

Four Steps for Healthy Aging

As you age, there are 4 steps you can take to improve and maintain your health: Together, these 4 things can make it easier to live longer, healthier, and more independently.

- Get the right amount of exercise
- Learn how to improve balance and prevent falls
- Strengthen your bladder to avoid incontinence
- Care for your mind, body, and spirit

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Exercise has many benefits

By exercising, you can: • Burn calories • Tone muscle • Keep your bones strong • Boost your mood • Improve chronic conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease, dementia, diabetes, and more.

Exercising is well worth the effort, but committing to a regular exercise schedule isn't always easy. If you're feeling stuck, consider what is standing in your way and make a plan to overcome it.

Exercise your way with ClassPass1 Choose from thousands of on-demand and livestream fitness classes online or book an in-person class near you with ClassPass. Get tips about fitness and exercise.

5 steps to help you get started

1. Mix it up — Choose activities you enjoy and make exercise fun
2. Buddy up — Exercising with a friend or family member makes it more likely you'll stick with your plans
3. Set realistic goals — Start slow, make sure to give yourself time to recover, and gradually speed up as you get stronger
4. Divide it up — Three 10-minute walks are just as good as one 30-minute walk
5. Time it right — The time you exercise every day should be when you have the most energy during the day.

10 tips to improve balance and prevent falls

Although home accidents, such as falls, are the main cause of injury among older adults, the good news is that most of these mishaps can be avoided.

- Stay active As a Kaiser Permanente member you have access to fitness classes to help improve your flexibility, balance, and strength.
- Understand side effects of medications Talk to your personal doctor to help determine if any of your medications might increase your risk of falling.
- Prioritize your sleep Sleep needs vary, but many older adults need 7 or 8 hours of sleep every night.
- Wear nonskid, rubber-soled shoes Also try to avoid walking on stairs or floors in socks, or in slippers or shoes with smooth soles.
- Take your time Many people fall when they move too quickly from sitting to standing, or when going up or down stairs.
- Check your vision Talk to your doctor if it is difficult to notice changes in elevation such as stairs, curbs, and driveways.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol Even small amounts of alcohol, such as one drink, can affect your balance and reflexes.
- Get the right equipment Use a cane, walker, or shower chair if you need it.
- Tidy up at home Clear pathways and other high-traffic areas by removing throw rugs, electric cords, and clutter.
- Talk to your doctor A fall might be caused by a new health problem or a medication that needs adjusting. Let your personal doctor know so they can help

How to manage urinary incontinence

As many as 1 in 3 people in the United States have problems with leaking urine (urinary incontinence). Many people don't tell anyone — including their doctors — about their symptoms, as they are often embarrassed. But speaking up pays off, because there are a variety of ways to end or lessen the leaks.

What is urinary incontinence?

Urinary incontinence — or leaking urine — can be short term or long lasting (chronic). Short-term incontinence is often caused by other health problems or treatments.

Talk to your doctor if you are experiencing urinary incontinence. There are many types of chronic urinary incontinence. Here are a few:

- Stress incontinence means that you leak urine when you sneeze, cough, laugh, or do something that puts stress or strain on your bladder.
- Urge incontinence is an urge to urinate that's so strong that you can't make it to the toilet in time.
- Overflow incontinence means that you have the urge to urinate, but you can release only a small amount. Since your bladder doesn't empty as it should, it then leaks urine later.

Prevention tips

- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, carbonated drinks, and sour or tart foods. They can irritate your bladder.
- Eat more fiber to prevent constipation, which can contribute to urinary incontinence.
- Don't smoke. It can cause chronic coughing, which can damage the muscles that control the flow of urine.
- Limit the amount of liquids you drink before bedtime.
- Manage your weight.
- Go to the bathroom at several set times each day.
- When you urinate, practice double-voiding. This means going as much as you can, relaxing for a moment, and then going again.
- Use a journal to track your symptoms and any leaking of urine.