



Enjoy life ...

Stay active!

TIPS AND TRICKS
FOR SENIORS

Québec 

Produced by

Kino-Québec

With the collaboration of the Secrétariat aux aînés,
Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés

ISBN 9782550563525 (printed version)

ISBN 9782550563518 (PDF)

Legal deposit:

Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2009

National Library and Archives Canada, 2009

© Government of Quebec

Contents

- 4** Stay active; it's a winning combination
- 6** Aim right!
- 8** Everybody wins!
- 12** Winning activities
- 14** Getting started!
- 26** Walking, an activity you can count on
- 30** Keeping exercise in your life
- 30** Now you're ready, so get to it!
- 30** Organizations and tools to help you stay in motion



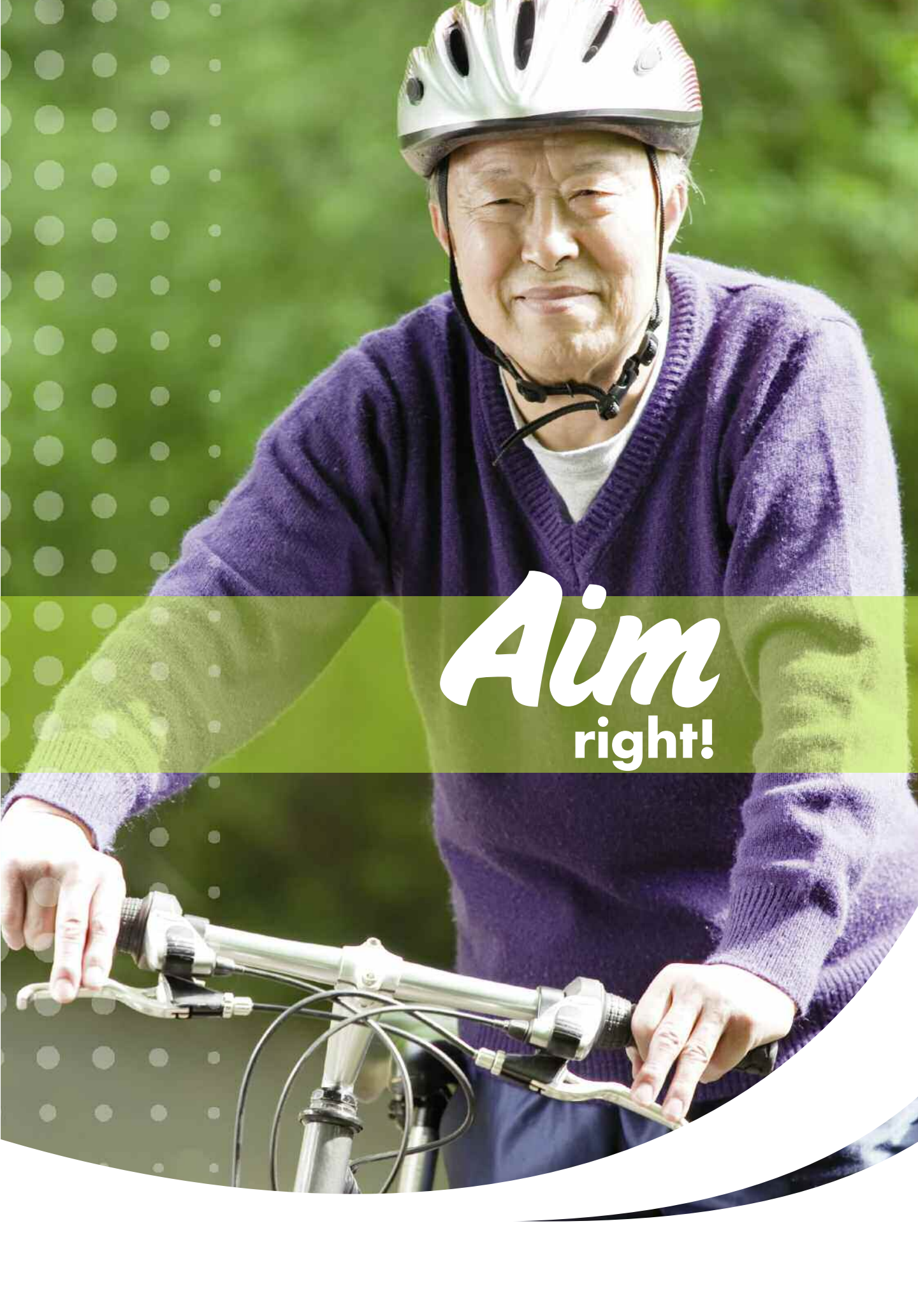
Stay active;
it's a winning combination

Staying active helps you to remain alert and enjoy life. It's never too late to start physical exercise. When you get into better physical shape, good things will happen, and you will notice an improvement in your quality of life. All activities are good: walking, swimming, dancing, physical training, snowshoeing, etc. Raking leaves, gardening, washing your car, traveling on foot or by bicycle are also part of the winning combination. If you are blessed with grandchildren, play with them outdoors, stay active and you'll share wonderful moments with them while keeping fit. These are great opportunities to be active and to socialize at the same time. What's most important is that you enjoy yourself and move forward gradually. Well, now it's your turn, get started!

**THE MORE YOU MOVE,
THE GREATER YOUR WELL-BEING**

Physical activity helps us to feel good. It provides more energy and muscle strength to meet our daily needs. It improves sleep, mitigates the effects of ageing and reduces the risk of disease.

**BE A PART
OF THINGS!**
More and more seniors aged 65 and older indulge in regular physical activities and derive all sorts of benefits from them, especially with respect to their well-being and their health.



Aim
right!

Whatever your age, gender or physical condition, you can benefit from physical exercise.

The more you are in motion, the greater the benefits. Here are some targets you can aim at gradually reaching:

- Five times a week, do at least 30 minutes (in periods of 10 minutes or more) of an activity that leaves you slightly short of breath, such as taking a long walk, bicycling, using an exercise bike or snow-shoeing
- Twice a week, do at least 30 minutes of muscle strengthening exercises (for example, using free weights, physical fitness devices or your own body weight), as well as exercises to maintain your flexibility and balance

