

## **Exercise PROVEN to Slow Aging**

*By Tara Hrushka, Fitness Director, Trico Centre*

Everyone wants to live long and live well. We can't stop the aging process, but we can slow it down with exercise. Research has shown that:

- Physical activity reduces the risk of heart disease, hypertension, osteoporosis, obesity and type 2 diabetes.
- Falls are a leading cause of injuries in older adults. This can be reduced dramatically in exercises that promote balance, flexibility and mobility.
- Mature adults, who maintain cardiovascular endurance, strength and flexibility, live independent lives and are less likely to need long term care.
- At any age, exercise is often associated with more effective stress management; fewer sleep disorders, an increase in energy and enlightened mental outlook.

The best way to begin is to get a pre-exercise assessment from a qualified health practitioner, such as your family physician or a certified fitness professional, especially if you are new to exercise. They will help you to determine short and long term goals and design an exercise program appropriate for you.

Your exercise program should include: cardiovascular, strength (resistance) and flexibility training. Always start with a warm up with some low intensity aerobic activity and range of motion movements of major muscle groups.

For cardiovascular training try walking outside, on an indoor track or treadmill. Cycling is also a good alternative. A stationary recumbent bike is less stressful on the back and legs. Try a group exercise class (it is fun and motivating to exercise with other people). It is not uncommon to see classes offered for all fitness levels and for specific markets (for example +55 fitness classes). Swimming and water exercise are also excellent because they don't place a lot of stress on joints.

Resistance training stimulates bone growth, improves posture, decreases percent body fat and improves balance and mobility. It has gained considerable popularity, especially with older adults. A fitness professional will coach you on safe exercise techniques (preventing injuries) and will maximize the effectiveness of each exercise.

Prevent back pains and injuries with flexibility training (or rehabilitate if an injury already exists). Perform each stretch slowly and hold it in a comfortable position for 15 – 30 seconds. Stretches should always be felt in the muscle, not the joint. Programs like Yoga and Pilates, are good for flexibility (as well as mind, body and soul).

You'll feel rejuvenated, younger and more positive after exercising. Your longevity and quality of life really depends on your lifestyle choices. **Slow the aging process by making exercise part of your weekly routine.**

*The Family Leisure Centre is a great place to sweat, laugh, visit, relax and learn. You are invited to visit and have a look around (11150 Bonaventure Drive SE) or visit our website [www.goflc.org](http://www.goflc.org)*