



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY and AGING

"Is there a fountain of youth in being physically active?"

Research supports the theory that many of the physiological changes associated with aging are a result of inactivity and/or a sedentary lifestyle. In fact, disuse accounts for 50% of the decline in functional capacity that was once thought to be simply a result of the normal aging process!

Physiological Changes

Decline in functional capacity of .75% per year after age 30.

Decline in work capacity of 30% between the ages of 30 and 70.

Decreased muscle mass and strength of 25-30% between ages 30 and 50.

Reduced levels of circulation.

Increased blood pressure.

Increase in pulse rate.

Deterioration of lung capacity.

Loss of bone mass.

Reduced joint range-of-motion.

Slower reaction time.

The Activity Elixir*

Improved functional capacity!

Improvement in capacity to work!

Increased muscular strength!

Improved circulation!

Decreased blood pressure!

Decrease in pulse rate!

Increase in lung capacity and respiratory function!

Increased bone mass!

Improved flexibility and better Range of motion!

Enhanced reaction time!

Sources: Archives of International Medicine, 2008.
National Exercise trainer's Association (NETA), 2004.
Center for Disease Control (CDC), 2004.
American Council on Exercise (ACE), 2004.
International Council on Active Aging (ICAA), 2005.

Developed by: Nikki Carrion MA

Issues with balance/coordination.

Impaired blood flow to the brain.

Increased incidence of arthritis.

Lowered basal metabolic rate.

Weight gain.

Decreased ability to fight off illness.

Slower recovery from illnesses.

Increased incidence of depression.

Increased risk of falling.

Postural changes.

Impaired ability to maintain balance.

DNA telomeres decrease in length with age.

Improved balance and coordination!

Increased blood flow to the brain!

Improved function of arthritic joints!

Improved basal metabolic rate!

Weight maintenance or loss!

Increased ability to fight illness!

Faster recovery from illnesses!

Less depression; increase self esteem!

Decreased risk of falling!

Postural improvements!

Improved ability to balance!

Telomeres decrease at a slower rate.

*Note: Leukocyte telomeres found in white blood cells decrease/shorten as we age and are said to be a possible marker for biological age. Active individuals have been shown to exhibit the telomere average telomere length of someone 10 years younger than them.

ELIXIR definition: a substance held capable of prolonging life indefinitely (Webster dictionary).

***The activity elixir:** Increasing one's activity level by walking, biking, swimming, using stairs, getting involved in a regular physical activity-type class and/or a regular personal exercise routine are all great ideas! The main thing is for an individual to find his or her "niche", as they say. Walking, if you are able, is said to be one of the best exercises of all. There are many other activities that improve cardiovascular functioning, strength and flexibility such as tennis, dancing and golf (if you walk) just to name a few. Exercise classes led by a trained and certified instructor and/or working with a personal trainer is highly likely to reap many of the benefits listed above.

EXTEND YOUR HEALTHY YEARS...EXTEND YOUR LIFE! *Be active!!*

Sources: Archives of International Medicine, 2008.

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