

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER 2023

SEPTEMBER IS HEALTHY AGING MONTH!

This is the perfect time to prioritize everything health and wellness! This month is dedicated to reflecting on your current health. It is a great time to get motivated to start healthy habits and encourage others to embrace a healthy lifestyle as well.

A few things we can do to celebrate Healthy Aging Month:

Exercise is a great way to promote healthy aging, to add to your quality of life and continue to live independently. Exercise also lowers the risk of diabetes and heart disease and helps maintain muscle strength as we age.

Eat well! It is never too late to make healthier food choices. By choosing healthier options you can increase your energy, prevent illness and improve you over all wellbeing.

Schedule a checkup. The risk of illness increases as we age, but early detection is important in staying healthy. Scheduling regular doctors' visits is an important part of this prevention. It also gives you the opportunity to revisit your current health status and ask questions.

Get plenty of sleep. Getting enough sleep can help you feel rested, alert, energized and focused. Getting good quality sleep can also prevent illness, help you maintain a healthy weight, improve memory and reduce the risk of dementia.

Replace bad habits. Replacing being the key word here. It is much harder to kick bad habits cold turkey. But if we can replace them with healthy habits it fills the void of the bad habit!

The VON SMART Program

Helping to keep our community dwelling older adults active, engaged and free from falls!

For more information about SMART exercise classes and fall prevention workshops please contact:

- Khrista Boon, Supervisor
VON Erie St. Clair
(khrista.boon@von.ca)
- Megan North, Kinesiologist,
Chatham Kent, Ontario
(megan.north@von.ca)



Our Participants Feature: Grace United, Sarnia



I enjoy this class very much and look forward to participating each day. It keeps me active and exercising on a regular basis. Our instructor Anne makes the class fun and keeps a pace I enjoy. The group provides social interaction as well as improving physical and mental well-being. We exercise all muscles and joints to improve strength, mobility and balance. Balance is very important as we age in helping to prevent falls. I like the aids used while exercising such as balls, elastic bands and chairs and that we aren't moving all around the room. This class is exactly what I was looking for. - Barb

I feel that I have better flexibility, maintained joint health (hopefully no knee or hip replacements in my future), hopefully maintaining or improving cardiovascular health, maintained balance, hopefully maintaining muscle mass. - Thanks Allyson & Wayne

I would say there are many benefits from participating; socialization and encouragement; feeling better and stronger with less 'age related' stiffness and pain. Barriers to my participating, it is more difficult because of weakness in my hip and upper leg area but that has been accommodated and everyone has been really helpful. My goals are to keep going, gaining strength and flexibility as well as encouraging others to participate too. I would surely recommend the program and have done so on many occasions. Also, I believe that one of the reasons that I was able to recover as rapidly as I did in the early months after breaking my hip was that I had been attending this class prior to my hip injury. I was 'off the walker' and onto canes in less than two weeks after surgery. My physio said the walker was slowing me down. - Anne E.

I feel better physically in terms of strength and mobility. Balance is a huge benefit for me who experiences bouts of debilitating vertigo. Socially it has been a great inclusionary activity with feeling of commitment to the program and the group. It is great to see everyone, and also to have a gathering event together outside of the class itself. Having a regularly scheduled class is a great motivator to participate, to feel part of the group. It's a happy commitment. There are benefits mentally as well, as we can feel as if we have done something positive for ourselves. Anne is always so upbeat, that you can't help but feel better emotionally. The music component is an extra emotional lift, one that helps you move to the beat. - Yvonne Vanderbeld

Feeling more stability for balance. Excellent exercises to help improve balance. More flexible with strengthening exercises. Some light cardio to help with our heart health (at your own tempo). Band workout instead of weights. Excellent for individuals who can choose bands suitable for their needs. Relaxation methods that help with breathing deeply and stretching our body to increase flexibility and in turn relaxation. I feel more energetic after this class. Instruction is excellent and consistent throughout with humor and encouragement. It is also social. I would recommend this type of program to anyone who is not interested in high end aerobics. It is beneficial for seniors and others who'd would like to maintain balance, flexibility, energy, relaxation and improve endurance. It is also social and encouraging environment. - Ian & Val A

I am feeling better and stronger, physically and mentally. I am experiencing less knee and hip problems since starting the exercises that Anne has in her routine. - Claudette

Did You Know?

(What Do We Know About Healthy Aging?)

COGNITIVE TRAINING AFFECTS HEALTH OUTCOMES



Cognition — the ability to clearly think, learn, and remember — often changes as we age. Although some people develop Alzheimer's or other types of dementia, many older adults experience more modest changes in memory and thinking. Research shows that healthy eating, staying active, and learning new skills may help keep older adults cognitively healthy.

