

CHOOSE RIGHT  
**easy**  
EXERCISE AND  
SCREENING FOR YOU

Nearly all older adults can safely meet the national recommendations of engaging in moderate intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking or gardening) for at least 30 minutes a day, most days of the week. The EASY tool helps you know when to see a health care provider to discuss your exercise plan and how to choose activities for optimal benefit if you have any health problems.

## Getting Started

**It is always a good idea to start at a level that is easy for you and to build up slowly. See the attached safety tips.**

**While it is generally not necessary to see a health care provider before beginning every-day physical activities that are of light or moderate intensity, we encourage you to talk with your health care provider about your health and exercise as part of your regular visits.**

**The EASY tool at [www.easyforyou.info](http://www.easyforyou.info) helps identify ways you can be active safely.**

**For more information on using the EASY tool please contact:**

**Phone: 979.436.9458**

**Email: [healthyaging@tamu.edu](mailto:healthyaging@tamu.edu)**

## Answering the Six Easy Questions:

### EASY QUESTIONS (Circle Response):

<b>1) Do you have pains, tightness or pressure in your chest during physical activity (walking, climbing stairs, household chores, similar activities)?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>2) Do you currently experience dizziness or lightheadedness?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>3) Have you ever been told you have high blood pressure?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>4) Do you have pain, stiffness or swelling that limits or prevents you from doing what you want or need to do?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>5) Do you fall, feel unsteady, or use assistive device while standing or walking?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>6) Is there a health reason not mentioned why you would be concerned about starting an exercise program?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

**Please see the answer sheets for recommended actions and for how to get additional information**

## **EASY RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON RESPONSES**

If you answer **No** to all of the questions on the EASY, follow these four steps to begin or continue your exercise program:

- 1. Choose enjoyable activities that fit into your everyday routine.**
- 2. Set a goal of being active 30 minutes daily most days of the week (it is best to work toward this goal slowly).**
- 3. Review the safety tips in this packet.**
- 4. Obtain a free copy of the NIA Exercise Guide by downloading the PDF**  
<https://order.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2018-04/nia-exercise-guide.pdf>

If you answered **Yes** to any of the EASY questions, use the recommendations sheet for exercising safely with your condition. It is always a good idea to review the safety hints and be aware of what the experts say are the most appropriate exercises for any specific condition. For each question, we provide a link for further information. Talk with your healthcare provider about your exercise program during your regular visits.

**Answering Yes to any of the EASY Questions:**

Question	YES
<p><b>1. Do you have pain, tightness or pressure in your chest during physical activity (walking, climbing stairs, household chores, similar activities)?</b></p>	<p><b>If you answered yes to this question and this is a NEW problem, see your health care provider first before starting any exercises.</b></p> <p><b>Ask your health care provider “Are there any exercises that I cannot do”? Work with your doctor to identify activities that are appropriate for you.</b></p> <p><b>If it is not new, or has already been evaluated, begin or continue your exercise program.</b></p> <p><b>American Heart Association 1-800-242-8721</b>  <a href="http://www.americanheart.org">http://www.americanheart.org</a></p>
<p><b>2. Do you currently experience dizziness or lightheadedness?</b></p>	<p><b>If you answered yes, it is recommended that you talk with your health care provider before initiating a new activity program.</b></p> <p><b>Ask if there are any exercises you cannot do. Work with your provider to identify exercises good for you.</b></p> <p><b>NIH: National Institute on Aging 1-800-222-2225</b>  <a href="https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/balance-problems-and-disorders">https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/balance-problems-and-disorders</a></p>

<b>Question</b>	<b>Helpful Tips</b>
<b>3. Have you ever been told you have high blood pressure?</b>	<p><b>If your blood pressure has not been checked in the last 6 months, get it checked by a healthcare provider.</b></p> <p><b>If you answered yes, you may continue to exercise to improve your overall heart health and prevent disease.</b></p> <p><b>American Heart Association 1-800-242-8721</b> <a href="http://www.americanheart.org">http://www.americanheart.org</a></p>
<b>4. Do you have pain, stiffness or swelling that limits or prevents you from doing what you want or need to do?</b>	<p><b>If you answered yes, continue to enjoy your exercise to prevent worsening of your arthritis and help manage your pain. If you have osteoporosis always avoid stretches that flex your spine or cause you to bend at the waist, and avoid making jerky, rapid movements.</b></p> <p><b>Call the Arthritis Foundation 1-800-283-7800 for the local office number and for specific exercises for people who have arthritis.</b></p> <p><b>Arthritis Foundation 1-800-283-7800</b> <a href="https://www.arthritis.org/">https://www.arthritis.org/</a></p>

