

A cyclist is seen from behind, riding a road bike on a path covered in fallen autumn leaves. The cyclist is wearing a blue and white cycling jersey, black cycling pants, and a blue POC helmet. The background shows a forest with trees and more fallen leaves. In the top left corner, there is a large, stylized orange and yellow maple leaf graphic. In the bottom left and right corners, there are smaller, similar leaf graphics.

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How to Stay Active with Mobility Issues

Physical activity is crucial for overall health and well-being. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises that most people can benefit from 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week, particularly when that physical activity is paired with two days of strength training. Seniors also should incorporate activities that challenge their balance to improve these skills and offset the risk for falls as they age.

Many seniors face mobility issues. For these individuals, meeting activity goals might seem extra challenging, but it is entirely possible and highly beneficial to exercise even when mobility is limited. Health professionals say gentle, adaptive exercises can improve strength, flexibility, balance, and mood, while reducing pain and preventing further decline. The key is to focus on what people can do and

to adapt movements to suit specific needs. Consulting with a doctor or physical therapist before starting a new exercise regimen is recommended. Here are some accessible exercise options.

CHAIR EXERCISES

Chair exercises build strength and flexibility while providing support and reducing the risk of falls.

- While seated, lift knees alternately as if marching, engaging core and leg muscles.
- Stand up slowly from a sturdy chair without using your hands, then gently sit back down. This builds leg and core strength.
- Lift arms to the sides or front, strengthening the shoulders and upper back. Use light weights for added resistance.
- Tap feet and circle your ankles to

improve ankle mobility and circulation, which is crucial for balance.

WATER THERAPY

The buoyancy of water reduces strain on joints and can help anyone with mobility issues.

- Walking through a pool or in a natural body of water creates gentle resistance that increases the potential of the workout.
- Perform controlled movements with your arms and legs through the water.
- Kick feet through the water while walking or when swimming.

BALANCE TRAINING

Improving balance and stability is critical for fall prevention. Rely on a wall or chair for support as needed.

- Shift your weight from side to side and front to back while holding on to

support.

- Lift one foot slightly off the ground while holding on to a support. Alternate to the other leg. Gradually increase the time spent balancing.
- Use a support to stand to help build core strength and strength in the legs.

FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility helps anyone who is physically active. Gentle stretching, tai chi, yoga, and even working with a physical therapist can improve flexibility and mobility.

Seniors with mobility issues who want to exercise should always start slowly and build up gradually. Wearing non-slip shoes is essential as well. Small, consistent efforts can make a big difference in maintaining one's independence and enhancing quality of life.

Daily Dietary Habits That Can Benefit Seniors Over the Long Haul



Food fuels the body throughout the day, ideally providing the energy people need to make the most of each day. But the foods people eat are more than just fuel. Indeed, a delicious meal is hard to forget, and that underscores how significant a variable flavor can be when people choose the foods they eat.

Flavor is certainly important when choosing and preparing meals, but it cannot be the only variable that determines what people eat. That's true for everyone, and especially notable for se-

niors. Age-related changes to the body should affect seniors' approach to diet. The National Council on Aging notes that metabolism slows as bodies grow older, which means seniors require fewer calories to fuel their daily activities than they needed when they were younger. That's just one of the many notable things seniors should consider when designing their daily diets.

- **Plan a well-rounded diet.** School children learn the basic food groups as youngsters, and it's good for seniors to

keep those long-ago lessons in mind when planning their daily diets. The American Heart Association notes the importance of incorporating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy, and proteins into daily diets. In regard to dairy, the AHA advises consuming the equivalent of three cups of low-fat (1 percent) or fat-free dairy each day. When picking a protein source, the AHA identifies eggs, fish, lean meat, legumes, nuts, and poultry as healthy and protein-rich foods. Even polyunsaturat-

ed and monounsaturated oils like olive oil and peanut oil can be healthy.

- **Resolve to read more labels.** Aging adults need not study nutrition to identify what they're putting into their bodies each time they take a bite. The NCOA notes that food labels are useful sources of information that can indicate how much fat, sodium and added sugars are in a given item. Seniors should be especially vigilant when trying to avoid foods that contain a lot of added sugars, which can contribute to weight gain. That's notable given seniors' naturally slower metabolisms.

