

Effective exercises for seniors

Losing interest in an exercise regimen is a situation many fitness enthusiasts have confronted at one point or another. Overcoming a stale workout routine can be simple for young athletes, whose bodies can typically handle a wide range of physical activities. That flexibility allows younger athletes the chance to pursue any number of physical activities when their existing fitness regimens grow stale. But what about seniors who have grown tired of their workouts?

Even seniors who have lived active lifestyles since they were youngsters are likely to encounter certain physical limitations associated with aging. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the likelihood of dealing with one or more physical limitations increases with age. CDC data indicates that 8 percent of adults between the ages of 50 and 59 have

three or more physical limitations. That figure rises to 27 percent among adults age 80 and over.

Physical limitations may be a part of aging for many people, but such obstacles need not limit seniors looking to banish boredom from their workout routines. In fact, many seniors can successfully engage in a variety of exercises that benefit their bodies and are unlikely to grow stale.

- **Water aerobics:** Sometimes referred to as “aqua aerobics,” water aerobics may involve jogging in the water, leg lifts, arm curls, and other activities that can safely be performed in a pool. The YMCA notes that water aerobics exercises are low impact, which can make them ideal for seniors with bone and joint issues like arthritis.

- **Resistance band workouts:** Resistance band workouts can be especially useful for seniors who spend a lot of time at home.

Resistance bands are inexpensive and don’t take up a lot of space, making them ideal for people who like to exercise at home but don’t have much space. Resistance bands can be used to strengthen muscles in various parts of the body, including the legs, arms and back. Resistance bands can be pulled or pushed in any direction, which allows for more versatility in a workout than weight machines and dumbbells. That versatility allows seniors to spice up their workout regimens when things get a little stale.

- **Pilates:** Pilates is another low-impact exercise that can be ideal for seniors with bone and joint issues. According to SilverSneakers®, a community fitness program for seniors that promotes living through physical and social engagement, Pilates can help seniors build overall strength, stability and coordination. SilverSneakers®

even notes that seniors can experience improvements in strength and stability by committing to as little as 10 to 15 minutes of daily Pilates exercises.

- **Strength training:** Seniors on the lookout for something more challenging than a daily walk around the neighborhood should not overlook the benefits of strength training. The CDC notes that seniors who participate in strength training can stimulate the growth of muscle and bone, thereby reducing their risk for osteoporosis and frailty. In fact, the CDC notes that people with health concerns like arthritis or heart disease often benefit the most from exercise regimens that include lifting weights a few times each week.

Physical limitations are a part of aging. But seniors need not let such limitations relegate them to repetitive, boring workouts.

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