

exercise



It is extremely beneficial for older adults to exercise. Not only does it help you keep your entire body healthy, it can help your brain. Exercise can also put you in a better mood, ease stress, and help ease depression.

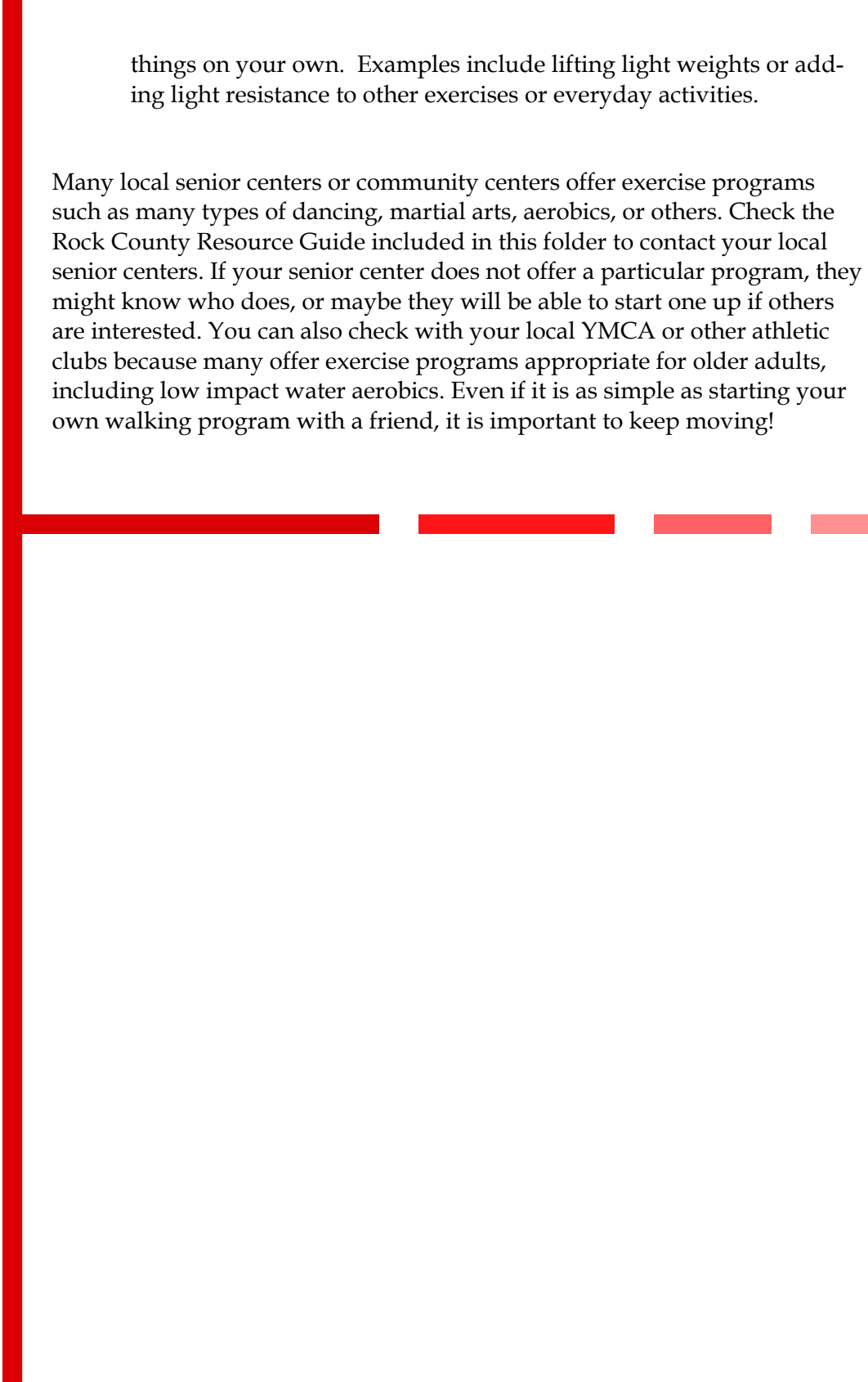
Exercise, along with a healthy diet, helps keep your body at a healthy weight, which is important in preventing diabetes and other health problems. It also helps prevent heart disease and stroke, which both increase the risk of developing dementia. Of course it is important not to smoke or consume too much alcohol because these habits also contribute to many health problems.

Studies have shown that exercise may reduce the amount of brain tissue loss in areas of the brain involved with memory, learning, and performing everyday activities, which are all areas affected by dementia.

Federal guidelines recommend that most people engage in exercise of a moderate intensity for 30 minutes a day, but talk to your doctor about appropriate exercise levels for you and any possible health risks. It is important to choose activities that you enjoy so that they will be easier to incorporate into your daily routine. Start off slowly; don't push yourself too hard. Remember that if it is too difficult to talk, you are exercising too hard.

Four types of exercise to incorporate into your routine:

- **Endurance:** Keeps your cardiovascular system healthy and strong and helps your stamina. Examples include walking, swimming, dancing, and bicycling.
- **Stretching:** Will help keep you flexible and prevent injury when doing endurance and strength exercises. Examples include lightly rotating your shoulders and gently bending to touch your toes.
- **Balance:** Is important for the other types of exercise and for getting around in general. Examples include standing on one foot and rising from a sitting position without using your hands.
- **Strength:** Will help you get around and be able to do more



things on your own. Examples include lifting light weights or adding light resistance to other exercises or everyday activities.

Many local senior centers or community centers offer exercise programs such as many types of dancing, martial arts, aerobics, or others. Check the Rock County Resource Guide included in this folder to contact your local senior centers. If your senior center does not offer a particular program, they might know who does, or maybe they will be able to start one up if others are interested. You can also check with your local YMCA or other athletic clubs because many offer exercise programs appropriate for older adults, including low impact water aerobics. Even if it is as simple as starting your own walking program with a friend, it is important to keep moving!