- **Practice portion control.** It's not necessarily the foods seniors eat but how much they eat that can derail their efforts to maintain their overall health. Seniors' recommended daily calorie intake varies by both gender and activity levels. Guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services notes women 61 and over who are moderately physically active should consume roughly 1,800 calories per day, while those living an active lifestyle are advised to eat around 2,000 calories per day. Moderately active men age 66 and older are advised to eat 2,400 calories per day, while active men between the ages of 61 and 75 should aim for 2,600 calories per day. When reading food labels, pay attention to calories per serving, as that can act as a useful guide to control portions. The National Institute on Aging recognizes it can be hard to control portion sizes when dining out, and recommends seniors share an entrée or order from the appetizers menu when picking their main course.

The right daily dietary habits can help seniors live longer, healthier and happier lives, and picking the right foods does not require sacrificing flavor.

Strategies to Promote Wellness

The tenets of wellness can be traced to ancient civilizations. Wellness encompasses strategies that lead to a state of holistic health. Those strategies include physical, mental and even spiritual components. The root of wellness incorporates various natural approaches and preventive care.

Physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being is achieved through different avenues. Programs in communities and places of employment can promote and emphasize wellness, which can benefit people in myriad ways.

- **Feeling empowered:** Wellness begins with individuals, who can feel empowered when they make healthy choices and utilize the tools and support systems at their disposal. This can include information provided by health care professionals as well as research people uncover on their own.

- **Community involvement:** Individuals who have access to healthy food, safe housing, education, and medical care are more likely to make wellness a priority. Community leaders can ramp up their efforts to provide health-based offerings to people in surrounding neighborhoods.

- **Workplace initiatives:** People spend eight or more hours each day at work, and health should and can be prioritized at places of business. Employers can incorporate healthy eating options in cafeterias or break rooms, offer stress management services, engage in fitness challenges, and even provide workout equipment or quiet spaces so employees can incorporate wellness into their work days.

- **Spiritual connection:** While spiritual wellness can include faith in a specific religion or belief, it also encom-

passes values, ethics, service to others, and finding meaning and purpose in one's life. Embracing spiritual wellness through outreach and other efforts can improve health. The World Health Organization states that health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It also includes physical, mental and social well-being, which can be fostered through a spiritual component of wellness.

- **Mental health support:** The National Institute of Mental Health says approximately 59.3 million adults in the United States experienced a mental illness in the past year. Such illnesses include anxiety and depression. The World Health Organization estimates 970 million people globally live with a mental health disorder. Mental wellness comes from seeking help from doctors, therapists and support groups



when needed. It also can involve finding root causes of mental distress and taking steps to remove triggers.

Wellness is a broad term that incorporates many different components, each of which can contribute to improved health and a greater sense of well-being.

5 Tips for Healthier Baking



Baking is a beloved pastime for many people. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people turned to baking as a way to not only while away the

hours, but to have a tangible product they could enjoy after all of their efforts. Baking certainly can produce delicious results, but oftentimes baked goods are not the healthiest fare.

Many baked goods are high in sugar and fat. The World Health Organization considers it urgent to reduce the extreme consumption of sugars and other fast-absorbing carbohydrates which tend to be found in baked goods to curb rising rates of obesity and type 2 diabetes. According to recent data published by the WHO, 13 percent of the world's adult population are clinically obese and 39 percent of adults age 18 or older were found to be overweight.

Overweight and obesity are tied to the consumption of fat-rich, high-calorie foods, including baked goods.

Those who want to bake, but bake more healthfully, can make certain modifications to keep health a priority.

1. **Replace butter and cream.** Look for recipes that feature healthier mono-unsaturated and polyunsaturated oils instead of butter and cream, which are high in saturated fat.

2. **Prepare bite-sized desserts.** Portion sizes should be carefully monitored to ensure one doesn't go overboard with baked goods. This is easily achieved by creating miniature or bite-sized items that can help reduce the tendency to take a big slice of cake or bread.

