



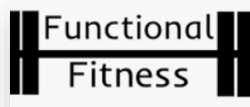
TO YOUR HEALTH

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FUNCTIONING WELL WITH AGE

By Karen Roy, Fitness and Aquatics Director,
and the Fitness Staff

As time goes on, our bodies naturally experience wear and tear. With age, everyday tasks—from gardening and household chores to reaching for or putting away items—can become more challenging. That’s why taking a proactive approach to maintaining strength and mobility in our senior years is so important. While some believe this isn’t possible, we’re here to say the opposite—and Functional Fitness is a perfect example.



Functional fitness refers to exercises that prepare the body for real-life, everyday activities. The movements improve strength, balance, mobility, and coordination to enhance the quality of life. Functional Fitness is designed to make daily activities easier and more comfortable, helping you move with confidence and ease. It supports an active, independent, and healthy lifestyle, allowing you to continue doing the things you love—and even discover new ones along the way. In addition to improving strength, endurance, and mobility, Functional Fitness offers benefits that go beyond the physical. Many people experience better sleep, improved mood, reduced stress, and a lower risk of certain diseases.

Functional Fitness also plays a key role in fall prevention by improving balance, stability, and body awareness. Strengthening the muscles used for squatting, reaching, and balancing can relieve joint and back pain, making movement safer and more comfortable. All of this contributes to greater independence, increased confidence, and the ability to live on your own and in your own home for longer as you age.

There are many ways to implement a functional fitness program. A variety of tools can be used, including dumbbells, TheraBands, resistance tubing, ankle weights, and more. It is strongly recommended to consult with a Fitness Specialist who can assess your daily movement patterns and the specific physical tasks you regularly perform. This allows the Specialist to design a program tailored to your individual needs and goals. Because every person’s abilities, routines, and challenges are different, no single functional fitness program is the same for everyone.

Aging well

Tip 1: Learn to cope with change

As you age, there will be periods of both joy and stress. It’s important to [build your resilience](#) and find healthy ways to cope with challenges. This ability will help you make the most of the good times and keep your perspective when times are tough.

Tip 2: Find meaning and joy

A key ingredient in the recipe for healthy aging is the continuing ability to find meaning and joy in life. As you age, your life will change and you will gradually lose things that previously occupied your time and gave your life purpose. For example, your job may change, you may eventually retire from your career, your children may leave home, or other friends and family may move far away. But this is not a time to stop moving forward. Later life can be a time of exciting new adventures if you let it.





Tip 3: Stay connected

One of the greatest challenges of aging is maintaining your support network. Staying connected isn't always easy as you grow older—even for those who have always had an active social life. Career changes, retirement, illness, and moves out of the local area can take away close friends and family members. And the older you get, the more people you inevitably lose. In later life, getting around may become difficult for either you or members of your social network.

Tip 4: Get active and boost vitality

Don't fall for the myth that growing older automatically means you're not going to feel good anymore. It is true that aging involves physical changes, but it doesn't have to mean discomfort and disability. While not all illness or pain is



avoidable, many of the physical challenges associated with aging can be overcome or drastically mitigated by exercising, eating right, and taking care of yourself.

Tip 5: Keep your mind sharp

There are many good reasons for keeping your brain as active as your body. Exercising, keeping your brain active, and maintaining creativity can help to prevent cognitive decline and memory problems. The more active and social you are and the more you use and sharpen your brain, the more benefits you will get. This is especially true if your career no longer challenges you or if you've retired from work altogether.

Source: Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard Medical School

Here are 5 tips on Aging Well , by [Melinda Smith, M.A.](#), [Jeanne Segal, Ph.D.](#) and [Monika White, Ph.D.](#) from the HealthGuide.org



Please join the clinic in welcoming **May Mullin, LPN**. Prior to joining CWV, she dedicated 23 yrs. at the Bedford Veteran's Hospital, working primarily within ambulatory care's Primary and Specialty outpatient clinics. With nearly 25 years of nursing experience, she remains both motivated and passionate about the opportunity to provide quality nursing care at CWV.

Spotlight on Social Work

By Maeve Lobo, LICSW



Care packages, like many noble ideas, were born of catastrophe. In the aftermath of World War II, the first parcels arrived in Le Havre, France, carrying surplus American "Ten-in-One" military rations. Twenty-two U.S. charities collaborated to assemble them, operating under the title "Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe." The acronym—CARE—proved far more portable than the full name, and it aged well.

Today, the care package has evolved. It arrives at college dormitories, it materializes on the doorstep of a sick friend; it appears, unbidden, as a morale boost in cardboard form. Recently at CWV, we held a food drive for those in need - boxes and cans filled with good intentions.

But what if a care package required no postage? What if it arrived in an envelope, or simply in a voice? A letter. A poem. A paragraph that says: I see you. Words of encouragement can steady someone who is grieving in ways that casseroles cannot. For the digitally fluent, a message accompanied by a carefully chosen piece of music can feel equally sustaining. Caregivers, who so often operate on emotional overtime, need tending as well. A conversation wrapped in kindness can function as quiet repair.

Kay Ryan captures this intimate generosity in her poem "Lighthouse Keeping," when she writes:

"the lighthouse keeper keeps a light for those left out. It is intimate and remote both for the keeper and those afloat."

The lighthouse does not travel. It does not knock on doors. It simply keeps the light on—steadfast, patient, available. Perhaps that is the most durable care package of all.