If you think your daily choices don't make a difference, data from a study with 3,000 participants show otherwise. Researchers scored participants on five healthy lifestyle factors, all of which have important health benefits:

- At least 150 minutes per week of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity
- Not smoking
- Not drinking heavily
- A high-quality, Mediterranean-style diet
- Engagement in mentally stimulating activities, such as reading, writing letters, and playing games

The findings show that making these small, daily changes can add up to significant health benefits. Those who followed at least four of these healthy lifestyle behaviors had a 60% lower risk of developing Alzheimer's. Even practicing just two or three activities lowered the risk by 37%. While results from observational studies such as this one cannot prove cause and effect, they point to how a combination of modifiable behaviors may mitigate Alzheimer's risk and identify promising avenues to be tested in clinical trials.

How cognitive training affects health outcomes

Many brain training programs are marketed to the public to improve cognition. Although some of these computer or smartphone-based interventions show promise, so far there is no conclusive evidence that these applications are beneficial.

But there is some evidence that exercising your brain by learning a new skill can improve memory function. A study of adults 60 and older showed that sustained engagement in cognitively demanding, novel activity enhanced memory function. In particular, the new skills learned in this study were 1) learning how to use computer software to edit photos and 2) learning how to quilt. Learning a new game, instrument, craft, or other skill can be fun and may have the added benefit of staving off memory loss as you age.

VON SMART Instructor Feature!



ANNE CRAIG

I became a volunteer instructor about 7 years ago. Our building Superintendent had reached out to VON to provide a Senior fitness program weekly in our apartment building. Dawna Robertson came with the SMART Program for a 3-month trial. I enjoyed the program & so I asked Dawna & Beryl if I could be trained as an instructor to continue the classes. I successfully completed the course & began by offering the program twice weekly.

Coincidentally the Alzheimer's Society was rolling out the Minds in Motion program for persons with dementia & their care partners so I was able to act as a Senior Fitness Instructor for them for several sessions. The next year, 2017, I was given the opportunity to complete the Senior's Fitness Instructors Course through Western Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging.

This culminated years of participation in many programs. I have been a volunteer most of my life. Becoming a VON SMART Senior Fitness Instructor has allowed me to pursue both my passions, regardless of my hearing loss.

I have the best participants imaginable. I continue to learn & grow, adapting to ZOOM classes during COVID.

Thank you VON for the opportunity.

WHAT EXERCISE TYPES ARE EFFECTIVE FOR PARKINSON'S DISEASE?
(mcmasteroptimalaging.org)



From celebrity diagnoses to viral internet challenges raising money for scientific research, every so often neurodegenerative disorder makes their way into the news, our social media feeds, and conversations with friends and family. Neurodegenerative disorders are those in which the cells in our brain or spinal cord—also known as the central nervous system—no longer function or die, with symptoms often worsening over time. Examples include Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, Lewy body dementia, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, better known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease.

Parkinson's comes with a host of motor and non-motor symptoms and complications, which impact mobility, function, speech, and the quality of one's life. These include tremors, involuntary and slow movements, muscle rigidity and painful contractions, difficulty balancing, depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, and cognitive issues like the development of dementia. In addition, disability and death are rising more quickly from Parkinson's than any other kind of neurodegenerative disorder.

Unfortunately, no cure currently exists for Parkinson's. However, treatments such as medication and surgery are available to help people obtain some relief from their symptoms. Non-drug and non-surgical treatments, such as physiotherapy and other forms of exercise, are also garnering more research interest. But with so many exercises available, are some better than others? More clarity lies in a recent systematic review that compares how a variety of exercise types impact movement, quality of life, and the development of negative side effects in adults living with Parkinson's.

What the research tells us

The review found that various types of structured and supervised exercise may enhance movement and quality of life in adults living with Parkinson's compared to no physical exercise.

First, high certainty evidence shows that dance moderately improves movement. Low certainty evidence shows that aqua-based training, gait/balance/functional training, and training that combines multiple exercises may moderately improve movement, while endurance training and mind-body exercises may enhance movement by a small amount. Unfortunately, flexibility training may have little to no positive impact on movement, and it is unclear if strength/resistance training and the Lee Silverman Voice training BIG (LSVT BIG)—a form of therapy specific to Parkinson's—have any impact on movement.

Second, moderate certainty evidence shows that aqua-based training likely moderately improves quality of life, whereas low certainty evidence shows that gait/balance/functional training and combined exercises may enhance it by a small amount. Unfortunately, it is unclear if dance, mind-body training, strength/resistance training, flexibility training, LSVT BIG, and gaming have any impact on quality of life.

Third, while the evidence is very uncertain and not all studies reported on side effects, those that did reported falls and pain as the most common. Despite the risk of falls and pain, the review authors note that overall, exercise for people with Parkinson's appears to be "relatively safe."

If you are living with Parkinson's, you have an array of exercises to choose from! Accordingly, you can work with your healthcare team to develop a safe exercise routine that matches your interests and needs, will help you fulfill what you want to achieve through exercise, and is adaptable to any limitations you may have.

VON Updates

There will be no classes SEPTEMBER 4th, 2023



VON SMART Exercise & Fall Prevention

Windsor-Essex | Chatham-Kent | Sarnia-Lambton

Khrista Boon, Program Supervisor: khrista.boon@von.ca

Megan North, Kinesiologist: megan.north@von.ca

<http://www.vonsmart.ca/>