3. **Incorporate healthy ingredients.** Balance out baked goods by improving the nutrient profile. Try adding shredded or pureed apple, banana,

carrot, and pumpkin to recipes to boost moisture, flavor and nutrition. These ingredients also can be used to replace some of the butter or oil in the recipe, according to EatRight.org.

4. **Try alternative flours.** Rather than white flour, consider whole-wheat flour as a substitution. Also, chickpea or almond flour can boost protein without adding carbohydrates.

5. **Reduce the sugar.** Many recipes call for much more sugar than is needed for the finished item to be tasty. Experiment with reducing the amount of sugar. Opt for "healthier" sugars, such as honey or maple syrup whenever possible.

Minor substitutions can make baking a bit healthier so it fits in with a well-rounded diet.

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Be More Active by Overcoming Back Pain

Back pain is one of the most common conditions across the globe. The World Health Organization says low back pain is the single leading cause of disability around the world, affecting an estimated 619 million people in 2020. That number was projected to rise to 843 million by 2050 as a result of aging populations and sedentary lifestyles. The National Institutes of Health says that 80 percent of adults in the United States experience low back pain at some point in their lives.

There are many reasons why back pain can occur. Muscle strain, arthritis, herniated discs, and other conditions can contribute to back pain. The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke advises visiting a doctor

if back pain is persistent. Early diagnosis can prevent chronic issues and rule out more serious conditions.

GET MOVING

Although moving around may be the last thing on the minds of people experiencing back pain, remaining physically active is essential to good health. Plus, movement actually is the best medicine for back pain itself. A review published in JAMA Internal Medicine in 2016 found that exercise alone reduces the risk of back pain by 35 percent. Low-impact activities like walking, swimming and yoga help to strengthen muscles, improve flexibility and reduce pain in the process. This can be beneficial to seniors who find

low-impact activities are best for their health.

STRENGTHEN CORE

People now sit for long periods of time, which can contribute to back problems. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says Americans sit for an average of 10 hours a day, often with poor posture and non-engaged core muscles. Getting up off of seats and strengthening core muscles can prevent back injury and pain.

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends two days of strength training per week with a focus on the core, back and hips. Individuals who don't know how to start safely should consult with a physical therapist or

certified personal trainer.

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

It may be easy to take a pill when pain begins, but people may want to explore alternative methods to alleviate pain. Changing ergonomics of work stations or how a person performs activities can help. The American Psychological Association reports techniques like mindfulness and cognitive behavioral therapy can reduce pain severity and improve quality of life. Massage therapy or even acupuncture are additional treatments to consider for back pain.

Back pain is a common complaint as one ages. There are ways to overcome the pain and remain as active as possible.

Tips to Lower Your Cholesterol

Hyperlipidemia, commonly known as high cholesterol, affects many people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 100 million adults in the United States had high total cholesterol levels as recently as 2020. High cholesterol is a significant risk factor for heart disease, which is the leading cause of death worldwide. Although genetics can affect cholesterol levels, lifestyle choices also come into play. Understanding how to manage one's cholesterol is a powerful step toward better health, and there are many ways individuals can do just that.

- **Make dietary adjustments.** Diet can affect cholesterol levels. However, the Cleveland Clinic says diet only af-

fects about 20 to 30 percent of the cholesterol in a person's blood. The American Heart Association says a diet high in saturated fat can lead to high LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and exacerbate plaque buildup in the walls of the arteries. Saturated fat is found in fatty cuts of meat, butter, cheese, cream, and many baked goods. Choosing leaner options and following a Mediterranean diet can help with cholesterol.

- **Exercise regularly.** Exercise is a powerful tool for cholesterol management. Exercise can help to lower bad cholesterol and triglyceride levels while increasing HDL (good) cholesterol. The AHA recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise

per week, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity. After a few months of routine exercise, people may see noticeable improvements in their cholesterol levels.

- **Losing weight can help.** Losing weight can help lower cholesterol levels. Excess body weight, particularly around the waist, can negatively affect how the body processes cholesterol. WebMD says every 10 pounds a person is overweight causes the body to produce as much as 10 milligrams of extra cholesterol every day. Losing even 5 to 10 percent of one's body weight can significantly benefit cardiovascular health.

