

Working out how to stay fit in old age

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Health and Exercise Science researchers from the University of Stirling recommend resistance exercise, aerobic training and a higher daily protein intake to help stay active and healthy in old age.

In the study 'Growing older with health and vitality', published in the journal *Biogerontology*, scientists present the latest evidence-based recommendations for physical activity and exercise in [older adults](#), explaining that weight lifting, high intensity work outs and a protein rich diet can work wonders for the over 65s.

Dr Oliver Witard of the School of Sport, said: "As we grow older our muscle mass and strength naturally decline, something that is accelerated

by inactivity and poor nutrition. By making simple lifestyle changes that target muscle mass and strength, older people will be able to enjoy longer and healthier lives.

"Activities like [resistance exercise](#), high-intensity aerobics and even household tasks like carrying bags of groceries, can really benefit healthy older members of the population and help them preserve vital [muscle mass](#) and strength. This type of activity isn't currently recommended in [physical activity](#) guidelines and we believe they could make a big difference to older people's wellbeing."

The study also recommends that a greater emphasis is placed on protein in older people's diet.

Dr Witard continued: "Current guidelines recommend that elderly people consume a minimum of 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body mass each day– the equivalent of about 60 grams of protein for a male weighing 75 kilograms. However we believe this should be increased by between 50 and 90 per cent based on individual lifestyles and diets, to maximise muscle growth.

"Older people also tend to consume most of their protein in just one of their daily meals, however to better feed the muscles, protein intake should be spread evenly throughout the day.

"Current daily intake guidelines are designed to inform a minimum protein requirement and not, as it often assumed, an optimum [protein](#) recommendation. By communicating optimum quantities, in a 'per meal' rather than 'by day' format, [older people](#) will have a better idea of exactly what their body needs and when they need it to stay fit and healthy into their seventies and beyond."

More information: Growing older with health and vitality: a nexus of

physical activity, exercise and nutrition. *Biogerontology*. 2016 Feb 15.
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