

# Let's make a ~~move~~ towards a better later life

At Age UK, we hear about the things older people wish they'd done when they were younger that would have helped them as they aged – and we want to share that knowledge and experience.

That's why we've launched Act Now, Age Better – and we're kicking off our campaign by talking about staying active.

We've partnered with GP and health coach Dr Hussain Al-Zubaidi to share some simple, effective ways to add more activity to our lives.

Dr Hussain says: “10 years ago, I was 26kg heavier, sedentary, highly stressed, and diagnosed with fatty liver disease and high blood pressure. The turning point came when I realised how much my lifestyle was shaping my future—what kind of life would I have at 70 if I continued on that path? I started prioritising physical activity to enhance life, not just as a task to check off.

Here, I've summarised the evidence behind longevity and shared practical strategies to help you train for your 70-year-old self. Let's shift the mindset from exercise as obligation to movement as empowerment.

Let's change how we age.”

Written by Dr Hussain Al-Zubaidi for Age UK



## Act Now, Age Better.

Your guide to keeping active for healthier ageing

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## We are living longer, and with the right choices, we can also live better.

While genetics influence how we age, our daily habits play a far greater role. Small, consistent changes can have a significant impact over time, leading to more energy, greater independence, and fewer health concerns in the future.

- **Physical activity is an investment in your future.** Staying active now increases your chances of living the life you want later. Think of it as paying into your own physical pension plan.
- **It's never too late to start.** Simple, small steps in your 50s can lead to major benefits down the road—no need for marathons or gym memberships.
- **Building your fitness, strength, and balance now, acts as a buffer against ageing.** It helps you stay independent and mobile for longer and can help reduce the likelihood of developing long-term conditions.
- **Strength and balance are key to ageing well.** Prioritising these now helps maintain independence and can prevent falls later.
- **The more you move, the better!** Every bit of activity counts, from bite-sized movement to longer sessions, and benefits continue to grow.

### Movement works wonders!



Sharper mind



Healthier metabolism



Better mood and mental health



Better balance and fewer falls



Stronger heart



Stronger bones through menopause

### What's in it for you?

Ageing doesn't have to mean living with frailty—**movement is your secret weapon to staying strong.**

- **Stay independent.** Everyday tasks like shopping, dressing, and cooking may seem easy now - maintaining strength ensures they stay that way. Physical activity builds a buffer to allow you to maintain function as you age.
- **Do what you love.** Good mobility and fitness keep you enjoying hobbies, traveling, and socialising with family and friends.
- **Support yourself and others.** Encouraging movement builds strength and independence. The sooner you start moving more, the better your chances of ageing well.
- **Prevent health problems.** Staying active can help delay or reduce the likelihood of developing a long-term condition.

Regular movement can cut dementia risk by 30%

Regular exercise can help lower cardiovascular disease risk by 35%

Being active more than once a week can lower depression risk by 40%

Staying active can help reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes by 40%

Visit our website to find out more at [ageuk.org.uk/actnowagebetter](https://ageuk.org.uk/actnowagebetter) or scan the QR code.



Let's make a plan

Getting active doesn't mean drastic changes—you can start small and build up as you gain confidence! To impact the ageing process, it is about consistency rather than all-out sessions.

Re-engineer movement back into your life. Replace sedentary time with small chunks of movement.

- 1. Take the stairs
- 2. Active travel - walk, jog or cycle
- 3. Park the car in the furthest space
- 4. Carry your luggage/shopping rather than push it in a trolley
- 5. Standing desk
- 6. Whisk by hand
- 7. Avoid a robot vacuum cleaner/mower
- 8. Dance during the ad breaks

How a week of movement could look

Here's an example of how someone new to exercise could spread physical activity across a week. This mix helps meet the 150-minute aerobic target, includes two strength sessions, and fits into daily life realistically!

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
15-minute brisk walk to work, the shops, or as a break.	Cycle or walk instead of a short car journey (20 minutes total).	30-minute swim at a comfortable pace.	Two 10-minute walks during the day.	20-minute dance session (in a class or at home).	Walk, jog, or volunteer at Parkrun (5K).	30-minute nature walk with a friend or family.
Strength session at home (10 minutes) – sit-to-stands, wall push-ups, carrying shopping bags.	Stand up and stretch every 30 minutes at work/home.	Strength-based movements (10 minutes) – squats, lifting household objects, or resistance bands.	Household activity (e.g. vacuuming, gardening, or DIY can count as movement).	Stretching or gentle yoga to help mobility.	Play outside with kids or grandkids (park games, ball games).	Gentle stretching or balance exercises (5-10 minutes).

All-in-one moves for full-body and functional fitness

Here are some key exercises that help with independence, fall prevention, and overall resilience as we age:



Sit-to-Stand (Squats)

Why? Builds leg strength for getting up from chairs, stairs, and maintaining mobility.

How? Stand up from a chair without using hands, lower slowly, and repeat 10-15 times.

Step-Ups

Why? Improves balance, coordination, and lower-body strength for stairs and curbs.

How? Step up onto a stair or sturdy platform, then step down. Repeat 10 times per leg.

Heel Raises (Calf Raises)

Why? Improves balance and strengthens the lower legs to prevent falls.

How? Stand tall, rise onto tiptoes, lower slowly. Repeat 10-15 times. Hold onto a chair if needed.

Single-Leg Balance

Why? Enhances balance and stability to prevent falls.

How? Stand on one leg for 30 seconds, switch sides. Progress by closing eyes or standing on a cushion.

Glute Bridge

Why? Strengthens the glutes and core, preventing lower back pain.

How? Lie on your back, feet flat, lift hips up, squeeze glutes, and lower slowly. Repeat 10-15 times.

Dead Bug (Core Stability)

Why? Engages deep core muscles for posture and injury prevention.

How? Lie on your back, arms and legs up, lower opposite arm and leg slowly. 10 times per side.

Bonus: If you struggle with getting off the floor, practising getting up from the floor in different ways is a key skill for longevity.

Top tips for success



Stay consistent! It takes about six months to see real benefits.



Be active outdoors with a group—you'll get the benefits of nature, community, and movement all at once!



Break up long sitting periods—stand, stretch, or use a standing desk to stay mobile.



It's not all or nothing; do what you can, when you can. It all adds up.



Find a community—activities like Parkrun, dancing, martial arts and walking can be a great way to stay connected to your community and others. Research shows that the quality of our connections influences how well we age.