

Fit at 50, 60, 70 and beyond Teresa Caldwell Board, Vim & Vigor Magazine

“The antidote to aging is activity,” says Marilyn Moffat, Ph.D., P.T., author of Age-Defying Fitness (Peachtree Publishers, 2006) “No matter what your age is now, no matter how inactive you have been, it is possible to increase your fitness,” Moffatt says. The payoff? You will look and feeling younger longer, not to mention staying healthy and energetic for decades to come. Consult your healthcare provider, physical therapist or personal trainer before jumping into any new physical activity. Then, give these tips a try:

As we age, we become less flexible. “Joints, ligaments and the tissue surrounding muscle fibers become less elastic”, says Moffat.

TIP: To improve and maintain flexibility, make **stretching** a regular part of your daily activities. Consider a structured program, such as yoga or Pilates. “Flexibility helps reduce muscle tension, improve coordination, prevent injuries, develop body awareness and even promote good circulation,” say Moffat.

While women get an earlier start at **losing muscle mass**, men join the club by their 60s. Dropping out of exercise, even for short periods, takes a quick toll on your quality of life.

TIP: Strength training remains important to build and maintain muscle, promoting weight management and stamina. It is recommended that we do cardio activities that are weight-bearing, at least two days per week. Walking is included as a weight-bearing exercise and helps promote healthy bone density and reduce the risk of fractures.

Ever heard that “it’s never too late?” Well, it is never too late to start exercising. With increased activity, you will find that everyday activities are easier to perform and you will have less pain, as well. Include exercises that promote a good sense of balance and you will be less likely to fall. “One third of people over the age of 65 fall at least once each year, Moffat says. Falls often contribute to a vicious cycle of a decrease in activity which reduces one’s stability and confidence, increasing the likelihood of another fall.

So... let’s get moving

Staying active and fit is one of the most important things you can do to feel vibrant longer! The benefits include:

- ❑ Maintaining a healthy weight
- ❑ Better sleep
- ❑ Depression may be reduced
- ❑ Increase in energy and endurance
- ❑ Immune system may be strengthened
- ❑ Potential reduction in risk of developing heart disease, osteoporosis and type 2 diabetes