

[IMAGE]

Stay Mobile With a Little Exercise

By Editorial Staff

Mobility can take a major hit as we age, which can reduce quality of life substantially and make aging, well, not nearly as graceful as it should be. No one wants to be hobbling, wobbling, walking with a cane, struggling to pick up something from the floor, or even wheelchair-bound when they should be enjoying their Golden Years.

Researchers studied more than 1,500 elderly men and women (ages 70-89) enrolled in The Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders (LIFE) Study. At the start of the study, published in *PLoS ONE*, (a Library of Science open-access journal), all participants were generally inactive, reporting less than 20 minutes of physical activity per week. For the study, the researchers divided participants into a group that walked and did walking-based strength, flexibility and balance training; and a group that received bimonthly health education workshops only.

After an average of 2.6 years in the study, participants who exercised were 28 percent less likely to suffer any persistent mobility disability and 18 percent less likely to suffer a major mobility disability compared to participants who did not exercise. When they subdivided the exercise group based on weekly activity levels for further analysis, the researchers determined that participants who exercised the most were a whopping 77 percent less likely suffer a major mobility disability compared to participants who exercised the least. However, even a little exercise was better than none. Overall, participating in at least 48 minutes of physical activity each week lowered disability risk, and the risk reduction only got better with more exercise.

It's a simple moral, but one worth emphasizing: Exercise matters! No matter your age, talk to your doctor about what consistent physical activity can do for you and the best exercises to meet your health and fitness goals.

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