Leaving inactivity behind you and leading a physically active life style requires some effort. Begin with activities that you can easily incorporate into your daily routine, for instance an exercise program that you can do at a specific time of day, more frequent use of stairs, or just walking. Rediscover the physical activities of your youth by adapting them to your current condition.

If a little bit is a lot, then more is even better! Think about the activities you already do and see where you have opportunities to add exercise to your schedule. Walk whenever you can. Gradually increase the length and frequency of your periods of physical activity from once to two or three times a week... What about having more opportunities to exercise and meet new friends at the same time? Join a walking, bowling, or bicycling club. Or, why not take physical training, aquagym or line dancing classes?

“The biggest health risk for the elderly is remaining sedentary.”

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION,
Geneva, 1997

A photograph of a man in a swimming pool, smiling broadly. He is wearing a white swimming cap and purple goggles. In the background, another swimmer wearing a green cap and goggles is visible. The scene is set in a pool with a perforated metal structure in the background.

Everybody .
wins!

Physical exercise slows the ageing process, improves endurance, muscle force, cardio-respiratory capacity and suppleness. Just moving your body will benefit you, even if you have a physical disability or health problem.

Your heart and arteries

Aerobic exercise (walking, swimming, dancing, using an exercise bike, etc.) stimulates your cardiovascular system. Practiced regularly and at your own pace, it will improve your blood circulation and heart performance as well as reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, including high blood pressure.

Your metabolism

Exercise forestalls diabetes. If you are diabetic, a regular, preferably daily, exercise program can improve your body's ability to assimilate insulin and, as a result, reduce your insulin needs. As the effects of exercise on blood sugar levels vary individually, it is important that you speak with your doctor before increasing physical activity.

Your bones

Besides improving posture and mobility, muscle exercises help prevent osteoporosis. They will be all the more beneficial if practiced often, because what matters is not so much the length of individual training sessions as their frequency. Exercises to develop and maintain balance, flexibility and suppleness reduce the risk of falling and bone fractures. Individuals who suffer from osteoporosis can benefit from an exercise program, provided that it is adapted to their physical condition and needs.

