

It's never too late to get fit say doctors: Exercise is key to happy and healthy old age



TAKING regular exercise even in later life can make you up to seven times more likely to stay healthy.

Those who are active as pensioners can stave off major illnesses such as heart disease and dementia.

An eight-year British study found that those who exercised at least once a week were between three and seven times more likely to be classed as “healthy agers”.

Researchers say being active is the key to preventing serious disease and disability. Regular exercise also bolsters mental health by protecting against depression. Doireann Maddock, senior cardiac nurse at the British Heart Foundation, said: “This shows us that even if you don’t become active until later in life your health will benefit.

“However, there’s no need to wait until retirement to get started. Adults should try to be active daily and aim for 150 minutes of activities that get you breathing harder and feeling warmer each week.

“Every 10 minutes counts, so even hopping off the bus a couple of stops early or taking a brisk walk on your lunch break will help.”

The researchers, led by Dr Mark Hamer at University College London, wrote: “Sustained physical activity was associated with improved healthy ageing – absence of disease, freedom from disability, high cognitive and physical functioning, good mental health.

“Significant health benefits were even seen among participants who became active relatively late in life.

“The results support public health initiatives designed to engage older adults in physical activity.”

The study, published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, tracked 3,500 people with an average age of 64 for more than eight years. Researchers were looking not only at the absence of major disease or disability, but at mental health.

Read more: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/health/445172/It-s-never-too-late-to-get-fit-say-doctors-Exercise-is-key-to-happy-and-healthy-old-age>