



SIU MEDICINE

DALE & DEBORAH SMITH CENTER
FOR ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH
& TREATMENT

EXERCISE

HEALTHY BODY, HEALTHY BRAIN

The link between brain health and overall health in the body are intrinsically linked. As we age, stability is a growing concern, even for those who don't have Alzheimer's or a related disorder. Regular exercise appears to slow cognitive decline in older adults with mild cognitive impairment.

GETTING STARTED

Being active should be cooperative and fun! Encourage the person with memory loss to do as much as possible for themselves, but make sure the activities and exercises are appropriate and safe for everyone involved.

- Be realistic! Several short workouts may be better than one long workout.
- Playing music while exercising may encourage movement.
- Have everyone wear comfortable clothes that fit well and are made for movement and exercise.
- Make sure everyone stays hydrated during and after.
- **TIP:** When walking, use a walking stick to help with balance and to deter back pain. The pole should be long enough to create a 90 degree angle with your arm (from your hand to elbow to shoulder).

MARATHONS NOT NECESSARY

For some, a walk around the neighborhood or park may be too much. Simple movement and exercise is still beneficial and can be done closer to home.

- Use a stationary bike
- Chair yoga or Tai Chi
- Simple tasks at home (sweeping, dusting, etc.)
- Resistance bands or stretching bands
- Simple movement with light weights

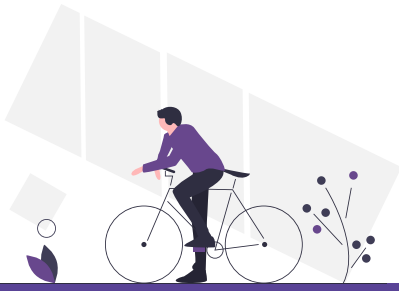


**We're here
to help**

From health and wellness, managing changes, educating family and friends and more, explore our online resource guide for caregivers.

Visit siumed.edu/alzresource or scan the QR code below.





120 to 150 minutes per week

A large-scale study revealed that regular exercise, no matter the intensity level, appears to slow cognitive decline.

The 18-month EXERT trial found that 1 hour to 1.5 hours of exercise a week for 12 months helped protect brain health.

In the study, both the aerobics group as well as the stretching and balance group did not show the expected decline of cognitive function.



15-minute workout for seniors

Looking to work out at home? Here's a video link that will provide a sample exercise set. Find the exercise right for you.

Link: youtu.be/Ev6yE55kYGw

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL WALK

Walking is a great exercise for improving endurance. Here are some tips for a productive and safe walk:

- Wear appropriate shoes that have a solid sole made with non-slip material and are secure from heel to toe.
- Start with a warm-up (e.g.: march in place for 2 minutes).
- Relax your shoulder and gently swing your arms in a way that is comfortable to you.
- With each step, land on your heel first, then push off on your toes.
- Finish with a cool-down (e.g.: stretch, or march in place for two minutes)
- Have a set time during the day when you walk so that it becomes a habit.

IMPROVING BALANCE THROUGH EXERCISE AND DANCE

No matter our brain health, stability is a growing concern as we age. At Stepping Up, one of the Smith Alzheimer's Center's programs, the focus is on developing lower-body strength through chair yoga, leg exercises and more through fitness and fun.

Benefits of exercise are many. With diligent adherence to the program, you can improve:

- Balance
- Muscle strength
- General fitness and well-being

At the weekly program, exercise and dance movements are set to familiar music and are designed to help reduce fall risk in adults, improve flexibility and strength, and are customized to each participant's specific needs and abilities.

Persons with memory loss are referred to Stepping Up through the Smith Alzheimer's Center's Memory Clinic.

To learn more about the program or how to enroll, email care@siumed.edu or call 217.545.7204.