Your joints

If you suffer from arthrosis or arthritis, gentle daily exercise is all the more important for you in order to maintain flexibility in your joints and allow them to move more freely and without pain. Here are some examples of activities that might suit you: home exercise, aquagym, and T'ai chi.

Your balance

Bodybuilding and balance exercises, T'ai chi or even walking up and down a flight of stairs are all activities that will increase your strength and sense of balance over time. If you are concerned about your balance or are afraid of falling, or if you have already fallen, the P.I.E.D. program (see page 33) might be for you. This program, supervised by health professionals, is especially designed to prevent falls and fractures.

Your brain

Physical activity is a guarantee of psychological well-being and mental health. Each aerobic exercise session can reduce stress and anxiety, improve your mood and leave you with a pleasant, relaxed feeling. Seniors who practice physical exercise regularly are also less likely to suffer from depression and panic attacks. Physical activities stave off the loss of nerve cells and the deterioration of brain function. In fact, research shows that seniors with good aerobic ability tend to lose fewer grey and white cells.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE IS YOUR TRUMP CARD

Physical exercise has
another beneficial effect:
it slows down the loss of your autonomy.

Physical exercise poses no danger for most people. Start slowly, and ease yourself into it! Giving yourself more occasions to be active will help you to better deal with any limitations you may have. If in doubt, talk to your doctor.

BENEFICIAL RESULTS

*Improved health and physical shape will
make you feel better all-round.*

*Besides, being active as part of a group
provides you with an opportunity
to meet people and to socialize.*



Winning
activities

Contrary to what some believe, bodybuilding is feasible for individuals aged 65 and older. It is an effective, safe way of increasing muscle mass, endurance and strength. Bodybuilding will allow you to increase your mobility and, in general, you will be able to carry objects more easily. You could lift weights or cans of food, follow a bodybuilding program, take the stairs or even pile firewood: these are all valid ways of exercising and strengthening your muscles. Flexibility exercises will improve your agility. They help to maintain healthy joints and keep you alert. When you incorporate exercises that augment your muscle flexibility, strength and endurance into your daily routine, you also help maintain your autonomy. This means you will have less difficulty with everyday tasks such as carrying grocery or garbage bags, opening jars, moving from one place to another, putting on your shoes, reaching objects on high shelves, making your bed and getting in and out of the bathtub.

“The loss of muscle mass, endurance and strength is not simply a normal consequence of ageing. It results to a great extent from the chronic physical inactivity that habitually accompanies ageing.”

“Physical exercise is a determinant factor in the quality of life of individuals aged 65 and older (Science Committee of Kino-Québec, 2002).”

MORE FREEDOM... OF MOVEMENT

Flexibility exercises help to maintain amplitude of movement and motor skills. Stretching exercises help to relieve joint ailments and the pain that comes with age.



Getting
started!

A home program

The following home exercise program will provide you with a gentle initiation to physical fitness.

Before you start, carefully read the following:

- Choose a chair back, table or wall that you will use for exercises in an upright position
- Wear comfortable clothing and flat shoes
- Breathe normally during each of the exercises
- If you feel uncomfortable, slow down the pace of the exercises and, if pain persists, stop
- Exercise every day, if you can. Nevertheless, you don't need to do all the exercises at once. Gradually, is the way to go
- Make your sessions more agreeable by playing music you enjoy hearing
- If you wish, increase the degree of difficulty of exercises 3 - 7 by using light weights (a bottle of water, a can of food or free weights)

N.B.: One way of starting an introductory physical exercise program is to register with Viactive (see page 32). For a thorough program of physical training, check with your municipal or community sports centres or a kinesiologist (See www.kinesiologue.com for a list of physical therapists in your area.).

If you do not participate regularly in demanding physical activities, you should consult your doctor before beginning a physical exercise program.

Exercise routines

➤ Repeat exercises 3 – 9, from 5 to 15 times.

This table can be a useful tool for measuring your progress.

