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TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

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JUNE 2021

Improve Your Joint Mobility

Body Systems & Immobility

Your body is made up of a variety of systems all working together to keep your body running nice and strong. These include muscle and bones, breathing/respiratory, digestion, nervous, among others. It's okay if you don't understand how each of these systems work, doctors go to many years of school to understand these systems! However, understand that everything you **do** or **do not**, can impact these systems. Immobility (lack of movement) has shown to stiffen joints by impairing the range of motion, causing loss of bone calcium, and reducing muscle mass. A lack of physical activity can lead to undesired weight gain and impact your mental health (lower mood, frustration, depression). Immobility can create a domino effect in your body's systems that can lead to life threatening complications.

Benefits of Joint Mobility

Some of the most common issues among aging adults are shoulder, knee, and lower back pain. Joint mobility can be improved as you target specific muscle groups to strengthen and improve long term mobility. Many conditions such as lower back pain can be resolved with proper work on flexibility, which can lead to improved quality of life and work productivity. The following are a few of the many benefits linked to joint mobility:

- Increased Strength
- Improved Posture & Balance
- Lower injury risk

- Reduced lower back pain
- Reduced stress levels
- Increased energy and endurance
- Positive state of mind

Physical Activity to Help Improve Mobility

Look for physical activities that allow your body to position itself in a way that all joints are involved in the movement. Always go at a pace you are comfortable with while challenging yourself at the same time. The following exercises help improve your overall joint mobility using minimal to no equipment:

Yoga. Low-impact physical activity, postures, breathing techniques, relaxation, and meditation. Equipment-Yoga Mat (optional, can use a bath towel instead)

Tai Chi. Postures flowing from one to the next without pause, keeping your body in constant motion while connecting the mind and body. Doing this exercise in nature is preferred.

Thich Nhat Hanh. A less familiar exercise involving simple movements that improves mindfulness. Do these slow and breathe throughout the motion while smiling.

Note: Please consult your doctor before trying any of the above exercises.

Aim to also maintain a healthy eating pattern and get your joints moving as often as possible!

Written by Adan Ruiz, Extension Agent - Better Living for Texans

Content Source: [registerednursing.org](https://www.registerednursing.org), [intermountainhealthcare.org](https://www.intermountainhealthcare.org), sites.psu.edu/kinescfw/health-education/exercise-articles/the-importance-of-flexibility-and-mobility/, fcsagents.tamu.edu/resources/stress-less-with-mindfulness



Photo Source: unsplash.com

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Recipe of the Month

Source: MyPlate Kitchen, myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen

Peachy Peanut Butter Pita Pockets

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 2 pita pockets (medium, whole wheat)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup peanut butter (reduced fat, chunky)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ apple (cored and thinly sliced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ banana (thinly sliced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ peach (fresh, thinly sliced)



Photo source: myplate.gov

Directions

1. Cut pitas in half to make 4 pockets and warm in the microwave for about 10 seconds to make them more flexible.
2. Carefully open each pocket and spread a thin layer of peanut butter on the inside walls.
3. Fill with a combination of apple, banana, and peach slices. Serve at room temperature.

Nutrients Per Serving: (1/2 pita pocket) 183 calories, 7 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 7 g protein, 26 g carbohydrates, 4 g dietary fiber, 7 g total sugars, 1 g added sugar, and 197 mg sodium

Total Cost per serving: \$\$\$\$

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