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County Executive

Older Adult Health and Wellness

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Fitness After 50—It's Never Too Late to Start

There are many reasons why regular exercise and physical activity are important to everyone, including older adults. Regular physical activity and exercise can produce long-term health benefits and that is one reason health experts recommend that older adults be active every day to maintain their health. Even moderate exercise can improve the health of people who are frail or have diseases that accompany aging.

In a study published in the journal *Neurology*, doctors found that exercise can slow cognitive decline—meaning our minds can stay sharper longer.

Some older adults are reluctant to exercise because they think exercise will be too hard or that physical activity will harm them. Others think they have to join a gym or have special equipment. Often when older adults lose the ability to do things on their own, it isn't just because they have aged—it's often because they are not active. Lack of physical activity can lead to more doctor visits, more hospitalizations and the use of more medications.

Exercising regularly can actually help prevent or delay many disease and disabilities. In some cases, exercise is an effective treatment for chronic conditions. Studies show that people with arthritis, heart disease or diabetes benefit from regular exercise. Exercise also helps people with high blood pressure, balance problems or difficulty walking.

Here are some programs that can help you increase your amount of physical activity, get more exercise and help improve the aging process.

Bone Builders

Bone Builders is a community-based osteoporosis prevention program that combines exercise and education to help older individuals increase their bone density. One in two older women and one in five older men will suffer from a fracture due to osteoporosis. Osteoporosis can be caused by heredity and other reasons, including a lack of calcium in the diet, a sedentary lifestyle and certain medications.

There are more than 30 Bone Builders classes at locations throughout the community. Taught by a group of dedicated volunteers, the hour-long classes are held twice weekly. Participants learn and do exercises specifically chosen to increase muscle strength and bone density in order to improve balance and minimize the risk of falls. Participants bring their own weights to class.

To register for a **FREE** Bone Builders class, call 240-773-8268. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer teacher of Bone Builders classes, contact Phyllis Elperin at 240-773-8268 or go to www.montgomeryserves.org/rsvp-bone-builders

Stepping On

Stepping On is a free County-supported falls prevention program led by a trained professional. Participants learn to manage health behaviors to reduce the risk of falls. Call 240-773-8290 for information.

Recreation Department

The County Recreation Department has a wide variety of fitness facilities and activities for people of all ages. There are programs for adults age 55 and older related to health promotion, fitness and fun in many locations throughout the community. Indoor walking is available for free at county recreation centers. For more information, see the department's website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec or call 240-777-4925.



Active Adults 55+ Fitness Classes

Clinics teach beginners how to utilize weight and exercise rooms in county recreation centers. Visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec or call 240-777-4925 for more information.

Senior Sneakers

Weight and exercise rooms in county recreation centers are available to adults age 55 and older at low cost. Call 240-777-4925 for more information.

Senior Fit

A partnership with Holy Cross, Kaiser Permanente and Montgomery County Recreation. The free classes are held at several locations around the county and help participants improve strength, endurance and flexibility. Participants must have a doctor's permission note. Call 301-754-8800 for registration information or visit www.holycrosshealth.org/senior-fit-and-exercise

Senior Shape

Senior Shape is a partnership between Suburban Hospital and Montgomery County Recreation. Located around the county, the classes provide strength, flexibility and aerobic exercise training. Participants must have a doctor's permission note. The fee for a three-month class is \$40. Call Suburban Hospital at 301-896-3939.

Health and Fitness Programs Sponsored by Hospitals

There are low cost health promotion programs, screening and exercise classes, usually offered in community locations including shopping malls, county recreation and senior centers.

Holy Cross Hospital

Senior Source (Silver Spring)
301-754-8510
www.holycrosshealth.org/fitness-and-wellness-programs

Community Health
301-754-8800

MedStar Montgomery Medical Center

Community Health Programs
301-774-8881

Suburban Hospital

Community Health and Wellness
301-896-3572

Local Municipality Senior Wellness Programs

City of Gaithersburg Gaither Senior Center
Serves individuals age 55 and older who are residents of Gaithersburg or the surrounding areas.

80A Bureau Drive, Gaithersburg
301-258-7380
www.gaithersburgmd.gov/services/senior-services

City of Rockville Senior Center

Serves Rockville residents age 60 and older with a variety of exercise, computer, recreation and education programs. Programs are available in English, Spanish and Chinese.

1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville
301-314-8800
www.rockvillemd.gov/seniorcenter

City of Takoma Park Recreation Department-Senior Programs

For persons 55+

7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park
301-891-7280
www.takomaparkmd.gov/government/recreation

Alternative formats of this document are available upon request. Call Aging and Disability Services at 240-777-3000.

People with difficulty using standard phones are encouraged to use Maryland Relay 711 when contacting organizations listed.