Write down your exercise session results in the appropriate squares.

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
EXERCISE ROUTINE	Number of times	Number of times	Number of times
Exercise 3			
Exercise 4			
Exercise 5			
Exercise 6			
Exercise 7			
Exercise 8			
Exercise 9			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Evaluation	<i>Pleasure level</i> 	<i>Pleasure level</i> 	<i>Pleasure level</i>
Walks (duration)			

➤ When you are able to repeat the movements 15 times, you can add light weights (free weights, a bottle filled with water or sand) to increase the difficulty of program, or else perform the suggested additional exercises.

DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
Number of times	Number of times	Number of times	Number of times
<i>Pleasure level</i>	<i>Pleasure level</i>	<i>Pleasure level</i>	<i>Pleasure level</i>
😊 😐 😞	😊 😐 😞	😊 😐 😞	😊 😐 😞



Exercise 1

Standing, turn your head slowly to the right, then to the left, for 30 seconds.



Exercise 2

Tread in place for between 2 and 5 minutes.



Exercise 3

In a sitting position, make wide circles with your arms, one at a time:

- A: Vertically, as if you were washing windows;
- B: Horizontally, as if you were dusting a table.



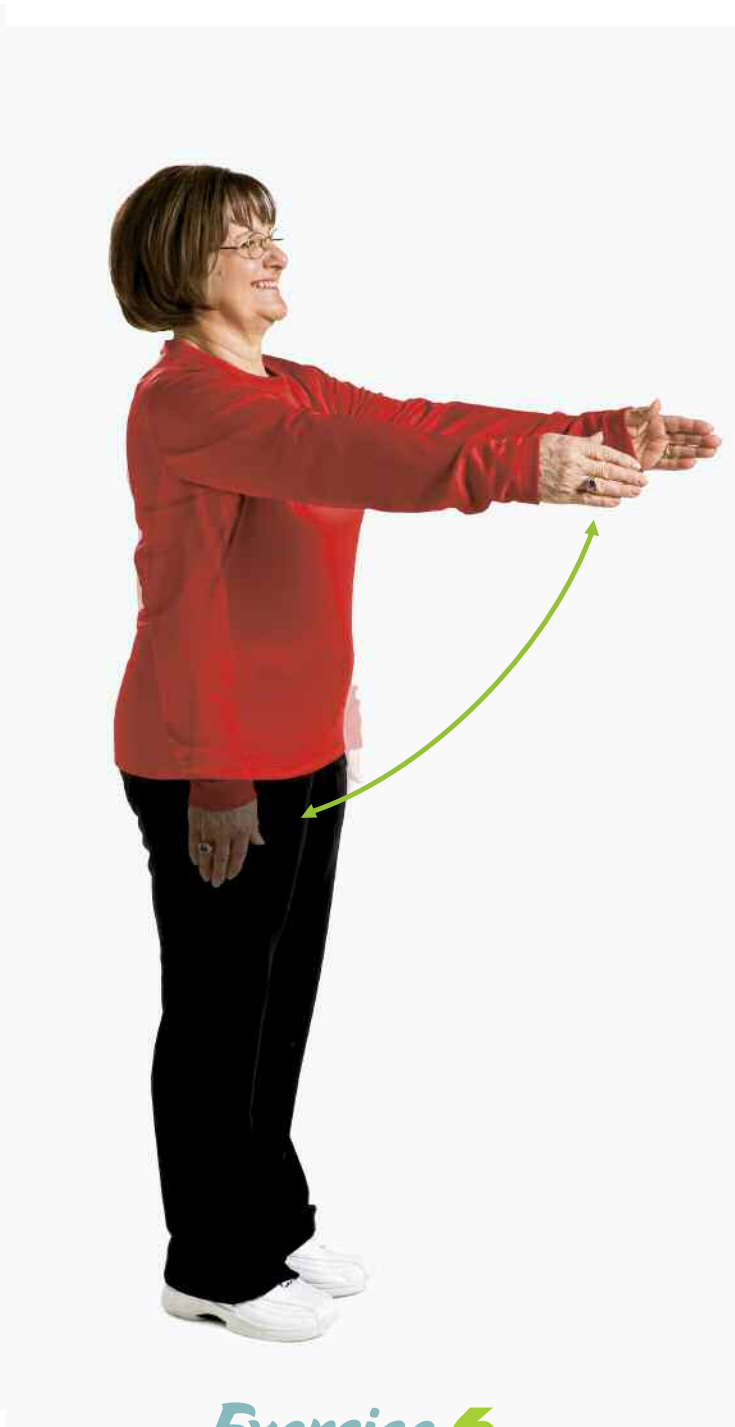
Exercise 4

Standing, hands on the wall or the back of a chair, raise the heels of both feet at the same time and lower them slowly to the floor.



Exercise 5

Standing, arms hanging loose against your body, bend your forearm. Keep your elbows close to your body. Return to the initial position.



Exercise 6

Standing, arms extended, raise both arms in front of you, to shoulder height. Return to the starting position.



Exercise 7

Sitting on a chair backed against the wall, sit down and then slowly get up.

N. B. To make this exercise easier at first, put a cushion or telephone directory on the chair seat.



Exercise 8

Standing, using a chair for support, raise and bend your right knee 90 degrees and maintain this position for a few seconds. Alternate using the left knee.



Exercise 9

Standing, supporting yourself on a chair back, your feet together:

- A: Raise your right leg sideways;
- B: Do the same exercise with your left leg.

Exercise 10

Standing, hands against a wall, put one foot behind the other one while maintaining your heel on the floor so as to stretch your calf.

Toes must remain pointed towards the wall. Maintain this position for from 10 to 30 seconds then alternate.

Additional exercises

that may be added to the preceding program

