

Jeni's Health & Fitness Tips

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Hi Everyone!

We are lucky to live in Australia where we have one of the longest life expectancies in the world. Current life expectancy in Australia is 81.4 years and, by 2060 and Australian woman can expect, on average to live until the age of 90. Currently there are some 2.8 million Australians aged 65 and over. This number is expected to triple in the next 40 years.

In order to prevent or manage chronic conditions such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis, the Australian Government has developed physical activity recommendations specifically for older adults. These recommendations apply to older people in all levels of health and ability whether living at home or in care. The National Ageing Research Institute in Melbourne developed these guidelines; their aim is to raise awareness of the physical activity needs of older adults such as balance, mobility and strength training.

If you are a young person reading this, you may wish to pass it on to an elderly friend or relative.

These new physical activity recommendations include:

- All Older adults should do some form of physical activity, no matter what their age, weight, health problems or abilities.
- They need to get at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days.
- They should do a range of physical activities that incorporate aerobic fitness, strength, balance and flexibility.
- If they are not used to exercise, or are trying something new, that they start at a level easily manageable and gradually build up to the recommended amount.

Some examples of recommended physical activity include:

Aerobic activity: Brisk walking, vacuuming or golf.

Strength activities: Carrying groceries, gardening, taking the stairs instead of the lift, weight training.

Flexibility activities: Tai chi, bowls, stretching or yoga.

Balancing: Walking heel to toe, tandem stance, tai chi.

The Australian Health Minister's Conference endorsed these recommendations late last year. A booklet, "Choose Health: Be Active", can be obtained from the office of the Minister for Aging by calling 1800 500 853 or (02) 6277 7280.

So whatever your age or state of health, there will always be some form of exercise you can do. It is preferable to seek professional advice to ensure that these activities are carried out in a safe and effective manner. Your trainer should be able to work around any restrictions you may have. It's never too late to start!

Yours in health,

Jeni

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