

MOBILITY MATTERS – 7 KEYS TO IMPROVE YOUR MOBILITY



My grandma knew the value of staying physically active and regardless of her age and abilities she had the right attitude! As she said to me soon after I got out of college, *“Christopher, please tell everyone you take care of – they’ve got to use it or lose it!”*

I was a new Occupational Therapist when she first implored me to spread her advice and 27 years later, her words still ring true. While the “use it or lose it” philosophy does have some limits, the reality is, the less mobile we become, the more at risk we are for illness and injuries requiring hospitalization, or injuries leading to disability.

When it comes to mobility, the less active we are, the more difficult it becomes to complete even the simplest of daily tasks. Improving your mobility through regular exercise will help improve your health and overall quality of life. By staying active we can increase strength, coordination, and balance, all of which are vital in preventing falls. As we age, in addition to fall prevention, active seniors experience a wide range of other benefits, such as a healthy weight, having more energy, and staying cognitively sharp.

If you have already begun experiencing a decrease or limitations in your mobility, the good news is that it’s never too late to improve your mobility! It has been said that exercise is the “ultimate anti-aging medicine” so here are seven important considerations to get you started, or to help **keep you moving forward**.

1. It takes the right attitude and real effort.

As grandma also pointed out to, *“Getting old isn’t easy Christopher, it takes work to stay active but it’s effort well worth it because I’ve got 9 grandkids to keep up with!”*

2. Add activity slowly at first.

Consult your physician and discuss limitations or precautions based on your individual situation. Start simply. Being active for at least ten minutes every day can make a difference. There are many worthwhile exercises that you can do right from your chair. Taking a walk around the block is also a good place to start. You can add on more activity as you regain more endurance and mobility until you are able to do a solid 30 minutes of exercise each day.

3. Get help from a pro.

While there are many ways to start exercising on your own, getting input and guidance from a healthcare professional like a physical therapist, occupational therapist, or fitness trainer can get you on an individualized plan tailored to your unique abilities.

4. Make healthy food choices.

By eliminating some of the unhealthy foods from your diet, like rich desserts that are high in sugar, your body will have more of the fuel it really needs. Instead, substitute some fruit or high protein snacks when you get a craving. When you eat better, you feel better, which will lead to feeling more active and alert.

5. Sleep is critical to good health.

Like a healthy diet and the right exercise regime, a good night's sleep is vital for seniors. Without restful sleep, accidents and falls are more likely. Sleep is our body's way of rebuilding. Sleep recharges us so our muscles are fit and ready for activity and it keeps our minds sharp so we can be more attentive to obstacles and our surroundings.

6. Be creative and have fun!

Find creative ways to get moving. When she was younger, grandma loved biking, skiing, and swimming. As her heart and breathing problems mounted, she enjoyed the gentle pool exercise classes in her community and would do exercises in her chair during commercials while watching TV.

7. Something...anything, is better than nothing!

Whether you climb a mountain or simply walk around the house when you're talking on the phone, any amount of movement and exercise will help your mobility. Ask a neighbor, a family member, or a friend to join you! Having an exercise partner is one of the many ways to make it fun as you increase your mobility in a way that doesn't make it feel like a workout.

At MedCOR, ***your Mobility Matters to us*** so keep at it and don't give up! Even on the days you feel too fatigued, try to complete at least 10 minutes of physical activity. When you need support or assistance for your mobility needs, we are here for you! Whether it's connecting you with one of our great local therapists or sharing our advice on the best mobility device to keep you safe and active, at **MedCOR, We Keep You Moving Forward!**