If your physical condition and your state of health allow it, and if you are capable of carrying out all of the previous exercises consecutively and continuously, you can add the following exercises to your routine. For the first three exercises, repeat from 5 to 15 times.



Standing, raise your right knee to your left elbow. Repeat, using your left knee and right elbow.



Standing, hands against the wall, feet spread shoulder width and shoulder distance from the wall, bend and extend your elbows.



Standing, one hand supported on a chair, take a big step forward and bend down, keeping your back straight, then rise. Rest for a moment and repeat, stepping forward with the other leg.



Standing, with your body leaning against the wall, bend your arms 90° keeping them flush on the wall; then raise them slowly by sliding them upwards along the wall. As much as you can, try to keep your back, shoulders, arms, elbows and wrists touching the wall. Lower your arms slowly and repeat the exercise four times.



Standing, one hand on the wall, bring the heel of your right foot towards your right buttock by holding your ankle or bottom of your pant leg. Maintain the position between 10 and 30 seconds. Alternate legs.



Sitting on a chair, extend one leg by drawing your toes towards yourself while keeping the heel of the other foot on the ground. Bend at your midriff, keeping your back straight. Maintain the position between 10 and 30 seconds. Alternate with the other leg.



Walking

An activity you can count on

Walking is one of the best exercises, well adapted to your body, easy to do and available to everyone. What's important is not how far you walk, nor how fast the pace, but that you walk as often as you can. Choose safe and pleasant itineraries. Walk at your own pace. Shortness of breath should never become an impediment to holding a conversation, so if you don't enjoy walking alone, invite a family member or friend along. Or, join a walking club.

Walking safely

Good posture will make your exercise easier and avoid discomfort. Walk with your head held high and straight, look far in front of you, keep your shoulders slack, relaxed and slightly turned to the rear. This posture will favour the efficient use of your abdominal muscles. Let your arms swing naturally, hands open, to maintain balance. Wear sandals, shoes or boots with non-skid soles.

Be seen!

To walk safely at night, wear light-coloured clothing. Walk on the sidewalk or else on the side of the road, facing oncoming traffic. Use a small flashlight or wear a reflective armband.

