



# ReLay Your Health!

Official Newsletter of Tlay Healthcare Services, Inc.

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## BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE THIS YEAR!

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### It's never too late to become physically active!

No matter how old you are, exercise can improve your quality of life and does not require you to spend a lot of time doing it to see and feel improvements. As an older adult especially, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that about 28 percent to 34 percent of adults aged 65 to 74 and 35 percent to 44 percent of adults ages 75 or older are inactive, meaning they engage in no leisure-time physical activity. Thus, inactivity is more common in older people than in middle-aged persons with women more likely than men to report no leisure-time activity. Consequently, inactive people are nearly twice as likely to develop heart disease as those who are more active and can also lead to more visits to the doctor, more hospitalizations, and more use of medicines for a variety of illnesses.

### Benefits of Exercise

Regular exercise and physical activity can reduce the risk of developing some diseases and disabilities that develop as people grow older. In some cases, exercise is an effective treatment for many chronic conditions. For example, studies show that people with arthritis, heart disease, or diabetes benefit from regular exercise. Exercise also helps people with high blood pressure, balance problems, or difficulty walking. On the other hand, physical activity has been found to add modest improvement in cognitive function.

### Getting Started

Although exercise and physical activity are among the healthiest things you can do for yourself, some older adults are still reluctant to exercise. Some are afraid that exercise will be too hard or that physical activity will harm them. Well, if you haven't been active for a long time, it's important to start out at a low level of intensity and work your way up, slowly.

Also, if you are at high risk for any chronic diseases such as heart disease or diabetes, or if you smoke or are obese, you should check first with your doctor before becoming more physically active.

Begin by writing down your short-term and long term goals. Short-term goals will help you make physical activity a regular part of your daily life. For these goals, think about the things you'll need to get or do in order to be physically active. For example, you may need to buy walking shoes or fill out a planner so you can figure out how to fit physical activity into your busy day. Your long-term goals should be realistic and should focus on where you want to be in 6 months, a year, or 2 years from now. Finally, choose activities that are effective and enjoyable. Try activities that include all four types of exercise -- endurance, strength, flexibility, and balance -- because each type has different benefits (see pg. 2).

There are so many ways to be active and choosing what works best for you and including it in your regular routine, is the first step. If you're already active, keep up the good work. In this New Year, I challenge you to make exercise a routine part of your everyday life.

### HOW TO KEEP FIT

- ◆ Choose activities you enjoy
- ◆ Combine a range of activities that include aerobic activity, strengthening, flexibility, and balance
- ◆ Start slowly and gradually build up to a total of at least 30 minutes of activity a day on most days of the week
- ◆ Always keep safety in mind and drink plenty of fluids

Questions? Comments? We'd like to hear from you. Please contact

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# TYPES OF EXERCISES



## Endurance

Builds "staying power" and improve the health of the heart and circulatory system

Endurance, or aerobic, activities can make it easier for you to: push your grandchildren on the swings, vacuum, work in the garden, rake leaves. Examples of exercises include:

- walking briskly on a level surface
- swimming
- dancing
- gardening, mowing, raking
- cycling on a stationary bicycle
- Bicycling
- playing tennis

**Suggested Time:** one 30 minute session or three 10-minute sessions of moderate-intensity activity 5 or more days a week .



## Strength

Builds muscle tissue and reduces age-related muscle loss

Small increases in muscle strength can make a big difference in your ability to stay independent and carry out everyday activities such as climbing stairs and carrying groceries, laundry, and small grandchildren.

Examples of physical activities that build strength include:

- lifting weights
- using a resistance band
- Pilates

**Suggested Time:** 2 or more days a week for 30-minute sessions each, alternating muscle groups



## Balance

Helps prevent falls by improving your ability to control and maintain your body's position, whether you are moving or still

Balance exercises can help you: prevent falls, stand on tiptoe to reach something on the top shelf, walk up and down the stairs, walk on an uneven sidewalk without falling. Examples of physical activities that improve balance include:

- standing on one foot
- heel-to-toe walk
- Tai Chi

**Suggested Time:** no limit



## Flexibility

Helps your body stay flexible and limber, which gives you more freedom of movement for your regular physical activity as well as for your everyday activities

Flexibility, or stretching, exercises make it possible for you to: look over your shoulder to see what's behind you as you back the car out of the driveway, make the bed, bend over to tie your shoes. Examples of physical activities that increase flexibility include:

- shoulder and upper arm stretch
- calf stretch
- yoga

**Suggested Time:** hold the stretch for 10 to 30 sec.

### WARNING SIGNS WHEN EXERCISING

Stop the activity and contact your doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Pain or pressure in your chest, arms, neck, or jaw
- Feeling lightheaded, nauseated, or weak
- Becoming short of breath
- Developing pain in your legs, calves, or back
- Having an uncomfortable sensation of your heart beating too fast

## NATIONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION WEEK: JANUARY 10-16, 2010

From *Weekly Morbidity & Mortality Report*

Each year during National Influenza Vaccination Week, the importance of influenza vaccination and the need for persons to receive vaccination throughout the entire October–May influenza season are highlighted. Influenza vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza and its severe complications.

This influenza season, with circulation of the 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus, influenza activity early in the traditional season was much higher than normal. As of mid-November, an estimated 47 million persons in the United States had been infected with the H1N1 virus, resulting in an estimated 213,000 hospitalizations and 9,820 deaths. In contrast with previous influenza seasons, through November 14, approximately 87% of influenza-related deaths from the H1N1 virus had occurred among persons aged <65 years. Thus far this season, H1N1 viruses have predominated, but future waves of influenza activity might occur from either H1N1 or regular seasonal influenza viruses.

Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 monovalent vaccine is the best way to protect against H1N1. As of December 29, 2009, approximately 116 million doses of vaccine had become available for distribution since vaccine shipping began in October. Most jurisdictions now are making vaccine available to all persons. H1N1 vaccination continues to be particularly important for pregnant women, household contacts and caregivers of infants aged <6 months, health-care and emergency medical

services personnel, all persons aged 6 months–24 years, and persons aged 25–64 years with medical conditions associated with higher risk for complications from influenza. In addition, as in every influenza season, persons who want to reduce their risk for seasonal influenza should receive the seasonal influenza vaccine. However, nearly all seasonal influenza vaccine has been distributed, and supplies are now limited.

Throughout the week of January 10–16, 2010, the Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, and other agencies will be highlighting the importance of influenza vaccination. On January 11, events will focus on communicating to the general public and health-care workers about the importance of influenza vaccination. January 12 events will highlight the importance of H1N1 vaccination for persons with chronic health conditions (particularly those aged 25–64 years) that put them at increased risk for serious influenza-related complications. On January 13, emphasis will be focused on pregnant women, children, and caregivers of infants aged <6 months. January 14 events will focus on young adults and college students, and January 15 events will highlight information for seniors.

Please refer to the September 2009 issue of *ReLay Your Health!* for local health departments providing vaccines FREE of charge.



### References

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