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Fitness Benefits

If you need motivation to join a fitness club or use your gym membership, check out these 5 often overlooked benefits. If you need even more of a financial incentive, consider that you might be able to join a gym without owing a monthly membership fee. Depending on the type of coverage you have, your plan may include a free gym membership.

Consider these added perks of joining a gym:

1. You've got a (workout) friend

The social aspect of joining a gym can (and should) be a great motivator. According to recent research, social isolation carries health risks for older adults, such as cardiovascular disease and inflammation. But even if you don't consider yourself socially isolated, you may benefit from a broader social circle. It can be hard to maintain friendships as we get older, and our networks narrow from life changes like retirement and empty nesting. Finding like-minded gym-goers can create social connections you might not have found elsewhere.

2. Brain muscles get love, too

Aerobic exercise has the potential to improve the performance of an aging brain. Researchers have linked moderate exercise to boosting memory and thinking.

3. Run (or walk) away from future health complications

Maintaining a consistent exercise routine can help prevent many common issues. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regular physical activity

can reduce your risk of chronic conditions including heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain kinds of cancer. Bonus: It can also slow the loss of bone density that comes with aging.

4. Help prevent future injuries

Stretching helps keep muscles flexible and improves strength. A gym can be a good place to get into a regular routine for being more limber, reducing muscle strain and even helping to prevent falls.

5. Hit the gym, help pad your pocketbook

Regular exercise might also come with some financial benefits by helping to avoid the significant costs often associated with intensive health issues, especially when those issues require hospitalizations or specialty prescription medications.

Content is for general informational purposes only and not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for professional health care. See your physician for medical advice personalized to your situation.

Source: UHCRenewActive.com; UnitedHealthcare Newsroom: 5 overlooked benefits of using your gym membership | UnitedHealthcare (uhc.com), Dec. 7, 2022.
Courtesy of UnitedHealthcare®



Spring into Physical Activity

As the days get longer, it's a good time to think about ramping up your exercise routine—safely, that is. If you've been inactive for a while, or if you have a chronic health condition, get your doctor's input before getting active.

Consider the following types of exercises:

- Walking, biking, and swimming can help you stay mobile, and lower your risk of falling, according to the Mayo Clinic. Not only do aerobic exercises potentially prevent dementia—they could help improve symptoms in people who have it. And those aren't the only positive effects: Exercises such as walking help lower the risk of osteoporosis.
- Lancet Public Health found in 2022 that taking more steps each day helps lower the risk of premature death. For people 60 and older, the risk tapered off at about 6,000 to 8,000 steps per day. (People younger than 60 needed 8,000 to 10,000 daily steps.)
- Don't forget to stretch! And be sure to warm up before stretching—even a quick, five-minute walk around your neighborhood will do—to reduce the risk of injury.
- Strength training, whether using free weights or resistance from your own body (like push-ups), can help you increase bone density and maintain lean muscle mass. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says adults 65 and older should do strength training and balance exercises (like standing on one foot) at least twice a week.
- Consider a gentle balance exercise like tai chi to work on muscle control, stability, and flexibility. In 2017, the Journal of the American Geriatric Society found that tai chi could reduce the rate of falls over 12 months by 43%.
- Meanwhile, a 2018 study that appeared in The Journal of Exercise Rehabilitation found tai chi could also help reduce the fear of falling—which is in itself a risk for falling.

Food as fuel

To maintain bone density and support your activity goals, foods rich in calcium such as milk, yogurt, and cheese—as well as vitamin D, which helps your body take in calcium—should be on the menu.

For healthy bones, the Mayo Clinic recommends that seniors should work the following into their daily diet:

- Four or more servings of vegetables
- Three servings of fruit each day for magnesium, potassium, and vitamins C, K, and A
- Four servings of grains (preferably whole grains)
- Healthy sources of proteins and fats. Check out the recipe for oven-baked salmon, below.

Of course, what you don't eat or drink is just as important as what you do. Limit sugar, salt, alcohol, and caffeine, and your body will thank you.

References:

Aerobic exercise: Top 10 reasons to get physical - Mayo Clinic

How much physical activity do older adults need? | Physical Activity | CDC

Tai Chi for Risk of Falls. A Meta-analysis - Lomas-Vega - 2017 - Journal of the American Geriatrics Society - Wiley Online Library

Mayo Clinic Q and A: Osteoporosis and a bone-healthy diet - Mayo Clinic News Network

Courtesy of PacificSource

What to do if You Have Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is a common problem that often can happen slowly over time. If you are concerned about your hearing, here are some things to look out for.

