



Wellbeing Insights



Your Active Aging Game Plan: 5 Keys to Lasting Mobility & Strength After 50

In recognition of Healthy Aging Month, it's the perfect time to spotlight the importance of staying active as we grow older. While exercise benefits every age, it becomes especially crucial after 50 to maintain strength, independence, and overall wellbeing. The best part? It's never too late to start — or restart — a routine that fits your life.

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Looking for ways to boost your self-care routine? [Click here](#) for your daily inspiration!



Your Active Aging Game Plan: 5 Keys to Lasting Mobility & Strength After 50

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Building a Balanced Fitness Routine

The best routine is one that's well-rounded, enjoyable, sustainable, and suited to your current physical abilities. If joint pain is an issue for you, consider chair yoga or water aerobics. Aim for a mix of these four essential types of exercise:

1. Cardio (Aerobic Exercise)

Keeps your heart healthy and boosts endurance.

Examples: Brisk walking, biking, swimming, dancing

Goal: 150 minutes per week of moderate activity

Try this:

Include short bursts of pace — try walking briskly for 2-3 minutes during your daily stroll to raise your heart rate, then return to a comfortable pace.

2. Strength Training

Maintains muscle mass and bone strength.

Examples: Bodyweight exercises (like squats or push-ups), resistance bands, light weights

Goal: 2-3 days per week

Try this:

Practice getting up and down from your chair without using your hands or try 8-10 slow and controlled sit-to-stands during TV commercial breaks.

3. Flexibility Exercises

Improve range of motion and reduce stiffness.

Examples: Stretching, yoga, pilates

Goal: A few minutes daily or after workouts

Try this:

Add 5 minutes of stretching after a walk or workout. Focus on longer stretch holds, at least 30 seconds, for hip flexors, hamstrings, or other major muscle groups.

4. Balance Training

Helps prevent falls and improves coordination.

Examples: Tai chi, standing on one foot, heel-to-toe walks

Goal: A few times per week, especially if you've had balance issues

Try this:

Stand on one foot while brushing your teeth or washing dishes — 30 seconds on each side.



5. Mobility Training

Promotes joint health, reduces stiffness, and improves functional movement.

Examples: Controlled Articular Rotations (CARs), dynamic stretching, mobility flows

Goal: A few minutes daily

Try this:

Begin your day with a [full body mobility](#) scan, moving your joints slowly through their full range of motion — neck, shoulders, ankles, hips, and wrists.

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Tips for Getting Started Safely

- **Talk to your doctor** before beginning a new exercise plan, especially if you have chronic conditions, joint issues, or take medications that affect balance or heart rate.
- **Start slowly and progress gradually.** Strength, endurance, and confidence don't show up overnight, and pushing too hard too soon can lead to strains, setbacks, or injuries that sideline you for weeks or longer.
- **Consistency beats intensity — especially as we age.** Short, regular bouts of movement (even 10-15 minutes per day) help maintain joint health, support muscle retention, and reinforce neuromuscular patterns that decline with inactivity. Our bodies recover more slowly with age, so spreading activity throughout the week reduces strain, lowers injury risk, and builds lasting results more effectively than a couple of intense days.
- **Always warm up and cool down.** Gentle movement before and after exercise helps protect joints, improve circulation, and prevent soreness. Choose dynamic stretches pre-workout and static stretching post-workout when your muscles are warm.
- **Wear supportive footwear and stay hydrated.** Good shoes help with balance and joint protection, while water keeps muscles and joints functioning well.



ON THE MENU

Sprouts

Sprouts may be small, but they pack a powerful nutritional punch. These germinated seeds from beans, grains, or vegetables are harvested just as they begin to grow; typically, within three to seven days after they begin to sprout. Popular types include alfalfa, broccoli, mung bean, lentil, and radish sprouts. Despite their size, sprouts are loaded with essential nutrients and are a simple, affordable way to boost your diet.

What Makes Sprouts So Special?

