

# Ways to Stay Active at Home

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The coronavirus has changed the way we stay active as many older adults have restricted their usual activities in an attempt to stay protected. But just as sheltering in place is recommended during these challenging times, exercise and staying physically and mentally active are key to maintaining a healthy lifestyle and a strong immune system. Regular physical activity can also help reduce feelings of stress and anxiety, which many of us may be feeling currently.

## **Safety First.**

Before engaging in any type of physical activity, always speak with your doctor to make sure what you have planned is safe and appropriate. Then remember to always:

- Take it slow and listen to your body. A good gauge is to exercise at a level that allows you to talk, but not sing.
- Warm up before exercising and cool down afterward.
- Stay hydrated by drinking water before, during and after exercising, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Let a friend or loved one know when you plan to exercise or will be out on a walk by yourself. If you'd like, invite a member in your household to join you in your activity.

## **Find Your Fit.**

With health clubs in flux and social distancing protocols in place, exercising at home is becoming increasingly popular. If you plan to do so, always exercise on flat and dry surfaces that are free of tripping hazards and wear proper footwear. Make sure you are in reach of a counter, back of a couch or a sturdy chair that is pushed up against a wall in case you lose your balance and need to hold on to something or need to sit down.

Here are four ways to stay physically and mentally active at home.

1. Online fitness videos – SilverSneakers is a fitness benefit included with your Care N' Care membership at no cost to you! They offer a series of videos designed to help you continue your

fitness journey without leaving home. You can choose between Balance, Beginning Exercise, Emotional Health or Pain Management.

- a. SilverSneakers On Demand
- b. SilverSneakers Live
- c. SilverSneakers GO

2. Walking – Walking can improve heart health, lower blood sugar, reduce pain caused by chronic conditions (like arthritis) and boost mental health. Try walking briskly around the house or up and down the stairs for 10 to 15 minutes, two to three times each day. During every commercial on TV, get up and march in place. If you can avoid crowds, take a stroll around your neighborhood or in a local park, maintaining a distance of six feet from others. Other simple aerobic activities like dancing to your favorite song or swimming can also help improve range of motion and strengthen your immune system.
3. Strength and balance training – Muscle-strengthening exercises you can do around your house include chair squats, single-leg stands, wall pushups and stair climbing. In addition to yoga and tai chi, you can also work on balance at home by simply holding onto a sturdy chair, standing on one foot, then the other for 10 seconds and repeating the routine five times. SilverSneakers offers a variety of videos that can help you to regain balance and strength without leaving your home.
4. Gardening – Gardening provides a dose of fresh air and moderate-intensity physical activity. By spending even a short amount of time gardening and potting plants you can maintain motor skills and improve your endurance and strength.

Incorporating physical activities into your everyday life can help improve your overall well-being and remind you to live life to its fullest. By finding fun, enjoyable activities and mixing them up, you're likely to find yourself with renewed energy and an added incentive to stay active on an ongoing basis.