Walking during winter

Here are some tips for winter walking:

- Dress warmly with several layers of clothing to retain body warmth. But avoid overheating! Choose long undergarments, wool sweaters and windproof jackets. Other essential accessories that will limit heat loss are hats and scarves to cover your face, and mittens or gloves for your hands
- Wear appropriate footwear. In winter, cold or frozen feet are often the result of overly tight shoes or boots. On the other hand, if your footwear is too loose, this can lead to pain, blisters and falls

Here are some suggestions to help you when purchasing winter footwear:

- Buy from a store that specializes in these products;
- Choose well-insulated, waterproof, lightweight boots with thick, non-skid soles and wide, low heels.

During winter, many people use soles with removable cleats (sold at shoe repair shops and sports stores) that facilitate walking on hardened snow or frozen surfaces, and contribute to avoiding falls. Ensure that your cleat soles are well adjusted to your boots. But don't forget to remove them indoors so you don't slip on hard surfaces like ceramic tile floors.

If you need a cane to keep your balance, it is important to adjust it properly to your height. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain how to use it. In winter, add an ice pick to your cane (widely available in pharmacies), and remember to remove it when you go indoors since it, too, can slip on hard surfaces. More and more people use walking sticks; besides helping to maintain balance, they help strengthen the upper body and arms. It is preferable to use a pair rather than a single stick.

Keeping exercise in your life

When people begin a physical exercise program most keep to it faithfully, but as time goes on, some lose their motivation. Here are a few tips to avoid becoming discouraged:

- Make the experience a pleasant one
- Select activities that you like and at which you show skill
- Choose activities that are simple and accessible
- Use appropriate and comfortable equipment
- Incorporate the exercises into your daily routine; for instance do your errands on foot
- Pace yourself and don't push it
- Have realistic expectations in terms of results
- Plan your periods of physical activities in advance
- Join a group or take classes
- Pay particular attention to choosing your physical activities in accordance with the seasons
- Keep good company

Now you're ready, so get to it!

The best way to grow old in good health and remain autonomous as long as possible is to stay active. Physical exercise is irreplaceable. Whatever your choice of exercise, make sure it also gives you pleasure. Remember: *A little bit is a lot!* Begin slowly and increase your level of activity gradually. The pleasure and well-being you feel will move you progressively forward until you can also say, *More, is even better!*

Here are some organizations and tools to help you *stay in motion*

To learn more about activities and available courses, schedules, etc., contact your municipal sports department, a community sports centre or a local senior's club.

VIACTIVE

You can register for a Viactive group or walking club by calling your regional Kino-Québec adviser. Visit the Kino-Québec Web site at www.kino-quebec.qc.ca or call 1 866 747-6626.

Your local CLSC can also provide you with information regarding physical exercise.



MUSCUL'ACTION

Muscul'action is an introductory bodybuilding program for people 55 and older who want to improve their muscle capacity at home. The plastic-coated Muscul'action sheet provides six routines of four bodybuilding exercises using weights, each lasting 10 minutes. These are safe and easy-to-perform exercises. The program also includes an exercise data bank that allows users to create new routines. You can obtain a copy of Muscul'action using the downloadable order form from Kino-Québec's Web site (www.kino-quebec.qc.ca), or by mailing your name and address along with a \$17 cheque payable to Agence de santé et de services sociaux de la Mauricie et du Centre-du-Québec, to the following address:

Program Viactive

570 Rue Heriot, Suite 5000
Drummondville, QC J2B 1C1

P.I.E.D.

This integrated program of dynamic equilibrium (P.I.E.D.) is meant for autonomous seniors who live at home. The program lasts 12 weeks and has three components: group exercises, exercises at home and discussion capsules on how to prevent falls. You can obtain information about this program from your local CLSC.

FADOQ

Hundreds of Golden Age clubs throughout Québec provide a variety of activities for seniors who like to stay active, such as the Viactive program, dancing, walking, biking, bowling, golf, Elder Olympics, etc. The FADOQ network also sells exercise books in the *FADOQ en mouvement* series. For more information, dial (514) 252-3017 or go to the Web site: www.fadoq.ca.

The content
of this
publication
was
prepared by
Kino-Québec

Kino-Québec is
a program under
the auspices
of the Minister
of Education,
Recreation and
Sports, the Minister
of Health and
Social Services and
health and social
services agencies.