Understanding the signs of hearing loss

The signs can sometimes be hard to recognize at first. Here are some common symptoms of hearing loss:

- Hearing speech but having trouble understanding it
- Asking people to repeat themselves regularly
- Finding telephone conversations increasingly difficult
- Playing the radio or TV too loudly for other family members
- Not hearing normal household sounds you once noticed (e.g. a dripping faucet or the doorbell)
- Having trouble hearing when you're not facing the speaker
- Being told you speak too loudly
- Experience ringing in your ears (tinnitus)
- Struggling to understand conversation in large groups or crowds

If you are experiencing any of these, it may be time to see what treatments are available to you.

Have an evaluation

To get a proper diagnosis, you might need to see a doctor that specializes in hearing disorders, like an audiologist or an otolaryngologist (also known as an ENT doctor). They may perform various tests to determine what type of hearing loss you may have, and how best to treat it. One potential treatment could be a hearing aid, and your doctor can help guide you toward which type might be best for you. Also, many Medicare Advantage health plans offer coverage for the cost of hearing aids and other treatments, so it's best to check with your benefits as well.

Improved quality of life

Treating hearing loss does so much more than improve your hearing. It can make it easier to connect with people, and positively impact relationships, mental health, and overall quality of life.

Source:
providence.org/services/audiology#tabcontent-1-pane-4
Courtesy of Providence Health Assurance

It Takes Two! Update Your Address with PHIP and PERS

When it comes to updating your address with PHIP, it is crucial to notify both PHIP and PERS to ensure accurate records. Because the separate systems may not automatically synchronize, notifying both agencies ensures that your information is completely up to date. By taking this proactive step, you can ensure that important documents and communications reach you promptly.

Oatmeal Raisin Walnut Cookies

Ingredients

- ½ cup raisins
- 1 cup trans-fat-free tub margarine
- ¼ cup stevia sugar blend
- 1 large egg
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ cup uncooked rolled oats
- ½ cup chopped walnuts

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Put the raisins in a small microwavable bowl. Cover them with water. Microwave on 100 percent (high) for 2 to 3 minutes. Let the raisins soak for 10 to 15 minutes. Drain well in a colander. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer on medium high, beat the margarine and stevia sugar blend until just blended. Beat in the egg and applesauce.
4. In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, cinnamon, vanilla, salt, and baking powder. Gradually beat the flour mixture into the stevia sugar blend mixture just until moistened but no flour is visible.
5. Gently fold in the oats, walnuts, and raisins.
6. Using 2 tablespoons, drop the dough about 2 inches apart on a large baking sheet or two small baking sheets to make 24 cookies. With the palm of your hand or a fork, lightly flatten each cookie.
7. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the bottoms are golden brown.

Tips

Be sure to take the extra step to soak the raisins before folding them into the batter. Because raisins are dry, they tend to absorb the liquid from baked goods, making desserts less moist.

Nutritional information (per serving)

Serving size: 1 cookie

Number of servings: 24

Calories	124
Total fat	7g
Saturated fat	1.5g
Cholesterol	8mg
Sodium	163mg
Total carbohydrate	15g
Dietary fiber	1g
Sugars	5g
Protein	2g

Source: Oatmeal Raisin Walnut Cookies | American Heart Association Recipes
 Courtesy of Providence Health Assurance

Oven-baked Salmon

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 12 to 16 ounces fresh or thawed salmon, cut into 3 or 4 pieces of similar size
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Preheat the oven to 450°F.
3. Place the salmon, skin side down, on a foil-lined baking pan. Drizzle the flesh with oil and sprinkle on the salt and pepper.
4. Bake the salmon for 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the thickness and size of the fish pieces.
5. The salmon has cooked long enough when it is opaque on the outside and flakes when tested with a fork. If you have a food thermometer, check in the middle of a piece for a temperature of 145°F.
6. Remove the pan from the oven and serve the salmon skin side down.
7. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Notes

No time to thaw? You can bake salmon from frozen:

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F.
2. Place the frozen salmon pieces in a foil-lined baking dish. Tightly cover the dish (without the cover touching the salmon) and bake for 15 minutes.
3. Remove the cover, drizzle the salmon with oil, season with salt and pepper, and cook uncovered for 10 to 12 minutes until it is opaque on the outside and flakes when tested with a fork.
4. Cook a smaller fish portion for one or two or save extras for another meal.

Nutritional information (per serving)

Serving size: 1 portion

Number of servings: 4

Calories	160
Total fat	7g
Saturated fat	1g
Cholesterol	50mg
Sodium	230mg
Total carbohydrate	0g
Dietary fiber	0g
Sugars	0g
Protein	23g

Source: Oven Baked Salmon | Food Hero
 Courtesy of Providence Health Assurance



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