

Low-impact exercises for the elderly

Monami K. Thakur, Health Me Up | Aug 21, 2011

Exercise and good health is as important for the elderly as it is for the younger generation. In fact, a recent research by the University of Alabama, Birmingham has clearly stated that there is a greater need for frequent exercise among older adults than for the younger people.

Preventing any kind of physical activities completely, known as detaining, can cause significant reductions in strength in just a few weeks. The best way to start a fitness regime is by opting for low-impact exercises. Here are some that you can make a part of your daily fitness routine.

Walking: The first thing that definitely comes to one's mind while talking about low-impact endurance exercise is walking. The basic idea is to adopt a regular low-speed walking program with frequent intervals in between. You can even add a few hamstring stretches and ankle rolls to ensure overall flexibility. However, take adequate protection measures by using proper walking shoes with cushioning affect. This will make your regular walks safer and more comfortable.

Swimming: Another great exercise for improving flexibility and endurance, swimming has a number of benefits for the elderly. It is an ideal low-impact exercise as it reduces the stress on bones and joints and is extremely helpful for improving the cardio-vascular functions. A minimum of 20-30 minutes is sufficient to keep your entire body conditioned.

Group exercise sessions: It is true that maintaining a regular and uninterrupted fitness routine at this age can be a tad bit challenging. But, we have a solution for this as well. Heard about group sessions? They are great options to keep you going and you can learn a lot from each other in the process. From cardio training to yoga postures; group programs are a great way to maintain an active lifestyle.

Yoga: Does the word yoga conjure an image of "impossible" postures that are intense in nature? It is true that many yoga positions involve a complex combination of stretches, balance and strength training. However, there are many others that are easier to perform and can be learned easily with the help of trained yoga instructors. These involve simple breathing exercises combined with low-impact meditation postures and a few basic stretches.

Gardening: A fun and enjoyable way of combining fitness with pleasure, gardening is a great way to work your muscles and remain healthy. However, it is important that you take extra care to avoid any kind of strain or stress to your back muscles. Also, keep yourself properly hydrated by drinking plenty of water as normally gardening is a warm-weather activity.

Golfing: Golfing is another fun way to work up your body muscles and maintain overall flexibility and fitness. If you have never learnt before, you can even take a few classes in the basics of golfing. It is a good idea to ensure that you do a few stretches of your calves, hips and upper body to avoid any kind of injury.

Water aerobics: These forms of fitness programs involve a perfect combination of cardiovascular exercises and strength training. You can even provide resistance to your muscles to strengthen them without causing any strain to your joints and bones.

Read more Personal Health, Diet & Fitness stories on www.healthmeup.com