

# ***BETter Living ...***

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## **Keys to Embracing Aging – Physical Activity**

Do you choose to take the stairs when they are an option? Do you choose to park farther away from a store? By choosing the stairs and parking farther away from a store, you are choosing to add physical activity to your day. The third key we will review is Physical Activity. Small steps can make a big difference!

Regular physical activity is important to both physical and mental health. No matter your size, shape, or age, an active lifestyle throughout your lifespan is one of the most important things you can do for well-being.

### **Why is Physical Activity Important?**

- Strengthens bones and muscles
- Improves cardiovascular health
- Maintains or increases range of motion and flexibility
- Protects against certain health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, hypertension, obesity, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, colon cancer, and depression
- Improves mental health and mood
- Improves cognitive function
- Protects against dementia, including Alzheimer's disease
- Improves quality of life and ability to do daily activities
- Controls weight
- Increases energy
- Promotes restful sleep
- Reduces the risk of falling
- Contributes to longevity

### **Aerobic Activity**

- Intensity – the strength and power you put into the activity
- Frequency – how often you participate in the activity
- Duration – the length of time you perform the activity at one time, at least 10 minutes each time
- Minimum recommendation is 150 minutes per week
- Strive for 300 minutes of exercise per week

### **Strength Training**

- Makes muscles and bones stronger
- Increases metabolism, which helps maintain a healthy weight and ideal blood sugar levels
- Helps prevent progression of osteoporosis
- Should be completed at least 2 times per week

### **Stretching**

- Helps keep the body flexible and limber

- Allows muscles and joints to move smoothly
- Helps give you more freedom of movement to do everyday activities such as reaching and looking over your shoulder
- Reduces muscle tension, soreness, and even low back pain
- Increases blood and nutrients to the muscle tissues
- Improves coordination
- Contributes to good posture
- Can help reduce stress

### **Balance**

- Recommended specifically for senior adults and adults with balance issues
- Helps prevent falls
- Helps build muscles and stability

### **You're more likely to stay active if you:**

- think you will benefit from your activities
- include activities you enjoy
- feel you can do the activities correctly
- believe the activities are safe
- have regular access to the activities
- can fit the activities into your daily schedule
- find that the activities are affordable
- can see the benefits of regular exercise and physical activity

Whether you're just starting out, getting back to exercising after a break, or fit enough to run a 3-mile race, physical activity is for everyone, including people who are healthy and those who live with ongoing health problems or disabilities.

I challenge you all to get up and move for at least 30 minutes each day!

For more information, contact the Wabaunsee County Extension Office at 785-765-3821 or email Bernadette Trieb, btrieb@ksu.edu.