

STAYING IN SHAPE AFTER 60

It is easy to understand how many of us become less active as we grow older. Our energy levels are lower and we develop other interests that are quieter and more relaxing. Unfortunately for our health and well-being those activities often include watching TV and probably having a snack while doing so.

In 2002, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a report that showed about 1 in 4 American adults engaged in little or no regular physical activity. Even worse, when work is excluded from physical activity, the figures really drop. In fact, 7 in 10 Americans were not regularly active during their leisure-time and that would include many retirees.

If our excuse when we were younger was that we had no time to exercise, what's our reason in retirement? It appears that most of the time we have captured from work is being replaced with watching television. That's great if you are filling your mind with helpful information from Doctor Phil or even Judge Judy, but what about your body?



Your body needs regular exercise, 30-60 minutes per day of moderately vigorous exercise, on top of routine daily tasks, such as grocery shopping or house

cleaning in order to stay in good working order. Without that exertion your body not only becomes more frail and flabby, but you also run the increased risk of serious illness.

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The American Heart Association recommends daily exercise such as walking or swimming and if you're up to it shorter sessions of more vigorous activities such as fast walking or stair-climbing. The harder you work the greater the benefits, but no exercise should be done excessively. Nor should you begin any form of rigorous exercise regime without consulting your doctor.

But even lower intensity activities like gardening and yard work can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Golf, badminton, croquet, shuffleboard, lawn bowling and table tennis are all fairly safe activities for seniors. Staying fit will help you in all parts of your life and enable you to be active and mobile for as long as possible.

For more tips on the benefits and the how-to's of exercise and fitness in retirement you can write to:

The National Institute on Aging
Office of Communications and Public Liaison
Building 31, Room 5C27
31 Center Drive, MSC 2292
Bethesda, MD 20892.

You can also visit their website at: www.niapublications.org/exercisebook/index.asp

You have no reason not to stay active in retirement. Why stop at 60?

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