

Cardio and Strength-Training Tips for Any Age



Regular exercise can help to manage blood pressure, strengthen your heart and bones, boost energy, and can even help reduce depression. You are never too old to exercise. If you have a chronic condition, be sure to get sign-off from your physician before starting an exercise routine.

Below, you can find cardio, strength training, and stretching tips for people of any age. This can help you create a workout routine you can do throughout the week and build upon.

Cardio tips

For overall health benefits to the heart, lungs, and circulation, perform any moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic activity using the following guidelines.



Walking

For anyone who has led a relatively sedentary lifestyle, start a cardio regimen by simply walking around your yard, apartment complex, and/or neighborhood. Start slow and work up from there. Just get outdoors and go for a walk. Start with 10 minutes and work up to 30 minutes per day. Find or create a walking club, walking support group, or a recreation program in your city. For increased intensity, try walking while carrying light, 3- to 5-pound hand weights, which can further enhance the cardiovascular effectiveness of your workout.



Light jogging

When you are ready to begin jogging, start by warming up for 10 minutes with a steady walk. From there, try lightly jogging for 3 to 5 minutes at a time, then rest. Over time, try to work up to a 20-minute light jog. Make sure to have sturdy athletic shoes for this activity.

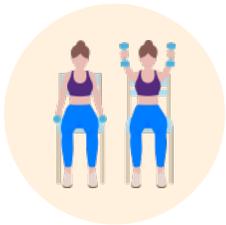
Strength training

Muscle-strengthening activities are recommended at least 2 days each week, according to the American Heart Association. Try these at home to improve your physical strength.



Leg exercises

Sit erect in a chair with your feet firmly planted on the ground, shoulder-width apart. Hold onto the sides of the chair seat for support if you need to. Lift one leg off the floor until your knee is straight and hold that position for a few seconds. Then, return that leg to the starting position with both feet on the ground. Repeat on the other side. Work up to eight repetitions on each side.



Arm raises

Sit up straight in a chair with your feet flat on the ground and arms by your sides, holding light weights (these can be soup cans if you don't have dumbbells) in each hand. Start by holding your arms straight down by your sides with your palms facing in. Keep a small bend in your elbows and slowly lift both arms out and up until they are perpendicular to your body and parallel to the ground. Hold for a second and slowly go down to the starting position. Pause and then repeat this exercise six to eight times.



Tricep extensions

Sit up straight in a chair with your feet flat on the ground and a light weight in your left hand. Bend your left elbow straight up next to your ear so it is pointing to the ceiling. Use your right hand to support your left elbow and then slowly straighten your left arm to the ceiling. Hold this position for a second and then lower your forearm to the starting position. Do this six to eight times and then switch to your right side.



Abdominal exercises

Strengthening exercises, such as seated knee lifts, can be done while sitting in a chair. Start by sitting up straight with your feet on the ground. Then, squeeze your abdominal muscles and simultaneously raise your feet off the ground together. Hold for one second and release. Try to build up to six reps of this exercise and hold for a little longer over time.



Balance exercises

One of the best ways to increase your balance is by walking heel-to-toe. Start by standing close to a wall for balance. Then walk by placing the heel of your right foot directly in front of your left foot, stopping when it touches your right heel to your left toe. Switch feet and work up to taking at least six heel-to-toe steps.

Stretches

Without stretching, our muscles tend to contract and tense up. By participating in regular stretching sessions, people at any age can decrease their likelihood of falling and remain flexible well into their later years. Stretch after you've exercised; you want your muscles to be warmed up.



Leg stretch

Stand up straight with both feet on the ground. Bend your left leg slightly and then lean your body left without falling over. Hold that stretch for a few seconds before doing the same on the other side. This stretch will lengthen your abductors. Another great stretch is to stand up straight and put one foot in front of the other. When your feet are solidly in place, gently lean forward and then repeat on the other side. You should feel a stretch in the front leg and the back leg.



Chest stretch

Sit up straight in a chair with your feet on the ground and your hands on your knees. Bring both of your arms up and clasp them gently behind your head. As you inhale, try moving your elbows back to the wall behind you. As you exhale, bring your arms back to your knees. Do this exercise three times and then rest.



With just a little bit of extra activity throughout the week, you can improve your overall health. These tips, accessible to people at any age, can help you begin or build upon an activity routine for a healthier you.

Not a Livongo Member? See if you're eligible for personalized health support at enjoy.livongo.com/new.