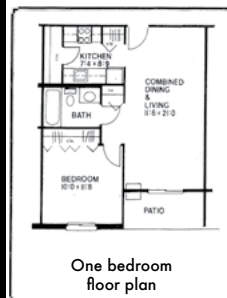
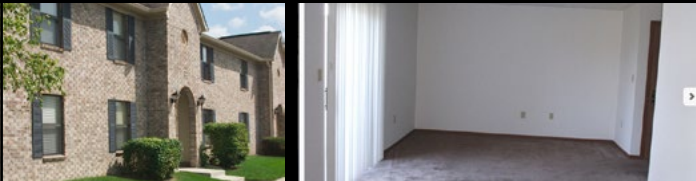
- **Quit smoking and reduce alcohol consumption.** Smoking damages blood vessels and accelerates the buildup of

plaque. Excessive alcohol consumption can raise triglyceride levels and affect heart health. Adjusting these habits can benefit the heart in many ways.

- **Explore medical intervention.** Lifestyle changes alone may not be enough for some individuals to reach target cholesterol numbers, especially if genetic issues or other health conditions are contributing factors. A person's doctor may recommend medication. Statins are the most commonly prescribed and highly effective medications for lowering cholesterol. They work by reducing the liver's production of cholesterol and increasing its ability to remove LDL.

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When Pain Signals an Emergency; Symptoms You Should Never Ignore

Most pain can be managed without a trip to the doctor. A bruised knee, a pulled muscle — these can be treated at home with some combination of rest, ice, and heat. But some types of pain require immediate attention from trained medical personnel.

Chest pain. Call 911 immediately. You may be having a heart attack or another serious medical event such as a pulmonary embolism (a blockage of an artery in the lung). Typical heart attack symptoms include heavy pressure or tightness in the chest; crushing pain that goes to the neck, the jaw, the left arm, or the back; and pain accompanied by shortness of breath, sweating, dizziness, or nausea.

Pelvic pain. Severe new pelvic pain can be a sign of appendicitis or, in women, a ruptured ovarian cyst or an early ectopic pregnancy.

Sudden severe headache. Get immediate care if you get a headache that is the worst you've ever experienced, or if the pain is accompanied by fever, vomiting, stiffness, seizures, a rash, visual disturbances, trouble speaking, or weakness. You could be having a stroke or have an infection of the brain such as meningitis. Also seek medical care after any head injury, which can cause a concussion or life-threatening swelling of the brain.

Severe or persistent abdominal pain. If abdominal pain is severe, per-

sists, or is accompanied by symptoms such as a fever, abdominal tenderness, or blood in the stool, you may have a serious medical problem (for example, appendicitis, diverticulitis, or pancreatitis) that requires immediate medical care.

Eye pain. See an eye doctor for evaluation if you get hit directly in the eye, you have stabbing pain in the eye, your eye turns red along with pain, your vision is impaired, or you see sudden flashes of light. These symptoms can indicate a serious eye problem such as an infection, glaucoma, a detached retina, or inflammation inside the eye (iritis or uveitis).

Source: Harvard Health Publishing



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Interval Training: As Intense as It Is Effective!



Looking for an exercise program that delivers fast results? High-intensity interval training (HIIT) is the answer.

HIIT alternates short bursts of intense effort with brief periods of rest or lower-effort exercises. For example, you might alternate 20 seconds of all-out exercise with 10 seconds of rest. This approach has become popular due to its effectiveness and versatility for all fitness levels.

BENEFITS

HIIT has numerous advantages:

- Most HIIT workouts last less than 30 minutes, making them suitable for busy schedules
- Regular HIIT sessions can sig-

nificantly boost your endurance and improve your cardiorespiratory health

- HIIT workouts burn fat without sacrificing muscle mass
- You'll burn calories during your workout and continue to burn them for hours afterward

This exercise program can also improve blood sugar management, lowering your risk of type 2 diabetes.

PRECAUTIONS

Despite these benefits, it's important to know the potential risks associated with this trending workout style. The high intensity heightens your risk of injury, particularly if you perform the exercises incorrectly or you don't warm

up properly. Guidance from a qualified instructor is recommended.

