabetes and lung disease. The ACSM Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist (RCEP) is qualified to support patients with a wide range of health challenges. You may locate all ACSM-certified fitness professionals by using the ProFinder at www.acsm.org.

For more information, visit www.exerciseismedicine.org or e-mail eim@acsm.org.

Support for the Exercise is Medicine® Global Initiative is Provided By:

