

Exercise Methodology in the Elderly

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Abstract

Aging drives several morphologic and functional changes in the organism, with important consequences on health state and quality of life. In the elderly (65-75 years old), practicing physical exercise assures an increase of the functional capacity, prevents osteoporosis, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity and depression, improves the equilibrium and neuromuscular co-ordination. Physical training in the elderly should start as early as possible, before the physical status deteriorates. This assumes an initial evaluation of the clinical-functional status by exercise tests and the set of adequate combination of exercise for increasing the resistance (endurance) and muscular force and, for the equilibrium and joint mobility restoration. An average of 3 sessions of physical training per week is recommended, at a moderate intensity level (heart rate of 60-70% of the maximal rate or a score of 11-13 on the Borg scale for subjective perception of exercise), with a duration of 20-30 minutes per session or 10 minutes three times a day.

Key words: elderly, exercise, functional capacity.