Additionally, engaging in too many sessions without adequate recovery time in between can lead to excessive fatigue and negatively affect your health. Remember to be careful when pushing your limits.

Are you ready to try HIIT? Consult a healthcare professional before starting any new training program, especially if you have pre-existing medical conditions. Once you get the green light, find online or in-person classes to improve your health.

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How a Healthy Gut Benefits Your Blood Pressure

Your gut microbiota — the trillions of tiny bacteria, viruses, and fungi dwelling deep within your intestinal tract — play a big role in your health. Beyond helping with digestion, these microbes also make certain nutrients and release substances that have wide-ranging effects throughout the body, including on the cardiovascular system.

A wealth of evidence shows a strong connection between the gut microbiota and blood pressure, according to a science advisory from the American Heart Association published July 17, 2025, in *Hypertension*. Over all, the findings support what nutrition experts have long advocated: eat a diet rich in whole, plant-based foods, which are naturally low in sodium and high in fiber, says Dr. Frank Hu, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

A high-sodium diet is an important cause of high blood pressure, and one possible mechanism may be mediated through the gut microbiome,” says Dr. Hu. Research shows that a salty diet increases the prevalence of bad microbes and reduces the number of beneficial microbes. When bad microbes accumulate in the gut, they form breakdown products and toxins that promote inflammation.

PREBIOTICS

But when beneficial microbes prevail, they need to feed on fiber, especially prebiotic fiber, which is not digested by your body but instead broken down in your lower intestine. That’s why a diet that provides a mix of healthy fiber from vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts, and seeds is so important, says Dr. Hu, who serves on the advisory committee of the Harvard Chan Microbiome in Public Health Center.

Another good source of prebiotic fiber is resistant starch, which forms in starchy foods like potatoes, rice, and pasta when they’re cooked and cooled overnight, he adds. The cooling process converts some of the starch that would normally be broken down in your small intestine into a form that instead feeds the bacteria in your large intestine.

Well-nourished beneficial bacteria in your gut churn out short-chain fatty acids, including acetate, propionate, and butyrate. These compounds then circulate through the bloodstream, where they’re thought to interact with specific receptors on cells that help regulate blood pressure, Dr. Hu explains.

THE POWER OF POLYPHENOLS

Many plant-based foods — especially berries, tea, coffee, cocoa, and extra-virgin olive oil — are rich in compounds known as polyphenols. “These compounds also have a positive influence on the composition and function of your microbiome,” says Dr. Hu. When polyphenols are metabolized in the gut, they create all kinds of small molecules that affect the function of your immune and nervous systems. The result is a decrease in inflammation and better blood vessel function, both of which can improve blood pressure control.

PROBIOTICS

Probiotics found in fermented foods and drinks can also support a healthy microbiota. Try adding a variety of the following products to your diet, Dr. Hu suggests.

Yogurt and kefir. Look for the words “contains live cultures” when choosing yogurt or kefir (a yogurtlike drink with a tart flavor and a thinner consistency).

Kombucha. This fizzy, tart, slightly sweet drink is made from fermented



tea and often flavored with fruits and herbs. Look for brands without added sugar.

Pickles and sauerkraut. Find these in the refrigerated section of the supermarket and check for the words “naturally fermented” on the label.

Kimchi. This spicy, reddish fermented cabbage dish from Korea is made with a mix of garlic, salt, vinegar, and chili peppers.

Miso. A strong, salty paste made from soybeans fermented with brown rice, miso is popular in Japanese cuisine.

Tempeh. This firm, chewy product made from fermented soybeans has a firmer texture than tofu.

SKIP THE SUPPLEMENTS

What about probiotic supplements sold over-the-counter as pills, capsules,

or powders? They are not carefully regulated, and the amount of live bacteria can vary substantially from one product to another, says Dr. Hu. “While some probiotic supplements have modest benefits for specific gastrointestinal conditions, there is little evidence that they are effective in preventing chronic diseases like hypertension. I’d recommend spending your money instead on a healthy diet that’s naturally rich in prebiotics and probiotics,” he says.

Source: Harvard Health Publishing



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