



# *PRO THERAPY*

Progressive Rehabilitation Orthopedic Therapy, Inc.

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## **Fitness and Aging**

Physical Therapists can help people with problems affecting them as they age such as back and neck problems, arthritis, shoulder and knee problems, difficulty walking, balance problems, rehab following surgery, or prolonged illness. Physical therapists treat the entire body, focusing on the musculoskeletal system and the way it moves and performs.

### **Myths of exercise and aging:**

- **I'm too old to exercise:** Regular exercise helps you feel and look younger.
- **Elderly people should save their strength and rest:** Inactivity accelerates illness and results in a loss in abilities and independence.
- **I have a bad back, knee, shoulder, etc.:** If you have an issue that limits your activity, physical therapists are trained to evaluate and provide care to get you back to an active lifestyle.

### **The benefits of exercise:**

- Helps to control weight = burn more calories
- Improved strength and flexibility
- Improved balance
- Controls the symptoms of osteoarthritis
- Improved sleep patterns
- Reduces depression
- Good for the brain

### **Safe exercise tips:**

- Check with your physician
- Always warm up and cool down for about 10 minutes each
- Increase your exercise program **SLOWLY**
- Avoid heavy meals 2 hours before exercise and drink plenty of water
- Work at a comfortable intensity level
- Wear good shoes and comfortable clothes
- Bring a friend

### **STOP!**

1. If you feel significant pain.
2. If you are injured, sick, or running a temperature.
3. Contact your physician if you:
  - Experience tightness in the chest, neck or throat or difficulty breathing
  - Abnormal heart rhythm, nausea, light headaches.
  - Visual changes, extreme or lasting fatigue after exercise.

### **Cardio/Aerobic exercise**

This type of exercise gets your heart pumping which increases blood flow that brings oxygen and nutrition to the tissues. Routine cardio exercise helps lessen fatigue and shortness of breath. Cardio includes walking, stair climbing, bicycle, treadmill, dancing, hiking and rowing. It should last from 12 to 20 minutes, 3 to 4 times a week.

### **Strength Training**

Strength training builds up muscle mass using resistance exercises such as with weights or elastic bands. It helps prevent bone loss, gain muscle mass, increase strength, and improve balance.

### **Flexibility**

Gentle stretching keeps muscles limber, allows better pain-free motion, keeps you less susceptible to injury, and improves balance. Stretching can be done 1 to 2 times a day to keep limber and maintain mobility.

### **Balance**

Balance requires adequate strength and flexibility. Balance decreases rapidly with inactivity; however, this is easily improved with simple exercises and activity. Some simple balance exercises may include Yoga, Tai Chi, aquatic exercise, walking, and stair climbing.