



Encouraging older adults to stay active and safe during the coronavirus pandemic

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While the Merrimac Council on Aging is currently closed we are interested in making sure you are safe and being taken well care of. Some of you have family in the area, while others depend on friends to assist you. However, during the times helpers are not available, or you live alone, we are encouraging you to remain active during the coronavirus pandemic. By staying active, you are maintaining your strength, balance, flexibility that reduces fall risk, strengthen the immune system, and improve quality of life.

You may be concerned about your safety as you prepare to exercise at home, but research has shown that the risks of exercise at home are no greater than exercising in a group setting. **Before you begin an active Exercise Program, check in with your health care provider.** Check out these tips for staying active during this time:

- **KEEP IT UP!** If you are already engaging in outbreak-appropriate physical activity, keep it up! Exercise is key to healthy aging. It is important to keep exercising to strengthen their immune systems and maintain their fitness. The National Physical Activity Guidelines recommends engaging in 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week.
- **Sit Less. Move More.** Use this infographic to help identify ways to move more and sit less during the day. For example, get up during every commercial on TV and do an active chore or march in place. If possible, taking a walk outside is a great way to stay active and enjoy the benefits of fresh air and sunshine.
- **Move Your Way.** <https://health.gov/moveyourway>. If you are too busy for exercise, you can get stuff done and stay physically active at the same time. Physical activity isn't a chore if

you make chores physical activity! Use this infographic:

https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/assets/page_documents/EIM_Rx%20for%20Health_%20Staying%20Active%20During%20Coronavirus%20Pandemic.pdf and video:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/NCPAD>, for tips on how to make everyday tasks more energetic.

- Practice all 4 types of exercise: Use this infographic: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/be-fit-for-function-infographic-508.pdf> to remind older adults to practice all 4 types of exercise for the most benefits. Offer examples of each type of exercise for endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility.
- Stay Safe: <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/how-to-stay-safe-during-exercise-and-physical-activity/> during exercise: Exercising at home, with appropriate exercises and guidance, is generally safe and healthy. Use these tips to help you remember to stay safe:
 - Listen to your body. Always warm up before exercising and cool down afterward. Gauge your level of effort with the “talk test”. You should be exercising at a level that allows you to talk, but not sing.
 - Be aware of your environment. Make sure you are in reach of a counter, back of a couch, or a sturdy chair that is pushed up against a wall in case you lose your balance and need to hold on to something. It may also be helpful to put a chair/couch behind you in case you need to sit or lose your balance.
 - Hydrate. Drink water before, during, and after exercising, even if you don’t feel thirsty.
 - Wear appropriate shoes and clothing. Choose shoes that are made for the type of activity you want to do and choose clothes that work with your activity and the temperature of your environment.
- Stay Motivated! Exercise is good for almost everyone, yet it is hard to fit exercise into our daily life. These tips can help older adults overcome common barriers to exercise and get moving to improve your health. Participate in a group exercise class online, such as the Go4Life Workout
Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmk21KJuZUM7kDgg7EOsXqPKAoOnD5Q8N>