

Active Adults Get Great Results

According to the American College of Sports Medicine, by the year 2030 more than 70 million Americans will be 65 years of age or older. Those 85 years of age and older will be the fastest growing age group. Unfortunately, as more and more Americans live longer, less and less participate in the one activity that can help keep them healthy, active and productive—regular exercise.

While regular exercise is important for people of all ages, it has been shown that the benefits of regular exercise are the most important to the people who tend to exercise the least—people over 60. In fact, it is estimated that more than 90% of retirees in the United States get virtually no meaningful exercise and that more than 50% are totally sedentary.

A recent National Council on Aging study found that the only statistically significant intervention found to improve overall health outcomes and quality of life in the Medicare population is regular physical activity. No segment of the population can benefit more from exercise!

A well-rounded exercise program prepares you for an active, independent lifestyle at any age. It can help reduce your risk for heart disease, osteoporosis, and other medical problems. It can also help you lose weight, reduce stress, prevent falls, sleep better, look better, and feel better. What a bonanza of benefits!

Given these compelling reasons to exercise regularly, why do so few people over age 60 do it? The excuses range from feeling to old, to having a specific

medical condition, to not having enough time, to feeling out of place. The truth is that almost anyone of any age can participate in some type of physical activity.

Always check with your doctor before starting any exercise program. Develop a balanced program that includes exercises for building muscular strength, developing flexibility, improving balance, and increasing endurance and heart health.

Lifetime Health—a program of the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging—offers well-rounded, low cost aerobic and stretch and tone exercise classes at convenient times and locations in the Lincoln area. Lifetime Health instructors are trained specifically to work with mature adults.

Personal trainers are available at the

Forever Strong Health Club, 1005 “O” St., on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and Wednesday mornings. They assist participants in setting up programs designed to meet their unique needs. This service is free to people age 60 and older. For more information call Lifetime Health at 441-7575

Lifetime Health and the Forever Strong Health Club are funded in part by the Seniors Foundation. Recent Foundation fund raising efforts enabled the program to purchase new multi-station gym equipment for the Forever Strong Health Club. The new equipment is expected to arrive sometime this summer.

Spotlight on an Active Older Adult

Sharon Vandennack and her husband Tom are regular attendees at the Forever Strong Health Club. They have always been active, especially with Tom being a bicycle enthusiast. Sharon comments that she tried biking for a while, but she is not quite as interested in it as Tom, so they walk almost everyday.

On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, the couple comes to Forever Strong to use the treadmill, elliptical machine, and weights. Sharon particularly enjoys the exercise ball and is currently learning more about ankle weights. She comments that they feel comfortable using all the equipment in the two exercise rooms and on Wednesdays they can ask the personal trainer any questions. They started out slow with a six-week program that as since progressed to the routine they currently complete. At first, Sharon was trying to continually work up to heavier weights, but she learned that using slightly smaller weights gives her the benefits she desires. She remarks that after she moved back down to the right

size of weights, the routine was more fun again.

When asked if her life has changed as a result of exercising, she replies with a yes! She has more energy and can get more things done. “The time you spend exercising, you get back ten fold to do other things,” she says. “For one thing, you can chalk up something positive for the day.” Other people have commented that she walks faster and is stronger than they are. Sharon believes it is important for everyone to exercise to be healthier and to feel better.

Motivation is a key to any exercise program and Sharon gives three motivators that push her to continue: her husband Tom, guilt, and knowing that she will feel better after her workout. If she is feeling sluggish that day, she has learned that just a little exercise will renew her energy.

Sharon’s tips for older adults considering an exercise program: “Just do it, start out slow, keep doing it, and don’t expect it to be really easy or there’s nothing to work toward.”



Left: Sharon Vandennack enjoys the NuStep at the Forever Strong Health Club. Above: Tom Vandennack uses the Forever Strong Health Club's Aerobic Rider as part of his regular workout routine.

HOW TO START BEING MORE ACTIVE

- Get social support from friends or family
- Start slowly with only 10 minutes and work up to 30 minutes
- Get some supportive shoes to wear while you exercise
- Try new things and do what you like
- Walking is the easiest and most popular exercise
- Make sure you include endurance, strength, stretching, and balance activities
- Listen to your body, it will tell you to work harder or slow down
- Give yourself positive messages—encourage yourself and other exercisers
- If you have a chronic condition, check with your doctor first
- The human body was meant to move so enjoy it!



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**Get Moving!
Get Healthy!**

Regular physical activity helps to prevent illness and improves the overall quality of life. That is why Lincoln’s Physical Activity Council is working to get **LINCOLN IN MOTION!**

LINCOLN IN MOTION can help you achieve a healthier lifestyle. Check out our website for more information on our vision statement, **LINCOLN IN MOTION** partners, sponsorship opportunities, promotional tools, and a schedule of events.

www.lincolninmotion.org