

# HOW TO GET STARTED ON EXERCISE

- Make a list of the reasons why you would like to incorporate exercise into your life. Be sure to include health problems that might be improved by exercise.
- Make a list of any reasons that keep you from participating in exercise and think of ways to overcome them.
- If you feel that there is any reason why you should not participate in an exercise programme, check with your doctor before beginning a programme.
- See if a friend would like to join you in your quest to become more active. Things are a lot easier and a lot more fun when a friend or your family is involved too!
- Call your local community centre, senior activity centre, or People's Association to find out if they offer any programmes or classes that may interest you. Many



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senior centres offer an array of exercise classes (taiji, yoga, aerobics), dancing lessons, swimming lessons, etc.

- Locate parks in your area and walking trails like the East Coast Park Connector. They are good places for brisk walking or biking.
- Keep an activity journal. In it, list all of the activities you have done each day and how long you did them. A journal will help you track your progress, help you set goals and identify the activities that you like best.
- Remember it is never too late to start exercising regularly.

### **Benefits of Exercise**

- Regular exercise improves aerobic fitness, muscle strength and flexibility which can help to maintain full functioning and independence in older people.
- Regular exercise protects against the development of coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, obesity, non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus, osteoporosis, colon cancer, and depression.
- Regular exercise keeps your bones strong and protects against osteoporosis and fractures.
- Regular exercise produces changes in certain chemical levels in the body that can help to reduce stress, symptoms of moderate depression, and improve mood and general well-being.
- Regular exercise boosts the blood flow to the brain and helps to protect brain function and prevent cognitive decline.
- Regular exercise appears to enhance the function of the immune system, thus helping to reduce the number of colds, flu, and other viruses.