

The Doctor Will See You Now (cont.)

(continued from previous page)

should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow. Keep in mind, some physical activity is better than none at all. Adults should move more and sit less throughout the day. Adults who sit less and do any amount of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity gain some health benefits.

Remember that it is important to talk with a doctor before significantly increasing your activity level. Ask about the amounts and types of activities that may be best for you or your loved ones. For those who are 65 years of age or older, generally fit and with no limiting health conditions, here are some frequently recommended options:

1) Moderate-intensity aerobic activity - anything that gets your heart beating faster – at least 150 minutes per week. This includes aerobic activity or “cardio,” ranging from pushing a lawn mower, to learning a new dance, to walking or biking to the store. On a scale

of 0-10 where 0 is sitting and 10 is working as hard as you can, moderate-intensity aerobic activity is a 5 or 6.

2) Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (for older adults who are able) at least 75 minutes per week. A rule of thumb is that one minute of vigorous-intensity activity is equivalent to two minutes of moderate-intensity activity. On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is sitting and 10 is working as hard as possible, vigorous-intensity aerobic activity is a seven or eight.

3) Muscle-strengthening activity, or anything that makes your muscles work harder than usual, at least two or more days a week. There are many ways to strengthen your muscles, whether it’s at home or in the gym. The activities you choose should work all the major muscle groups of your body - legs, hips, back, chest, abdomen, shoulders and arms. Consider working with resistance bands, lifting weights, mild forms of yoga, heavy gardening such as a digging or shoveling, and other

exercises that use your body weight as resistance, such as push-ups or sit-ups.

4) Balance activities help prevent falling, which reduces the risk of injury. Walking backward, standing on one leg, or using a wobble board are all examples of balance activities. Strengthening your back, abdomen, and leg muscles also improves balance.

5) Multicomponent physical activity can include a combination of moderate or vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, muscle strengthening, and balance training. Dancing, yoga, tai chi, gardening, and sports are examples of multicomponent activities because they usually incorporate multiple types of physical activity.

Optum New Mexico uniquely promotes physical activity and health education for residents ages 55 and older at its Community Center, 4010 Montgomery Blvd NE. Anyone who meets that age requirement can access wellness classes, events, and a state-of-the-art gym free of charge.

The center, designed as a welcoming space for seniors to keep physically active, intellectually stimulated, emotionally supported, and socially connected. It is open to anyone regardless of their health insurance plan. Guests of the center also do not have to be an Optum NM patient to make full use of the facility.

The center’s program offerings are constantly evolving. To date, they include “yogalates” and dance classes; a weekly movie day; arts and crafts activities; BrainSavers, an Alzheimer’s prevention program; and presentations on a variety of health topics, such as diabetes and osteoporosis. Pneumatic resistance machines, which provide smooth and safe tension through compressed air as opposed to via stacks of weights, are a highlight of the fitness area.

The center is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more details, visit optum.com/nmcommunitycenters, or call 505.254.6500.

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