

HEALTH

Four Tips for Boosting Exercise Motivation in Seniors

NewsUSA

(NU) - You're never too old to develop or refine an exercise program. And there has never been more opportunity to find an array of programs that suit your interests, your fitness ability and your lifestyle.

As an older adult, the reasons for exercise change: benefits include helping to control chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes, strengthening muscles to prevent falls, and improving flexibility to maintain activities of daily living.

An added benefit? Regular exercise can help boost your mood and improve your overall sense of well-being. And, you'll make new friends! (Of course, always talk to your doctor before starting any type of exercise program.)

Where to look for a new exercise program? Start with your local fitness or community center. The key is finding activities that you enjoy. Some tips to get started:

- **Follow your interests.** Like to dance? Swim? Maybe yoga or Tai-Chi sounds appealing. There are fitness classes for every taste and ability level.

- **Follow your friends.** Going to a fitness class with a friend improves your motivation and if you're going it alone - here's your chance to make new friends!

- **Listen to your body.** Exercise doesn't need to be painful to be beneficial. Start slow and progress over time.

- **Set goals.** How often do you want to exercise? How hard? Develop a three- to six-month plan so you can measure your success.

But wait, there's more: Older adults who participate in group exercise programs report improved quality of life from the social aspect of group fitness. The group creates a sense of community that helps keep you motivated.

Social isolation, which often leads to loneliness, is common among seniors, but taking a fitness class can forge a bond that keeps



people coming back for exercise and extends to socializing outside of class.

In a recent study of adults aged 65 years and older, researchers surveyed 46,564 participants in the SilverSneakers fitness program between 2010 and 2016 to determine how exercise improved their quality of life.

"Even though regular physical activity is important, well-being is about more than just exercise," according to Julie Logue, Training Manager at Tivity Health. "Through SilverSneakers, you can explore all kinds of fitness programs, socialization and nutrition programs to help you live your best life. We empower members to live healthier, happier, longer."

Older adults with more frequent visits to fitness centers who participate in SilverSneakers exercise programs report significantly fewer days when they felt physically or mentally unwell and rated their physical and mental health higher than those who participated less frequently.

Curious about more ways to stay motivated to get and stay fit? During open enrollment for health insurance between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7, enroll in a plan that offers SilverSneakers, which provides members with access to more than 16,000 fitness and community locations nationwide.

To check your eligibility and find a health plan that includes SilverSneakers, call 888-423-4632 or visit [silversneakers.com](https://www.silversneakers.com).