

“I know exercise is important but it is difficult for me. What can I do for exercise?”



Regular physical activity can help build stronger muscles, prevent joint stiffness, improve sleep, and help you function better. It is important to stay active throughout your entire life. This may mean you need to change your activity level depending on what your health and lifestyle allow. Remember, some physical activity is better than none.

Challenges of getting exercise

There are many things that can keep people from getting exercise including a lack of time, energy, and motivation. Other common challenges may be fear of injury, or physical barriers such as reduced range of motion, certain health conditions, and lack of skill or ability. But exercise does not only include high impact or high demand activities like going for a run or weight lifting at the gym. There are many lower impact activities and exercises that do not require as much physical demand or create as much stress on your body but still help you burn calories and improve physical strength.

What is low impact exercise?

Low-impact exercise is movement and exercise that gets your heart rate up slowly and causes less pressure on your joints (knees, hips, ankles) than high-impact exercise. It can help you achieve your exercise goals without worsening an existing injury or causing a new one. It can also maintain and build muscle that decreases steadily with age.

Low impact exercises can also be easy to adapt to your preferred level of intensity. People can focus on these exercises as a form of cross-training in order to build endurance, flexibility, and to strengthen different muscle groups with less risk of injury. Some common examples of low-impact exercise include walking, hiking, yoga, Pilates, swimming, skating, cross-country skiing, and golf.

Easy ways to incorporate low impact exercise

You can easily include low-impact exercise into your daily routine, regardless of your age and ability. Many exercises can be done at home, at your desk while at work, or even when travelling. Here are some ideas to help get started:

- Start your day with 15 minutes of stretching
- If you take public transportation, get off at an earlier stop and walking the rest of the way
- Walk or bike, rather than drive, to the grocery store, work, or local errands
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Extend your errands into a mild exercise routine by adding steps to your shopping trips
- Find an exercise buddy who can join you on walks or for an exercise class before or after work. Exercising with someone else can help keep you on track
- Use moments of free time to move around, stretch, walk, do yoga, whatever gets your blood moving

Always be sure to consult with your doctor first because some movements can be harmful when you have swollen joints or muscle pain.

