

# Exercise benefits outweigh the struggle at any age

The more you age, the more you need exercise to stay independent and healthy, said Dr. Keith Veselik, director of primary care at Loyola University Health System. “Around age 35 is when our muscle mass and resting metabolism starts to decrease. When this happens our bodies require more, not less exercise to manage our caloric intake. When this starts to happen, we can eat the same things, do the same things and may gain 3 pounds a year. That’s 30 pounds in a decade,” he said.

Dr. Veselik said the best workout program balances heart healthy exercise, strength training, and flexibility. He recommends an hour of cardiovascular exercise 4 days a week, 2 days of strength training for 30 minutes, and balance and flexibility exercises such as stretching, yoga or pilates, 1 to 2 times a week.

## In your 50s:

- Muscle and joint aches and pains start becoming more apparent, so get creative about how to keep up cardiovascular exercise that is easy on the joints but gets the heart rate up (hint: swimming, biking, or running on softer surfaces).
- Cardiovascular exercise also helps to fight many of the most common and deadly medical concerns, including heart disease, asthma, and COPD.
- Don’t go from doing nothing to running a marathon. Talk to your doctor, ask about risk factors, and together create a plan that’s right for you.
- If back pain occurs, protect your back by building strong core muscles and make sure you are lifting heavy objects correctly.

## In your 60s:

- Balance and strength should be a major focus. Many people are scared of breaking a hip, which can limit independence.
- Bones aren’t as strong and both men and women become more prone to osteoporosis.
- Add balance and leg strengthening exercises to increase flexibility, as well as balance to help prevent accidental falls. Weight-bearing exercise is crucial to bone health and keeping bone density strong.
- If arthritis develops at this age, exercise can help you cope. Swimming or aquatic classes are especially good.
- Walking is a great form of exercise. Just make sure you get your heart rate up.

## In your 70s and beyond:

To combat seniors’ biggest worry, dementia, know that exercise is the only thing that is proven to prevent Alzheimer’s disease. And many of the major risk factors for dementia – high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes can be countered with exercise.

