Blum CL. Developing an exercise program for healthy ageing. Asia-Pac Chiropr J. 2026;7.3 apcj.site/BlumHealthyAgeing.pdf

MANUS Summary

Blum's article presents an individualised approach to exercise prescription for healthy ageing, with emphasis on preserving physical function, cognitive health, independence, and quality of life. Drawing on published literature and clinical considerations, it advocates combining aerobic exercise, resistance training, flexibility exercises, and balance activities. These complementary components support cardiovascular and metabolic health, maintain muscle mass and bone health, preserve joint mobility, and help reduce fall risk. For chiropractors, the article provides a practical framework for exercise counselling that extends beyond symptom management to the maintenance of functional capacity and activities of daily living. Sustained participation, gradual progression, and varied activities are emphasised as central to an effective exercise programme.

A key clinical message is that exercise should address individual needs rather than follow a uniform routine. Differences in strength and flexibility between sides or regions of the body may warrant targeted strengthening or stretching. Programme emphasis should also reflect health conditions and movement characteristics: obesity increases the importance of aerobic activity for metabolic health and weight management, while generalised joint hypermobility calls for greater attention to muscular strength, neuromuscular control, joint stability, and balance, with judicious stretching of genuinely restricted areas. Within chiropractic care, these principles support tailored exercise advice informed by the patient's functional limitations, injury history, and goals. Periodic reassessment and appropriate modification are essential as physical abilities and health status change, positioning exercise as a lifelong strategy for maintaining resilience and independence.

MANUS QUIZ

1. Which combination of activities does the paper recommend for a comprehensive exercise programme supporting healthy ageing?

A. Aerobic exercise and flexibility training should replace resistance and balance training.
B. Aerobic exercise, strength training, flexibility exercises, and balance training should be combined.
C. Strength training alone is sufficient to preserve all aspects of physical and cognitive function.

D. Flexibility exercises should be the primary activity for every older adult.
Correct answer: B. The paper recommends integrating all four components to support cardiovascular health, muscular strength, mobility, balance, and independence.

2. How should an exercise programme address differences in strength or flexibility between the two sides of the body?

A. The stronger side should receive additional exercise to maximise its existing advantage.
B. Both sides should always receive identical exercise, regardless of their individual limitations.
C. The weaker side may require additional strengthening, while the tighter side may need additional stretching.
D. Exercise should be discontinued whenever any asymmetry is identified.

Correct answer: C. The paper advocates tailored exercise to address individual asymmetries rather than applying an identical routine to every region.

3. Which exercise priorities are most appropriate for someone with generalised joint hypermobility?

A. Muscular strength, neuromuscular control, joint stability, and balance should be prioritised.
B. Increasing the range of motion of all joints should be the principal goal.
C. Stretching should replace strengthening because the joints are already highly mobile.
D. Resistance exercise should be avoided in favour of flexibility training alone.

Correct answer: A. The paper recommends emphasising stability and control, with stretching directed judiciously towards areas of genuine movement restriction.

4. According to the paper, what role should aerobic exercise play when obesity is an important consideration?

A. It should be avoided until the individual has achieved substantial weight loss.
B. It should replace all strength, flexibility, and balance exercises.
C. It should be used only when dietary changes have produced no benefit.
D. It should be an essential component of an individualised programme supporting metabolic health and weight management.

Correct answer: D. The paper highlights aerobic activity in programmes addressing obesity while retaining the need for an individualised, balanced approach.

5. Why should an exercise programme be reassessed periodically?

A. Exercise becomes ineffective once a person reaches older adulthood.
B. Health status, physical abilities, and functional goals can change over time.
C. Every exercise programme should be completely replaced each week.
D. Reassessment removes the need for sustained participation and gradual progression.

Correct answer: B. The paper recommends adapting exercise programmes as the body, health status, and goals change throughout life.