Senior Benefits

Exercise can be a fountain of youth that keeps older bodies and minds fit.

June 11, 2012 By Lauren Tuck

Elderly adults are hitting gyms and health clubs at a record rate, according to the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association. Specifically, from 1987 to 2003, fitness center memberships grew by 343 percent for people older than 55.

But, if you're a senior, don't lace up your sneakers just yet. John Bosse, RD, suggests older workout warriors consult their physicians or an exercise specialist *before* starting a physical training program in order to avoid potential injuries.

Bosse also encourages older gym enthusiasts to exercise care and choose workouts that don't go beyond their physical limitations. "While activities such as running and hiking are great for the heart and muscles, they can wreak havoc on traumatized joints that can't take the kind of pounding they used to," Bosse says. And, as always, a proper warm-up is advised.

What are a few best-bet exercises for older people with a limited range of motion? Bosse recommends cycling, cross-country skiing, canoeing or kayaking, yoga, Pilates and jogging.

And after all that work, do yourself a favor, he says. Get a nice massage!

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