

Staying healthy as you age



4 steps to better health

As we age, there are 4 steps we can take to improve and maintain our well-being:

1. Get the right amount of exercise
2. Learn how to improve balance and prevent falls
3. Strengthen our bladders to manage incontinence
4. Appreciate life in a way that helps us maintain a healthy attitude

Together, these 4 simple things make it easier to age with grace and enjoy our years with greater happiness.

Step 1: Get more get-up-and-go



Exercise is the best gift we can give our bodies. It helps to keep bones and muscles strong and joints flexible. Exercise also reduces the risk of disease, lowers the chance of falling, reduces incontinence, and increases energy levels.

Before and after

Get started with deep breaths, shoulder rolls, and gentle stretches. After your workout, cool down with a slow walk and more stretches. Always drink lots of water. Remember to keep your doctor informed of changes in your activities.

Enjoy the outdoors

Exercise can be any type of movement—even walking or waltzing. Go for a swim. Work in the garden. Join friends for yoga or tai chi. The more you move now, the longer you'll be moving later.

Step it up

Check out everybodywalk.org, an online resource for starting a walking program. Or, visit kp.org/classes to sign up for a health education class.

Consider wellness coaching

A wellness coach can take an active role in your health and help create a plan for reaching your goals. To schedule a convenient telephone appointment, call 1-866-862-4295.



**30 minutes a day
keeps more than the
doctor away.**

Take advantage of your fitness benefits

As a Kaiser Permanente Medicare Health Plan member, your plan benefits may include a fitness program. If so, you could join a local participating fitness facility without having to pay the initiation fee or monthly dues. Or, if you prefer working out at home, you may be able to set up a home fitness program at no additional cost.

Make every calorie count

Healthy foods provide fuel for your body as well as your mind. As you get older, you may find that you need less food, so choose well by adding lots of leafy greens and fresh fruits to your diet. Many illnesses—such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and osteoporosis—can be prevented or controlled with dietary changes and exercise. Water and fiber are also helpful in preventing dehydration and constipation.



CA members:

Learn more at
kp.org/advantageplus

CO and GA members:

Learn more at
silversneakers.com

HI, MD, OR, VA, WA, and Washington, D.C. members:

Learn more at
silverandfit.com

Step 2: Learn how to improve balance and prevent falls



Add strength to your core

Sit in a sturdy chair with the chair against a wall. Stand up without using your hands. If this is too hard, start by using a pillow on the chair until you get stronger. Repeat 10-15 times if possible.

Sign up for a Strength or Balance Fitness Class

Our Strength and Balance Fitness Classes will help you feel strong and stable. Visit kp.org/classes to sign up for a fitness class or learn more.

Get rid of clutter

The first step is to remove cords, crowded furniture, slippery rugs, and anything you can trip over. Good lighting is a must. Consider putting night lights in your bedroom, hallways, and bathroom.

Wear it wisely

Replace slippers with non-skid, comfortable, closed-toe shoes. Avoid long clothing or jackets and blankets that could get caught under your feet.

Adjust your glasses

Talk to your doctor if your glasses (e.g., bifocals) make it difficult to notice changes in elevation such as stairs, curbs, and driveways.

Watch our video
for tips on how to
prevent falls.



Visit kp.org/fallprevention
to learn more.

Check your medicines

Some medicines can cause side effects, including falls. If you are having the symptoms mentioned at the right, review your medicines with your doctor and be sure to include all over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, minerals, and herbal supplements.

Plan ahead

If possible, sign up for a medical alert system or keep a portable phone close by. It's also a good idea to give a spare key to a family member or friend and to program important phone numbers into your phone.

If you fall and cannot get up

If you need help, make noise, shout, bang on something, call 911, or press your medical alert button. Move your legs, arms, and lift your hips slightly to prevent pressure sores from starting. If you wear an Apple Watch Series 4 or Series 5, it can detect a hard fall. You can choose to have it contact emergency services or to dismiss the alert if you are OK.

- Do you ever feel faint or lose your balance?
- Do your legs ever feel unsteady or like they will give way?
- Would you feel safer using a walker or a cane?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, please talk to your doctor.



Step 3: Gain control over your bladder



Bladder capacity gets smaller with age and we may need to urinate more frequently. The good news is that in most cases, a leaky bladder can be controlled—or even cured—with bladder training, exercises, medicine, or surgery. Ask your doctor for more information.

There are 3 types of bladder problems, also called incontinence:

Leaking when sneezing or laughing

Stress incontinence is more common in women.

Unable to get to the bathroom in time

Urge incontinence can be the result of a bladder infection, enlarged prostate, tumors, Parkinson's disease, and nerve-related disorders.

Dribbling

Overflow incontinence occurs when the bladder cannot completely empty itself.

Improve bladder health

Take your time

Don't rush, strain, or push when urinating. Make sure you fully empty your bladder.

Urinate on a schedule

Resist the urge to go too often. Instead, wait to go to the bathroom when your bladder is full, perhaps every 3 or 4 hours.

Don't hold it for too long

Although you don't want to go too often, it's also unhealthy to wait longer than 4 or 5 hours when you're awake.

