**MIND-BODY BALANCE**

Just as your body needs activity to stay healthy, so does your brain and your sense of self.

- Stay in contact with family and friends.
- Try an elder hostel program or plan a vacation.
- Alternate intense activities with relaxed solo and group activities.
- Pursue new and old hobbies and interests.
  - Learn and practice other languages, arts or crafts, musical skills, and games or puzzles.
- Volunteer your time and/or your talents to a program of interest to you.

With all these activities practice moderation. Just because something is good does not mean that more is better!

These are general guidelines and not a substitute for the advice of your physician. Be sure to consult with your physician before changing your diet or exercise or if you have any specific concerns.

**INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES**

- American Association of Retired Persons
  www.aarp.org/health
- American Geriatrics Society
  www.healthinaging.org
- American Heart Association
  www.heart.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  www.cdc.gov/aging/aginginfo
- United States Department of Agriculture MyPlate
  www.choosemyplate.gov/older-adults
- National Council on Aging
  www.ncoa.org
- National Institute on Aging
  www.nia.nih.gov

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**EXERCISE**

Regular exercise lowers blood pressure, improves cardiovascular function, strengthens bones, and makes you feel good. It doesn’t have to be strenuous or exhausting to be effective.

- Start slowly and build up to 20–30 minutes a day at least 4–5 times a week.
- Start your day with stretching to increase joint mobility.
- Strengthening exercises help lessen the pain of arthritic joints, improve posture, and make muscles and bones more resistant to injuries.
- Improved balance reduces risk of falls — try tai chi or standing on one foot next to a support.
- Aerobic exercise (e.g., walking, bicycling, swimming, or dancing) strengthens the heart and improves overall fitness.
- Make it fun! Exercise with a friend or a group.
- Vary your activities daily to work different muscles and keep it interesting.

*If you don’t feel well when exercising, stop. If symptoms persist, call your physician.*

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**SLEEP**

Sleeping needs change as you age. The key is good quality sleep.

- Get 7 to 8 hours each night.
- Establish regular sleeping patterns.
  - Start a relaxing bedtime routine.
  - Go to bed and get up at about the same time — even on weekends.
  - If you nap, take short naps before 2:00 p.m. for no longer than 1 hour.
- Don’t use alcohol as a sleep aid.
- Unless advised by your physician, sleeping pills should not be used for more than a two-week period due to dependence.

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**HEALTHFUL EATING**

Eating a nutritious, well-balanced diet can help maintain energy levels while reducing the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes or heart disease.

- Stock your pantry with a variety of deeply colored fruits and vegetables.
- Drink plenty of fluids — 6–8 glasses every day — especially in warmer weather.
  - Fluids can come from water, tea, or coffee. You could also eat soups, fruits, or vegetables for fluid intake.
- Whole grain and fortified foods are good sources of fiber and B vitamins.
- Incorporate fat-free and low-fat (1%) dairy products and protein-rich foods such as nuts, beans, eggs, fish, and poultry into your diet.
- Add flavor with herbs and spices instead of salt.

*Talk to your physician to suggest other options if you are on a specialized diet or the medications you take affect your appetite or change your desire to eat.*