

Exercise is the Fountain of youth Holly Kouvo, Eons contributor



The truth is out. Studies continue to show that exercise boosts immune system function, improves mood, enhances mobility, sharpens mental skills and can extend your life. For older people, the benefits of moderate exercise can be dramatic.

Doctors have found that regular exercise can be a powerful tool to help manage a chronic illness like heart disease, arthritis or diabetes - conditions which occur at higher rates in older populations.

Statistics

*A recent study by the Institute of Neuroscience at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland showed people over age 60 who participate in some kind of regular physical activity have better mental skills than those who don't exercise.

*A study that followed a group of men and women over 40 years revealed that people over age 50 who exercise regularly at a moderate or high level of physical activity live longer and have less heart disease than those who exercise less or not at all.

*A study conducted by researchers at the Stanford Center for Research and the Emory University Sleep Disorders Program in Atlanta found that moderate exercise helped older people sleep better than more sedentary seniors.

*Numerous studies have shown that regular exercise quickly and effectively reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression, which commonly affect seniors - especially those who are battling chronic illness.

Do you need more proof? Rosalie Berkovich offers a powerful testimonial.

Rosalie Berkovich was born in 1927 in Russia. After retiring in 1990, she moved to the United States to be closer to her son. Rosalie is one of my long-time class participants, and we spent some time talking after a strength training class at the Harvard Ridge Fitness Center in Boxborough, MA.

At 78 years old, Rosalie knows the benefits she gets from exercising. She attends water aerobic classes three mornings a week and strength training classes two mornings a week. When asked what she does on the weekends, she responds, "I rest!"

Why do you feel the need to exercise so much?

When I don't move I feel bad. You sit down at the table and eat. You get in the car, then you return and you are back at the table for dinner. Then you go to bed. That is why I appreciate when I can come here to class to exercise. There is too much sitting. Exercise is useful for everyone.

Do you feel that you benefit from doing different kinds of exercise?

Yes, at times you may have some pain in an area. One type of exercise may not use that area as much as other exercises. When I had pain in my shoulder, you gave me exercises and showed me how to stretch, and that helped to heal it. After that I could do all the exercises again.

Do you get any mental benefit from exercise?

I feel younger. I feel like I can do anything I want to do!



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How many years have you been exercising?

I have been exercising for four years in these classes. Prior to that, I worked in the garden a lot. When I lived in Moscow, we did not have a car. I walked to the bus or the subway. We did not actively go to exercise. It was a part of our daily activities.

Do you do any walking or exercise outside of the exercise classes?

No, I do not exercise on my own. I like the social aspect of classes and I am motivated when there are other people working out with me.

How has exercise kept you healthy?

I feel very good when I exercise. I come here every morning to exercise and it gives me energy all day. I can move around easily after I exercise. I don't need to visit the doctor very often.

What motivates you to exercise?

In general, I like moving. I can not sit still and do nothing and I like the social aspects of the classes.

According to Dr. Thomas Perls, author of "Living to 100," genetics play a huge part in how long you will live. How old were your parents when they died?

My parents were both 85 when they died. They did not do extra exercise. They had to move a lot in their normal, daily life.

Rosalie has a great attitude on life. She lives for today and says if she doesn't keep moving she won't be able to move at all. Rosalie inspired and motivated me to produce my first exercise DVD. She was always asking me to make a video so that when I went on vacation she would still be able to work out with an exercise DVD on her home television. Exercise has power. Unleash its power in your life and feel the difference.

**Holly Kouvo
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Holly Kouvo is an Aerobics and Fitness Association of America-certified personal trainer and aerobic instructor as well as a certified nutrition specialist. As president of Fitting Fitness In, Holly focuses on helping people who need to lose 100 pounds or more. She recently produced a video entitled "Total Body Workout...Just Easy on the Knees," the first in her Easy On™ series, which brings easy-on-the-knees exercises into people's homes. Contact her at 978-502-8781 or holly@fittingfitnessin.com. Visit Holly's website at www.fittingfitnessin.com.

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