

**Cornell University**  
Cooperative Extension  
of Schenectady County



**Consumer-centered access for long-term care information, referrals and assessments.**  
**For information, call 382-8481, x 1234.**

**Attention Senior Citizens:**

Have a nutritional question or concern? If you are participating in a senior meal program, you are eligible to have a free consultation with a Registered Dietitian. Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at 372-1622, ext. 269. Leave a message, if necessary, for dietitian to call you back.

Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services denies no person services or access to service based upon race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status and/or handicapping conditions. Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services is primarily funded with County tax dollars. Supplemental funding is through the New York State Office for the Aging under Title III-B/D, III-C-1, III-C-2, III-F of the Federal Older Americans Act, and New York State Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP), Community Services for the Elderly Act (CSE), Congregate Services Initiative (CSI), and the Wellness In Nutrition (WIN).

# Exercise and Physical Activity: Getting Fit for Life



Exercise and physical activity are good for you, no matter how old you are. Being active can help you keep and improve your strength so you can be more independent and have more energy to do the things you want to do.

**Physical activity can:**

- ◆ improve your balance
- ◆ prevent or delay some diseases like heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis
- ◆ perk up your mood and reduce depression.

Find things you like to do or can do. Try different kinds of activities that keep you moving and make it a daily routine.

**Who Should Exercise?**

You can still exercise even if you have a health condition like heart disease or diabetes. Check with your doctor if you have not done much activity and are not sure what you can do safely. Any disability you may have will determine what specific exercises you may be able to do.

**Safety Tips**

- Start slowly, especially if you haven't been active for a long time.
- Slowly build up your activities and how hard you work at them.
- Don't hold your breath during strength exercises. That could cause changes in your blood pressure. You should breathe out as you lift something and breathe in as you relax.
- Wear the right shoes if walking or jogging.

**Safety Tips, Continued**

- Unless your doctor has asked you to limit fluids, be sure to drink plenty of fluids when you are doing activities.
- Bending and lifting—Always bend forward from the hips, not the waist. Keep your feet fully on the floor throughout the whole movement. Do not lift your heels. Bend your knees directly over your feet. Bend forward at the hips to see the floor.
- Warm up your muscles before you stretch. Try walking and light arm pumping first.
- Exercise should not hurt or make you feel really tired. You might feel some soreness, a little discomfort or a bit weary, but you should not feel pain.

**STICKING WITH IT: What Works**

- 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

To get all of the benefits of physical activity, try all four types of exercise:

1. **Endurance:** These include activities like walking, jogging, swimming and dancing. You may be limited in how much of any of these activities you are able to do. Endurance activities build your energy or “staying power.” If you can, try to build up to at least 30 minutes so you breathe hard on most or all days of the week. You can do ten minutes at a time, too. If you can talk without any trouble at all, you are not working hard enough. If you can’t talk at all, it’s too hard.
2. **Strength:** Keep using your muscles. Strength exercises build muscles. When you have strong muscles you can get up from a chair by yourself. You are less likely to fall when your leg and hip muscles are strong.
3. **Balance:** Balance exercises, along with certain strength exercises, can help prevent falls by improving your ability to control and maintain your body's position, whether you are moving or still. If you can, try standing on one foot, then the other with or without holding on to anything for support. Get up from a chair without using your hands or arms. Every now and then walk heel-to-toe. As you walk, put the heel of one foot just in front of the toes of your other foot. Your heel and toes should touch or almost touch.
4. **Flexibility:** Stretching can improve your flexibility. Moving more freely will make it easier for you to reach down to tie your shoes. Stretch when your muscles are warmed up. Don’t stretch so far that it hurts.

## Strength Exercises

Seated Row with Resistance Band



Overhead Arm Raise



Leg Straightening



Side Leg Raise



Wall Push-Up



## Balance Exercises



Stand on One Foot

Heel to Toe Walk



Check out Go4Life® at [www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life](http://www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life). This exercise and physical activity campaign from the National Institute on Aging has exercises, success stories, and free video and print materials.

Download Workout to go.

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## Flex Exercises

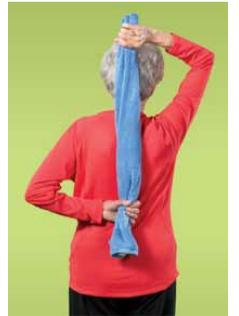
Thigh Stretch



Bending



Shoulder and Upper Arm Stretch



**Be sure to check with your healthcare provider before undertaking an exercise plan.**