During the sprouting process, seeds undergo biochemical changes that make them easier to digest and increase their nutritional value. Sprouts are rich in fiber, vitamins (like vitamin C, K, and some B vitamins), minerals (such as iron and magnesium), and antioxidants. They're also a good source of plant-based protein, making them especially popular among vegetarians and vegans.

Studies suggest that regularly including sprouts in your meals may support immune function, digestion, heart health, and even help regulate blood sugar levels. According to Emily Ho, a nutrition professor at Oregon State University, *"You can eat 50 cups of broccoli or a single cup of broccoli sprouts for similar nutrition and benefit."*

Adding Sprouts to Your Diet

- **Toss them on salads or sandwiches or wraps** for a crisp, peppery bite.
- **Add them to smoothies**, especially milder varieties like alfalfa or mung bean for an extra dose of nutrients.
- **Use them as a topping** on soups, tacos, or stir-fry bowls for flavor and texture.



Sautéed Bean Sprouts

- 16 oz bean sprouts, washed
- 1-2 Tbsp. oil
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes

Heat oil over medium heat in a frying pan, then add bean sprouts, soy sauce, garlic powder, and red pepper flakes. Stir every 2 minutes for 5-6 minutes.

Nutrition Info

Yields 1

Calories	72
Total Fat	4g
Carbohydrates	8g
Sugar	4g
Protein	4g

Light Touch, Big Benefits: Exploring Self-Manual Lymphatic Drainage Massage

Have you ever wondered how your body gets rid of toxins and supports your immune system? One of the key players is your lymphatic system — a network of vessels and nodes that help filter waste, move fluids, and fight infections. Sometimes, this system can become sluggish and may benefit from a little extra support. That's where manual lymphatic drainage (MLD) comes in.

Why Is the Lymphatic System So Important?

The lymphatic system is the immune system's first line of defense against illness. Think of it as a waste removal crew, sweeping through your body, collecting viruses, bacteria, and toxins, and helping to flush them out — and keeping you healthier in the process.

Unlike the cardiovascular system, the lymphatic system doesn't have a central pump. Instead, it relies on pulsing arteries, muscle contractions, and deep breathing to move fluid. This is why massage can be a helpful tool.

What Is Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) Self-Massage?

MLD, also known as manual lymphatic massage, is a gentle technique that uses light, rhythmic movements to stimulate the flow of lymph fluid. Unlike traditional massages that use deeper pressure to target muscles, MLD involves soft, surface-level strokes. Think of it like the foam on top of a cappuccino — you're not dipping into the coffee but gently working within the foam.



The Benefits of Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD)

Many people turn to MLD for a variety of wellness benefits, including:

- **Reduced Swelling:** Especially helpful after surgery or injury, or for people experiencing lymphedema (fluid buildup).
- **Detoxification:** Enhances the body's natural removal of toxins.
- **Improved Skin Health:** Reduces fluid retention, supports detoxification, and improves nutrient delivery to the skin.
- **Stronger Immune Function:** Supports the immune system's ability to fight illness.
- **Better Circulation:** Helps pump fluids throughout the body.
- **Stress Relief:** The gentle technique activates the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation.

Who Can Benefit from MLD — and When to Avoid It

MLD can benefit those recovering from surgery or injury, experiencing swelling or edema, managing chronic conditions like fibromyalgia, or simply looking to enhance their overall wellness. However, always consult your healthcare provider before beginning MLD. It should be avoided in certain situations, including during active infections (like cellulitis) and congestive heart failure, or if you have deep vein thrombosis or a history of blood clots.

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How to Perform Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) Self-Massage

1. Activate Main Lymph Nodes

- **Neck:** Place your fingers just below your ears on both sides of your neck. Gently stroke down toward your collarbones, 5-10 times.
- **Armpits:** Place your hand under your armpit and make gentle circular motions upward toward your shoulder, 5-10 times on each side.
- **Groin:** Place your fingers in the crease between your thighs and abdomen. Gently press and use circular motions upward and inward, 5-10 times on each side.

