Physical Activity: It's never too late to start

It does not matter if you are just starting for the first time or have gotten out of your exercise routine. The benefits of physical activity are well established. Some of these include more energy, better sleep, controlled body weight, reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, strong bones and muscles, improved mood, and better balance to prevent falls. Sounds good, right? Here are some ways to get started and keep going:

- Always talk to your doctor before starting any type of exercise to see what is appropriate for you.
- Start slow. Choose the type and amount of activity that is comfortable for you. Then increase slowly to 30 minutes per day, five to seven days a week (you can break up the exercise into three 10-minutes periods).
- Increase everyday activity. Take the stairs, park farther away from the store and walk, clean your house, mow or rake the lawn, and walk around the house as you talk on the phone.
- Being active is also a great way to meet friends. Try joining a walking club, exercise class, or contact your local Council on Aging to see what activities are available.
- Activity can bring the family together. Teach children and grandchildren dances that you enjoy, plan a trip to a local pool, and visit a museum or zoo.
- Make sure to include stretching before and after exercise and wear comfortable clothing and shoes.
- Stay hydrated with water before, during, and after exercise.
- Mix it up. Try different exercises including walking, biking, swimming, light weights, exercise classes, bowling, dancing, yoga, gardening, or tennis.

Sources: move.va.gov