



How to Stay Fit and Active as You Grow Older

Fitness is not just for the young

Some questions to ask yourself

- Do you want to keep fit, as you grow older?
- Are your joints stiff?
- Has your co-ordination declined?
- Have you had a recent illness, operation or accident and not regained your previous level of fitness and confidence?
- Do you trip more than you used to?
- Have you fallen once or more in the past year?
- Do you fear falling more than you used to?
- Do you feel less confident
 - walking at night?
 - walking on uneven surfaces?
 - climbing up stairs?
 - getting out of a chair



Why Strength and Balance Matters

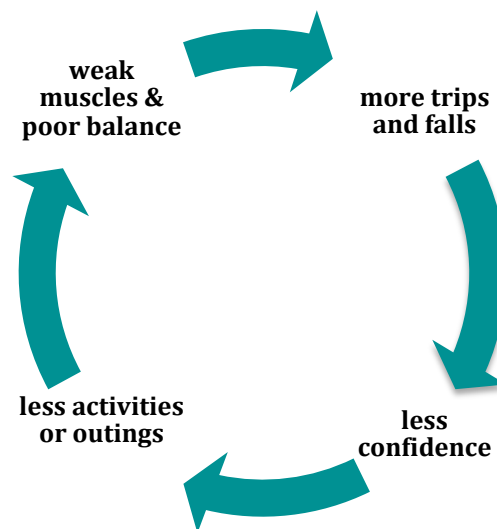
There are many reasons why we can lose strength and balance - the most common is lack of use.

As we get older we are less vigorous, less adventurous and less active, so we don't challenge our sense of balance as we did when we were young.

Therefore we:

- lose muscle strength
- develop stiff joints
- are slower to react
- are more likely to trip and fall

We need to avoid the DISUSE CYCLE



Your sense of balance can be influenced by:

- poor eyesight or bad lighting
- badly fitting shoes
- hazards at home or in public places
- side effects of some drugs

Be sure you stay on your feet. Remember if we don't use it – we lose it

As you grow older you need:

- to keep your **joints well-oiled**
- to maintain strong **muscles**
- to maintain or re- train your **sense of balance**

Consider seriously increasing your level of fitness or activity even if your strength and balance and general fitness is still good.

Exercise Classes

Find an exercise class that suits you, something that:



- has a 'Live Stronger Live Longer' tick
- you will enjoy
- strengthens and stretches ALL muscles and joints
- allows you to progress at your own pace
- provides professional support
- challenges your balance
- is friendly and fun
- is supportive and instructive
- conducted to carefully chosen music
- has others with similar needs
- is led by someone experienced in exercise for older people
- is suitable for all levels of fitness
- challenges those who want to do more, and if you want to do less, that's ok
- has chairs available at all times



If you join an exercise class and:

- you can't hear, ask for the music to be turned down or ask the instructor to speak up and speak slower
- you have difficulty seeing tell the leader

Other recreational or sporting activities you may enjoy:

- walking with a friend or group
- swimming
- bowls
- dancing
- gardening
- attending the gym

Visit 'Active Canterbury' and 'Sport Canterbury' websites for a list of activities in your area.

Some general tips on exercise:

- wear comfortable clothes that allow you to stretch freely and footwear with a broad low heel.
- go at your own pace and build up your fitness gradually
- remember it's good to get a little breathless – it means you are working your heart and lungs. If you can still talk while feeling a little breathless, this is ok.
- It's also ok for your muscles to feel a bit stiff after exercising.

Physical activity is the best medicine for our bodies so keep it up as you age and enjoy it.

If you need some advice about what exercise is best for you our friendly physiotherapist can help, just contact us on:

Phone: 03 377 5280 **Email:** admin@tpl.nz