<p><b>5. Do you fall, feel unsteady, or use an assistive device while standing or walking?</b></p>	<p><b>If you answered yes, it is recommended that you talk with your health care provider before initiating a new activity program.</b></p> <p><b>Ask if there are any exercises you cannot do. Work with your provider to identify exercises good for you.</b></p> <p><b>NIH: National Institute on Aging 1-800-222-2225</b></p> <p><b><a href="https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/balance-problems-and-disorders">https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/balance-problems-and-disorders</a></b></p>
<p><b>6. Is there a health reason not mentioned why you would be concerned about starting an exercise program?</b></p>	<p><b>If you answered yes, SHARE this information with your health care provider</b></p> <p><b>Most reasons can be addressed and you can begin an exercise program that will improve your overall health and well-being.</b></p>

## **SAFETY TIPS**

**Follow these EASY safety tips for when to start and stop exercise. Use the recommendations below for exercising safely with your condition.**

**Exercise Safety Tips to Always Consider Prior to Starting Exercise**

- **Always wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing and appropriate shoes for your activity.**
- **Warm up: Perform a low to moderate intensity warm-up for 5-10 minutes.**
- **Drink water before, during and after your exercise session.**
- **When exercising outdoors, evaluate your surroundings for safety: traffic, pavement, weather, and strangers.**
- **Wear clothes made of fabrics that absorb sweat and remove it from your skin.**
- **Never wear rubber or plastic suits. These could hold the sweat on your skin and make your body overheat.**
- **Wear sunscreen when you exercise outdoors.**
- **Practice safe distancing (try to remain 1 meter apart from others) to prevent the transfer of infections. A mask is preferable but you do not need to wear a mask if you are sweating and having difficulty with breathing while exercising.**

## **Exercise Safety Tips for When to STOP Exercising**

**Stop exercising right away if you:**

- **Have pain or pressure in your chest, neck, shoulder, or arm.**
- **Feel dizzy or sick.**
- **Break out in a cold sweat.**
- **Have muscle cramps.**
- **Feel acute (not just achy) pain in your joints, feet, ankles, or legs.**
- **Slow down if you have trouble breathing. You should be able to talk while exercising without gasping for breath.**

## **Exercise Safety Tips to Recognize Days/Times When Exercise Should NOT be Initiated:**

- **Avoid hard exercise for 2 hours after a big meal. (A leisurely walk around the block would be fine).**
- **Do not exercise when you have a fever and/or viral infection accompanied by muscle aches.**



- **Do not exercise if your systolic blood pressure is greater than 200 and your diastolic is greater than 100.**
- **Do not exercise if your resting heart rate is greater than 120.**
- **Do not exercise if you have a joint that you are using to exercise (such as a knee or an ankle) that is red and warm and painful.**
- **If you have osteoporosis, always avoid stretches that flex your spine or cause you to bend at the waist, and avoid making jerky, rapid movements.**
- **Stop exercising if you experience severe pain or swelling in a joint. Discomfort that persists should always be evaluated.**
- **Do not exercise if you have a new symptom that has not been evaluated by your health care provider such as pain in your chest, abdomen or a joint, swelling in an arm, leg or joint, difficulty catching your breath at rest, or a fluttering feeling in your chest.**

**Additional Safety Information is provided at the National Institute of Health Web page [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/safety.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/safety.html)**

## How to Learn More About the EASY Recommendations:

Additional information and readings about the EASY recommendations are readily available on the Internet. You do not have to be an expert on computers to be able to access this information. All public libraries and most senior centers have public access computers.

## SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO ACCESS MORE INFORMATION:

**Tip:** If you are not sure about any of these steps ask your librarian at the public library.

1. Open any internet web browser program.
2. Type [www.easyforyou.info](http://www.easyforyou.info) in the address line at the top of the page
3. Click on the “links and resources” box at the top of the page
4. If you would like to take the information home with you ask how to the print the web pages you are most interested in.

## **Supporting links and websites:**

The following links are included on the easyforyou.info website. For easy access to this information follow the instructions listed immediately above.

