



Communities + Generations + Innovations

Ten Coping Strategies for older Oregonians during COVID-19

4

Stop, Drop it, Exercise!

As we age, it seems that physical activity goes from being a joy to a chore. Are you up for a little hectoring, nagging, even badgering? For myself, I don't enjoy being on the receiving end of tough love, but I recognize that whatever it takes to motivate me is being done from concern.

It also helps to think of Dr. Anthony Fauci, from the National Institutes of Health, who jogs or walks as much as possible—usually about 3 miles a day. The man is 79 years old! During the coronavirus crisis, he is working 18 hour days. Yet, "Almost nothing can stop us," his running partner says.

You already know that being physically active is an essential ingredient for the health and well-being of humans. It positively benefits us in countless critical ways, physically and psychologically. And it will help us build stronger immune systems for the trying times ahead, including possible illness.

Right now, the how, when and where of getting exercise are not as important as simply getting out there. (As of today, "physical distancing" and "stay-at-home" guidelines do not prohibit walks as long as 6-foot distancing can be maintained.)

So the best advice is: stop reading this, close your computer and go for a walk if you can. Whatever your ability, move, stretch, wave your arms. Piles of research predict that you will feel better, stronger and have more energy if you do.

Want more guidance?

As a rule, adults need at least 30 minutes of "moderate to vigorous physical activity" almost every day. (Children in your care need 60 minutes of this same level of daily physical activity.) "Moderate to vigorous physical activity" is activity that makes your heart and lungs work harder than they normally have to, and is usually considered to be a good fast walk.

Many older people may see this target as difficult to achieve. That's absolutely okay. Start where you are by setting a realistic target of even just 15 or 20 minutes of activity. This target should be a little more than you usually do, not too easy to achieve, but achievable. Then set yourself the task of building on this every couple of days by adding 5 extra minutes.

Can't leave the apartment or house?

You can find a workout that realistically matches your needs and abilities here at [Silver Sneakers](#).

Miranda Esmonde-White, PBS's queen of stretches and gentle exercise is now offering [free daily classes](#) from her home, as well as a 14-day free trial that offers access to hundreds of 20-minute routines. Scroll down the page for the daily class.

And for cooped up kids, we like [GoNoodle](#), a popular website teachers use for physical activity in classrooms.

Now a last word from Dr. Fauci on why he loves to run. Watch this short clip [here](#).