Good physical health and exercise is important to aging and living well. Regular physical activity has a strong correlation in older adults' ability to remain independent and complete activities of daily living for longer periods of time, according to the National Center for Biotechnology Information. However, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that more than 80 percent of adults do not meet their recommendation for physical activity. This can be for a variety of reasons. Maybe they think they're too old to start or it won't make a difference at this point in their life, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Small behavior changes can positively impact health and longevity at any age.

Start by asking your older family members and friends if they already engage in physical activities. If they are, ask what types of activities they participate in and how often. Are they meeting the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommended 150 minutes of physical activity a week for older adults? Highlight the importance of meeting physical activity recommendations and feature the benefits of exercise (for example, increasing quality of life, reducing risk of chronic condition, improving sense of well-being and enhancing social life). Ask if there are any activities they are interested in to keep their routine fun and stimulating. Perhaps they've always wanted to try yoga or tai chi, or maybe they love hiking and they just need a new pair of boots or a walking stick.

Your older family members and friends might have difficulty reaching 150 minutes of exercise in a week. Some of their barriers might include:

- Lack of transportation
- Limited budget
- Unaware of available resources and opportunities
- Anxious about trying new activities
- Self-confidence

If your older loved ones identify barriers to their physical health, talk with them about it. Brainstorm ways to overcome them, and ask if they might like your assistance in making an action plan.
There are many physical activity resources for older adults. Talk with your loved one about these resources and see if they want to use them to enhance their exercise routine.

**Texercise**

Texercise is a statewide health promotions initiative of Texas Health and Human Services that aims to educate and engage people in healthy lifestyle behaviors. Visit the Texercise website to learn more about healthy aging and get resources to start engaging in healthy lifestyle behaviors.

**Area Agencies on Aging**

Area Agencies on Aging helps Texans 60 and older, their family members and other caregivers get information and assistance about community services (including wellness opportunities) that can help them live in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Call 800-252-9240 to be directed to the nearest AAA and find out what services they provide in your area.

**Texas AgriLife Extension**

Texas AgriLife Extension helps improve the lives of people, businesses and communities across Texas through high-quality, community-based wellness education. Visit the AgriLife Extension website to find your county extension office and contact them to find out what wellness offerings they provide.

**Go4Life**

Go4Life is a campaign by the National Institute on Aging that aims to assist older adults with incorporating exercise and physical activity into their daily routine. The campaign provides resources to educate older adults on engaging in physical activity including how to get started, exercises to perform and much more.

Be aware when discussing physical health that it might be a sensitive and frustrating subject. Many adults know how to be and want to be healthy, but they might have focused on other areas of their life (for example, relationships, work and mental health). Being understanding and focusing the discussion on now, not the past, will provide everyone with a place to start from.

**Remember** – Always talk with your doctor before starting any exercise routine. Encourage your older family members and friends to visit their doctor before starting a new routine.