

Keeping Active in Colder Months

Our health and wellness is tied to so much more than good nutrition. Physical activity is just as important, and keeping active can be harder when we age. The current recommendation is to get 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week, regardless of our age. Winter in Minnesota also adds additional challenges, so here are some ideas for getting in fitness when it's too cold to do so outside. Please make sure to check in with your doctor if you plan to start any new physical activity or make major changes.

Use habits you already have to incorporate activities - If some of your daily habits are sedentary, use these as opportunities to move. Love watching TV? Get up during commercials and walk from room to room or even march in place. Enjoy reading? Keep something lightweight nearby to do some arm curls after every chapter (think cans of food, hardcover books, etc). Is listening to music more your jam? Dance around a little every other song.

Chores can be great ways to workout - Participate in housework as you are able to. Things like laundry and unloading groceries provide some cardiovascular exercise and also stretching. Vacuuming, dusting, and other general cleaning are also great to work different muscle groups and get your body moving.

Technology is our friend - If you have internet access, search for things like "low-impact workout video" or "older adult exercise classes." Get creative with your searches! There are tons of workout videos available for free online. Remember, you don't have to follow every exercise on a video and many of them show modifications if your mobility isn't great. The AARP also has a number of workouts at: <https://videos.aarp.org/category/videos/fitness>.

Find an accountability friend - Maybe it's a fellow SAPAS member, your son or daughter, or another friend. Set up a time to check in with your friend to make sure you got in your physical activity. Whether it's daily, weekly, or some other interval, having someone who knows your goals and can provide encouragement may help keep you on track.

Know your limits - If exercise is new to you or something you haven't done in a while, don't push yourself too hard. It's better to start slow and gradually increase activity than risk an injury.