### **Links for General Exercise Options:**

AARP Get Moving !Exercise Made Easy. <https://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2019/get-moving.html>

American College of Sports Medicine/ Exercise is Medicine® Exercise prescription considerations for older adults: [https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/support\\_page.php/rx-for-health-series/](https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/support_page.php/rx-for-health-series/)

American Heart Association: <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness>

The Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging's Home Support Exercise Program: <https://www.healthplexus.net/article/canadian-centre-activity-and-aging-home-support-exercise-program>

Exercise is Medicine®. Staying active during COVID-19. [https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/support\\_page.php/staying-active-during-covid-19/](https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/support_page.php/staying-active-during-covid-19/)

International Council on Active Aging: <https://www.icaa.cc/walkinghome.htm>

National Blueprint: Increasing Physical Activity Among Adults Age 50 and Older: [www.agingblueprint.org/tips.cfm](http://www.agingblueprint.org/tips.cfm)

NIH: National Institute on Aging: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-physical-activity>

NIH- SeniorHealth Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/NIHSeniorHealth>

MedlinePlus: Exercise for Older Adults: <https://medlineplus.gov/exerciseforolderadults.html>

President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports: <https://www.hhs.gov/fitness/index.html>

Texercise: <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/food-fitness/txercise>

### **Links for Exercises for Dizziness or Lightheadedness:**

AARP- Better Balance Prevents Falls: [www.aarp.org/health/staying\\_healthy/prevention/better\\_balance\\_prevents\\_falls.html](http://www.aarp.org/health/staying_healthy/prevention/better_balance_prevents_falls.html)

American Physical Therapy Association- What You Need To Know About Falls: [http://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/Practice\\_and\\_Patient\\_Care/Patient\\_Care/Physical\\_Fitness/Members\\_Only/PocketGuide\\_Falls.pdf](http://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/Practice_and_Patient_Care/Patient_Care/Physical_Fitness/Members_Only/PocketGuide_Falls.pdf)

Go4Life- Balance exercises: <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/exercise-type/balance/>

### **Links for Cardiovascular Specific Exercise Programs/Information:**

CardioSmart. Exercise and Heart Disease. <https://www.cardiosmart.org/Healthy-Living/Move-More/Exercise-and-Heart-Disease>

Cleveland Clinic. Exercise and Activity after a Heart Attack. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/departments/heart/patient-education/recovery-care/interventional-procedures/exercise-activity>

Exercise is Medicine. Exercising with High Blood Pressure. [https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/support\\_page.php/high-blood-pressure-hypertension/](https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/support_page.php/high-blood-pressure-hypertension/)

Exercise is Medicine. Being Active when you have Heart Failure. [https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/assets/page\\_documents/EIM%20Rx%20series\\_ Exercising%20with%20Heart%20Failure\\_2.pdf](https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/assets/page_documents/EIM%20Rx%20series_ Exercising%20with%20Heart%20Failure_2.pdf)

Medline Plus- Being active when you have heart disease. <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000094.htm>

USNews Health. Best Exercises for Heart Disease Patients. <https://health.usnews.com/conditions/heart-disease/slideshows/best-exercises-for-heart-disease-patients?slide=6>

Women's Heart Foundation: [https://www.womensheart.org/content/Exercise/intro\\_to\\_exercise.asp](https://www.womensheart.org/content/Exercise/intro_to_exercise.asp)

### **Links for Exercises for Joint problems:**

American College of Rheumatology: Exercise and Arthritis. <https://www.rheumatology.org/I-Am-A/Patient-Caregiver/Diseases-Conditions/Living-Well-with-Rheumatic-Disease/Exercise-and-Arthritis>

Arthritis Foundation- Exercising with Osteoarthritis- <https://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/benefits/osteoarthritis-exercise.php>

Arthritis Foundation- Building a Walking Workout- <https://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/workouts/walking/walking-works.php>

Arthritis Foundation- Exercise for Arthritis. <https://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/>

Arthritis Foundation. Walk with Ease. <https://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/tools-resources/walk-with-ease/>

Exercise is Medicine®. Being Active When you have Osteoarthritis. [https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/assets/page\\_documents/EIM\\_Rx%20for%20Health\\_Osteoarthritis.pdf](https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/assets/page_documents/EIM_Rx%20for%20Health_Osteoarthritis.pdf)

Exercise is Medicine®. *Exercising with Rheumatoid Arthritis*. [https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/support\\_page.php/rheumatoid-arthritis/](https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/support_page.php/rheumatoid-arthritis/)

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Disorders: Description of different diseases and strategies for living with it. <https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/arthritis-and-rheumatic-diseases>

**Links for Exercises with Assistive Devices and Disabilities:**

National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability. For Individuals and Caregivers. <https://www.nchpad.org/Individuals~Caregivers#video-1>

National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability. Discover Accessible Fitness. <https://www.nchpad.org/discoverfitness/files/inc/084021749b.pdf>

Harvard Health. 5 tools to maintain your mobility. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/5-tools-to-maintain-your-mobility>.

Muscular Dystrophy Canada. *Equipment and Assisted Devices: What equipment is right for me.* <http://www.muscle.ca/living-with-muscular-dystrophy/mobility/>

Parkinson's Foundation. *Exercise.* <https://parkinson.org/Understanding-Parkinsons/Treatment/Exercise>