



Welcome to the Accountable Aging Newsletter

Our aim is to serve you as a trusted conduit of information from scientific and academic sources and highlight those services we offer that meet the needs of senior adults and their families.

This Edition highlights the importance of older adults implementing a fitness program to function optimally.

May 2008 Edition

DID YOU KNOW?

Accountable Aging sent three members of our staff to *The American Society on Aging* national conference in March. We left impressed with all the exciting work and research in the area of aging. A clear message to all who are aging or work with aging persons is the impact of physical fitness on disease, brain fitness, mental health, physical health and overall well-being. We're even more dedicated to including this in our work with our clients. We currently assess how this need is being met with all our clients and include this in assessments for one time consultations.

The cities we serve, San Antonio, Austin and Dallas, are very blessed to have many opportunities for seniors to participate in fitness activities. There are many personal trainers who'll go to client homes and modify programs to meet specific needs. There are gyms with trainers who'll do individual and group sessions with seniors and great physical and occupational therapists. Yoga, tai chi, water aerobics and other exercise classes are offered in the community and in residential facilities. There are massage therapists who'll work in offices, homes and nursing homes.

When you trust Accountable Aging with your client or family member, know that our care managers will work to increase the physical fitness of the senior considering all of these great resources.

Questions: (answers are underlined in article below)

- * What's the #2 cause of preventable death?
- * What area of the body should be strengthened?

FUNCTIONAL FITNESS IS THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH!

While physical exercise benefits people of all ages, a **fitness program is even more vital to the functional ability of older adults.** **Benefits include:**

- * improved physical flexibility & structural alignment
- * increased functional strength, endurance, balance & coordination
- * increased strength of bones, muscles and connective tissue
- * decreased risk of injuries and adverse physical conditions
- * more muscle * less fat * optimal body weight * reduced risk of major diseases

Note: Older adults should only begin a fitness program when cleared by their doctors to do so. If possible, they should work with a certified trainer, yoga or Pilates instructor to ensure they're using correct exercise form.

Components of a Great Fitness Program for Older Adults:

Align & Stretch Your Body: As we age we lose flexibility in our muscles, joints and connective tissue and our bodies become increasingly out of alignment. Stretching 10-30 minutes daily and practicing good posture habits will help offset this. Yoga, massage, passive stretching & Pilates are great options. Older adults can go to classes or learn from books, tapes, DVD's and trainers.

Strengthen Your Heart: Aerobic exercise is continuous, rhythmic activity that strengthens the heart and lungs and improves respiratory endurance. Without exercise, the functional capacity of our hearts declines by about 10% per decade. This is significant since they pump 100,000+ times a day to give us oxygen.

Regular aerobic exercise will slow down the declining functional capacity of older adult hearts. Walking should be our first choice since it strengthens muscles, bones and joints in our hips, legs and feet in a natural way, decreasing debilitating bone and joint conditions later in life. Physical activity also helps regulate blood glucose levels and decreases age-associated declines in balance and coordination that are a major risk factor for falls.

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Strengthen Your Body: Older adults should try to achieve a functionally-fit body. Research shows that as early as age 30, we may lose as much as .5 pounds of muscle per year. As older adults lose muscle, they lose strength and functional capacity. Functional strength training will offset muscle and strength loss and give older adults the physical freedom to function well. Strength training should begin with our "core," the center of our bodies, since core strength is vital to staying active as we age.

Older adults also need to strengthen their upper and lower bodies through functional resistance training. This can be done through weight training, calisthenics, Pilates, yoga, walking at an incline or aerobic exercise that challenges our muscles. Pilates focuses on controlled, natural movements across three planes. Yoga and Pilates are well-suited for older adults since they can be done at home on a mat. We should strength train our bodies at least twice a week.

Shape Your Body: Since obesity is cited as the #2 cause of preventable death by Everett Koop, former U.S. Surgeon General, the #1 goal of older adults should be to achieve a healthy bodyweight. In addition to an increased risk of disease, overweight older adults subject their hearts, bones and joints to unnecessary stress. Older adults who want to lose weight should weigh regularly, set weekly goals, drink lots of water, control calories and minimize sugar, starch, salt and saturated and trans-fats.

This information was provided by **Scott McTeer**, one of many resources available to clients and families of *Accountable Aging, Inc.* He's a personal fitness trainer in Austin, Texas, founder of Mobile Fitness 2U and author of two fitness books. He's been certified as a Strength & Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) with the National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA), a Personal Trainer with the American Council on Exercise (ACE), an Older Adult Trainer by the American Institute of Fitness Educators (AIFE) and Flexibility Coach with the International Fitness Professional Association (IFPA).

His website is www.ybyl.com and his BLOG is www.ybyl.com/wordpress (20+ articles on older adult fitness)

MORE INFO on OLDER ADULTS and FITNESS: Senior Journal, www.seniorjournal.com/Fitness.htm , Novartis Foundation on Gerontology, www.healthandage.com , American Senior Fitness Association, www.seniorfitness.org/sfafit.htm , The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (for older adults), www.fitness.gov/older.htm

Do you know someone who might benefit from our services? If so, please forward this to them. They can sign up for our free newsletter at www.accountableaging.com. Thanks.

ACCOUNTABLE AGING, INC.

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Accountable Aging is a single source for seniors and their families to attain knowledge, resources and on-going assistance with the challenges related to aging or caring for an elder loved one. We serve seniors in Austin, Dallas, San Antonio and the surrounding areas.

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