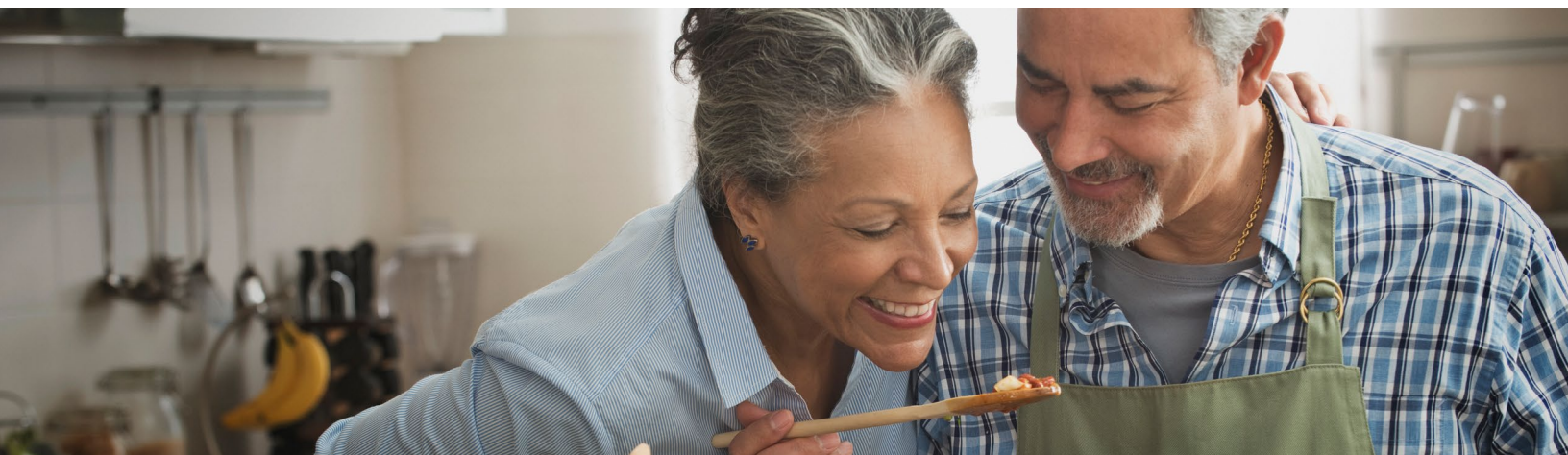
Develop healthier habits

If you're overweight, smoke, or drink a lot of caffeinated drinks such as coffee or tea, talk to your doctor about how to cut down or quit.

Strengthen bladder muscles with Kegel exercises

Squeeze the same muscles you would use to stop your urine. Your belly and buttocks should not move. Hold for 3 seconds, then relax for 3 seconds. Repeat 15 times, 3 times a day.

Step 4: Have an attitude of gratitude



Something powerful happens when we practice gratitude. Research shows that having an attitude of gratitude can help lower stress and improve health and wellness. Grateful people often take better care of themselves and participate in more healthy activities, such as exercising regularly, eating better, and getting regular physical exams. Healthy behaviors can help us complete our regular daily activities with more ease and energy.

Just breathe

Take a deep breath and say, "I'm grateful for _____." This simple act may start the ball rolling toward gratitude.

Keep a gratitude journal

A journal or diary can be a great way to remember life's little wonders—from a beautiful sunrise to a phone call from a friend or grandchild. Any notebook will do. Simply choose a time each day to write down the things that brought you joy.

Connect with people

Surround yourself with positive people who share your interests. Take a class. Join a senior center. Meet friends for morning walks. Enjoying the company of others can keep your spirits high and your mind engaged.

Find your purpose

Express your gratitude in ways that make a difference. For example, if you love animals, volunteer at a local animal shelter. By improving the lives of others, you can often bring greater happiness to your own.

Enjoy something beautiful

Appreciate simple beauty, whether it's sunlight on a flower, a happy conversation, or a child laughing outside.



**Gratitude can
help us better
manage stress
and remain calm
and peaceful.**

Recognize signs of depression

The first step in staying mentally fit is knowing when to get help. Grief, stress, abuse, physical challenges, pain, and loneliness can cause depression and other emotional health problems. If you are concerned, talk to our behavioral health experts or your doctor. They can help you adjust to changing life circumstances and improve your outlook.

Care for your emotional health

Your well-being includes a healthy mind and spirit. Follow the tips below to maintain your emotional balance.

- If you feel anxious or depressed, if you're thinking about suicide, or if someone is hurting you (or threatening to hurt you) emotionally or physically, talk to your physician or practitioner—or another person you can trust—for help.
- Individual, family, and group counseling is available through our Mental Health, Behavioral Health, or Psychiatry departments. Contact us to find out about mental health services in your area.
- Take steps to manage your stress. For guided exercises and activities, go to kp.org/stress-management.
- Remember that loneliness and isolation increase your risk of illness. Spend time with your friends and family and participate in activities that interest you.

Sleep well, live well

While most people need between 7 and 8 hours of sleep, your needs may be different. Do you feel refreshed when you wake up? If you feel tired or groggy, you may need a few more hours. And, if you have trouble sleeping altogether, you aren't alone. Up to 1 in 3 Americans have difficulty falling and staying asleep. But rest easy: There are a number of simple things you can do to help. Improving your sleep habits, building daily self-care practices, and learning to manage stress better can all improve the quality and quantity of your sleep.

Learn more at kp.org