**Common Reasons Seniors For Not Improving Their Balance**

**Common reasons/problems I see in practice**

1. Too tired/No energy
2. It hurts
3. I don’t want to hurt myself (I’m not sure I know what I’m doing)
4. Injuries/surgeries (sciatica, neuropathy, spinal stenosis - hips, knees, shoulders,)
5. No time

**Top 10 Excuses Seniors Use to Not Exercise**

As a senior, you know you “should” exercise more—and yet, somehow when you’re 60, 70, 80 or beyond—the excuses to not exercise seem very BIG and REAL! Exercise reluctance happens at any age, but when it’s compounded by aging body parts, it’s hard to tell the difference between valid reasons and lame excuses.

In my 40s and 50s, a sore knee meant I better not go jogging, but I could still do sit-ups. Now, in my mid 70s, I feel my knee even when I do a sit-up.

“I’m so tired!”

Many times, in the past I dismissed fatigue as just an excuse, and sure enough, I would feel energized after five minutes of warm-up. Lately it takes 20 minutes and even then, I wonder if I really should take it easy and go home.

As a psychologist, I know “stinking thinking” when I hear it. I have talked myself out of exercise far too many times. The result was I never got fit, even though I went through the motions and fooled myself into thinking I was doing enough.

“I just don’t have time!”

Today, as a 74-year-old, I don’t have time to kid myself. If I want to keep my muscles and bones, I can’t fake it. I have to do the work.

I am not alone in finding excuses not to exercise. My fellow gym buddies share with me their own obstacles. Like anything, these can be used to get creative and find workarounds.

I’ve got sore body parts: It is true that exercise will produce sore muscles, but that is how you know it’s doing some good. Strength training (moving muscles with weights) damages the muscle fibers slightly, which mobilizes cells to repair and grow. This keeps your tissues younger and stronger.

I’m too fatigued: Exercise signals cells to get busy, repair, and rejuvenate. True, you need time in-between workouts. However, don’t get carried away. Sometimes we feel tired because we tell ourselves we’re tired. What if someone handed you a check for $100,000? Bet you’d feel energized, right? I can’t imagine you saying, “Oh, thanks, but I’m too tired to spend it.”

I don’t want to risk injury: Most of us listen to our bodies when we feel pain. That’s good. But instead of focusing on what you can’t do, try finding a way to exercise (without risk) anyway. There’s always something you can do.

I don’t want to over-train: Really? Are you at risk because you took the dog for a walk, washed the car and lifted groceries? Avoid over-training by working different areas of your body on different days. Mondays, biceps and triceps/ caves and quads. Tuesday, upper back and shoulders/ glutes and hamstrings. Use a trainer until you can learn to program your own routine.

I’m thinking about replacing the treadmill for walks at the mall: If you’re not breathing hard and sweating, please don’t count walking as cardio exercise. Same for gardening and some gentle yoga classes. All movement is beneficial, just don’t justify it as exercise designed to prevent aging, avoid diseases, and prolong life. Don’t fool yourself by under-exercising.

I don’t want to sweat or get out of breath: Right, but even if you have a heart condition and take heart medications, your doctor will most likely tell you exercise strengthens the heart muscle. Sorry, some sweating is likely to occur. Wear deodorant, use a towel or sweat bands, and avoid letting your heart, lungs, and muscles atrophy due to lack of use.

I need to lose weight first: While it may be discouraging to see a lot of fit people at a gym, that’s because that’s what happens when you show up and do the work. Some at the gym are overweight, and they’re getting fit anyway. What do you care? Don’t compare yourself to others. No one is looking at you anyway. Most are too focused on themselves to care.

I tried working out, it didn’t work: How long did you stick with it? Why did you quit? Were you expecting instant results?

It takes too long to see results: The external rewards (weight loss, tape measures of chest, waist, hips, etc.) may take as long as 3 – 6 months, it depends on how hard you work. A scan of body fat percentage vs. skeletal muscle will show the results of proper exercise and nutrition after several months. But, by far the biggest, healthiest rewards to your body for exercise are the invisible metabolic changes that occur within your cells DAILY! These results show up on blood tests. You have to trust that exercise prevents some of the chronic diseases of aging, such as diabetes, dementia, high blood pressure. Focus on that. There are too many false promises of flat abs or huge biceps in merely weeks. Don’t be fooled. Your body benefits from exercise long before you can see the results.

Why bother with exercise? My parents lived to their 90s. They were genetically blessed for sure. Who says you are? Science now says lifestyle (what you do, eat, and drink) contributes more to how long you will live than genetics. My parents died in their 50s and early 60s. I’m now 74 and clicking my heels in the air… lucky? Maybe. And then again, I do a lot of work, which is actually fun.

You probably can add your own personal favorites to this list. My point is, no matter what excuse, most of us can do something. When it comes to exercise, something is better than nothing.

Who knows when a five minute walk around the block turns into an all-out power walk? You’ll never know until you put in the first five minutes.

SOURCE: Senior Fitness 4 Life (<https://seniorfitness4life.com/top-10-excuses-seniors-use-to-not-exercise/>)

So, what happens when you do exercise and work on your balance? FYI: Every pound of weight gained puts an extra 4lbs. to each knee.

**Physical Exercise in Old Age: An Eight-Year Follow-Up Study on Involvement, Motives, and Obstacles among Persons Age 65-84**

This study examined changes in involvement in physical exercise and the motives for and obstacles to participation over an 8-year period in a representative sample of senior residents of Jyvaskyla, Finland. The participants were noninstitutionalized seniors age 65-84 years at baseline in 1988. The most common form of physical exercise was walking for fitness. In men, participation in supervised exercise classes and performing calisthenic exercises at home increased over the follow-up. In women, physical exercise generally declined. The most important reason quoted for nonparticipation at both baseline and follow-up was poor health (65-88%). Among those who reported participation in supervised physical exercise, the most important motives were health promotion (80%) and social reasons (40-50%). The main obstacles were poor health (19-38%) and lack of interest (28-26%). It is an important challenge to remove obstacles to participation in physical activity in old age and to give older people every opportunity to get involved.

SOURCE: Journal of Aging and Physical Activity (<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mirja-Hirvensalo/publication/224011613_Physical_Exercise_in_Old_Age_An_Eight-Year_Follow-Up_Study_on_Involvement_Motives_and_Obstacles_among_Persons_Age_65-84/links/0912f501fb401b0d03000000/Physical-Exercise-in-Old-Age-An-Eight-Year-Follow-Up-Study-on-Involvement-Motives-and-Obstacles-among-Persons-Age-65-84.pdf>)