2. Neck & Face

- Starting at your forehead, gently sweep outward toward your temples and down along the sides of your face, jaw, and neck.
- Place hands on each side of your neck and stroke downward toward your collarbone, 10-15 times.

3. Arms

- Start at your shoulders and gently stroke downward toward your armpits, repeating 10-15 times per arm.
- For forearms, stroke from wrist to elbow, continuing toward the armpit.

4. Legs

- Start at your upper thighs and stroke upward toward your groin, 10-15 times per leg.
- For lower legs, begin at your ankles and stroke upward toward your knees.

5. Abdomen & Pelvic Area

- **Upper Abdomen (Celiac Nodes):** Place your hands just below your ribcage. Use light circles to move fluid upward toward your diaphragm.
- **Middle Abdomen (Mesenteric Nodes):** Make gentle, clockwise circles around your navel, gradually working outward.
- **Lower Abdomen (Inferior Mesenteric Nodes):** On the lower left of your abdomen, use circular motions moving upward toward your navel.
- **Pelvic Area (Iliac Nodes):** Place your hands just above your groin, inside your pelvic bones, and make light circular movements upward toward your navel.

Tips for Maximizing MLD Self-Massage

- **Stay hydrated:** Drink water before and after MLD to support waste removal.
- **Frequency & duration:** Two to three times per week is effective — consistency matters more than intensity.
- **Make it routine:** Choose a time and method that fits your lifestyle, so it doesn't feel like a chore.
- **Incorporate gentle movement:** Activities like walking or yoga further support lymphatic flow.
- **Go bare:** Perform MLD directly on dry skin, without oils or lotions, for best results.

By taking care of your lymphatic system through MLD and other healthy habits, you're supporting long-term wellness while inviting calm and relaxation into your daily routine.

How to Avoid Surprise Medical Bills

It's Like Booking a Flight Without Knowing the Baggage Fees

Imagine this: You book a flight. The price is only \$250 round trip and fits your budget perfectly. But, when you get to the airport, you're told your carry-on costs \$50, your checked bag is another \$75, and you'll have to pay extra if you want to pick a seat. Now, that \$250 deal has turned into a \$400 headache. You had no idea those fees weren't included.

That's what a **surprise medical bill** feels like. You go to a hospital or clinic that's in-network and assume everything is covered. But weeks later, you get a bill from a provider you didn't choose — like an anesthesiologist, radiologist, or lab that wasn't in-network. You had no control over it, but now you're on the hook for the cost.

The Good News: The Law Has Your Back

The No Surprises Act now protects you from most of these billing surprises. If you're treated at an in-network hospital or facility, they can't charge you extra just because one of the providers involved is out-of-network. That means you shouldn't get hit with unexpected fees in most emergency situations or after planned procedures.

Still, there are gray areas — especially for things like lab work, imaging, or outpatient procedures, so it's important to stay informed.

How to Protect Yourself

1. Before you receive care, ask: "Is everyone involved in this in-network?"

That includes the doctor, anesthesiologist, radiologist, lab, and imaging center.

2. Use your insurance plan's website or app to research in-network providers.

Look for a "Find a Doctor" or "Find Care" section. For example: Blue Cross Blue Shield has a "Doctors & Hospitals" search tool. UHC's search tool is under "Find Care & Costs."

3. Call your insurance company.

Use the number on the back of your insurance card. Ask them to confirm that all providers and services involved are in-network. Be specific if you're having surgery or a test.

4. Request a cost estimate in writing.

For non-emergency care, ask your provider to give you a written estimate that lists who is involved in your care.

5. If you get a surprise bill, remember — you have options.

Call your insurance company right away. You might be protected under the No Surprises Act. You can also get help through the [No Surprises Help Desk](#).

Surprise medical bills are like hidden travel fees — you thought everything was covered, but the fine print said otherwise. A little planning, asking the right questions, and double-checking your providers can help you avoid paying more than you should. Don't let unexpected bills derail your financial health. Know your rights and travel smart through the healthcare system.

For more information, check out this resource: [Avoid Surprise Healthcare Expenses: How the No Surprises Act Can Protect You](#).

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