

WELLNESS CONNECTION

LIVE WELL. WORK WELL.

SEPTEMBER 2020

INSPIRE TO MOVE - Healthy Aging



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When I think of getting older, I picture myself retired, having worked a fantastic, rewarding career at the University of Illinois, living a healthy life filled with travel to exotic places, playing with my grandchildren and meeting up with my friends for McDonald's coffee at 5 am. Whatever your retirement dream is, how can we make sure we are able to live it out? When I think of healthy aging, I know there is no better time than the present to start living a healthy lifestyle that will enable me to enjoy my golden years. Here are a few helpful tips for healthy aging that we can start at any age.

- **Move It or Lose It** - I am sure you heard this term before. What this means is keep active! Increasing your daily movement can help improve balance and stamina, which may help to prevent injuries. Moving more improves our brain health and may help prevent chronic diseases. Keeping active is great for your cardiovascular health. [Join an activity group for your age category](#) to keep moving. Join a group fitness class through your [campus rec department](#) and be sure to register for [Walktober](#), our 2020 UI Stride family fitness program for employees and household members ages 13 and above. The challenge starts September 14 and [registration is now open](#). Young adults may choose rigorous activities like rock climbing and aerobics. For those adults age 65 or over or those of you who may be recovering from surgery or illness may choose a low-impact activity group such as [Silver Sneakers](#) and [Silver & Fit](#).
- **Make Healthy Food Choices** - This means eat your vegetables like your mother always told you to. She was right! Vegetables are low in calories and fat. They are rich in fiber and antioxidants and contain important sources of many nutrients, including potassium. Foods

rich in potassium (spinach, carrots, broccoli, green beans) help maintain a healthy blood pressure. Whole grains (oatmeal, whole wheat pasta, quinoa, brown rice) and low-fat dairy products (low-fat or skim milk, low-fat cottage cheese, low-fat Greek yogurt) are also very beneficial. They contain vitamins, minerals, healthy fats, fiber, and antioxidants which can neutralize potentially harmful molecules called [free radicals](#).

- **Drink your Water** - I cannot stress this enough, there is nothing healthier for our bodies than [water](#). Ask your doctor what the right amount of water is for you because there are certain health conditions that limit the amount of water you should consume. I am instructed to drink half of my body weight in ounces of water. Water intake may vary for each of us, so make sure you are drinking enough water for your needs. Water carries nutrients and oxygen to your cells, flushes away harmful bacteria, aids digestion and weight loss, normalizes blood pressure, maintains electrolyte balance, and much more.
- **Be Tobacco Free** - Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free help or connect with the [Employee Assistance Program](#) for your campus. Smoking leads to disease and disability and harms nearly every organ of your body. [Smoking causes](#) cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung disease, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), increases your risk of tuberculosis, certain eye diseases and problems of the immune system, including rheumatoid arthritis. Secondhand smoke is just as bad because it is still smoke from chemicals. [E-Cigarettes](#) contain nicotine which is highly addictive and can harm brain development.

Interested in learning more? Join the [University of Illinois Extension Discover Healthy Aging webinar](#) on health, happiness, and confidence beginning September 3.

