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Exercise: A Fountain of Youth

Regular physical activity can help slow — and even reverse — the effects of aging.



— Getty Images

Raise your hand if you'd like to age successfully — that is, without acquiring a chronic disease, losing precious memory, gaining a few

surplus pounds or suffering diminished mobility.

With aging, the best defense is a good offense. And if the latest research is to be believed, the most effective offense against the downside of aging is exercise.

Understanding the impact of exercise on aging cells is the first step. A study published in the January 2008 issue of [Archives of Internal Medicine](#) confirmed the beneficial impact of exercise at the cellular level.

The London-based study was based on the observation that telomeres (regions of repetitive DNA at the end of a chromosome) in white blood cells erode and shorten during the aging process. Thus their length and quality are biological indicators of human aging, sort of an internal lifeline. Researchers compared the length and quality of the telomeres in 1,200 sets of twins; within each set, one twin exercised regularly and the other was sedentary.

Researchers found that the longer, healthier telomeres of the active twin indicated a younger biological age — sometimes by as much as nine years — when compared to the biological age indicated by the shorter, degraded telomeres of the sedentary twin.

Our brains may benefit from exercise as well. Dr. Waneen Spirduso, author of [Exercise and Its Mediating Effects on Cognition](#), argues that exercise improves mental functions such as recall, learning and abstract reasoning. Exercise may even help prevent or delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

No one is more enthusiastic about the neurological benefits of exercise than Harvard University professor and psychiatrist John Ratey, author of [Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain](#). In a [Los Angeles Times](#) article, Ratey claims that aerobic exercise can delay cognitive decline by as much as seven to 10 years. Furthermore, because “exercise creates neuron growth,” Ratey calls exercise “[Miracle-Gro for the brain](#).” He believes that exercise is the single best tool we have for keeping our brain functioning at its highest level.

So the elusive fountain of youth may turn out to be a foundation for youth — one built simply on regular, consistent exercise. Indeed, the evidence is so compelling that I'm turning off the computer and heading outside for a walk.

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Article By: Carole Carson

Source: [AARP](#)

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January 16, 2012 8:26 AM EST

[Juan3](#) – I've been exercising for a few years now and loss a significant amount of weight. I decided in order to keep it off I had to re-educate myself on the ehtics of proper nutrition and diet. I enrolled in an online program and studied the biomechanics of the human body along with nutrition and fitness. I recieved my certification in Fitness Training and now I help friends who are in need of a little push to get on the wagon to good health. Yes, exercise helps to relieve joint pain, reduce weight and help in controlling my diabetes, too. It is beneficial to exercise and to maintain a good stable and strong body along with feeling great about yourself. It also helps cutting down on doctor visits, too.

[Report](#)

October 16, 2010 3:09 AM EDT

[fogey10](#) – It is a problem with a full waiting room, to talk to your Dr. with a vision and a plan of wellness. Even with written questions, your "illness" is treated and you are gone. Perhaps, AARP could influence medical societies to encourage Mds. to be aware of those patients with long range views. Also, for mds. to provide or point to follow up fitness and diet, etc. w. Fogelberg

[Report](#)

September 13, 2010 7:16 PM EDT

[jimbohretired](#) – I have been exercising for years. I do notice three results related to exercise or not exercising.

1. if I am traveling and am unable to exercise I begin to feel lethargic and tired in no more than a week.

2. Exercise also helps keep my weight under control
3. I feel much better physically and mentally when I exercise regularly.

Report

July 15, 2010 11:35 AM EDT

[PegDiva](#) – I have been exercising for years. I'm an avid believer that exercise helps with improving your quality of life. I'm able to recover quickly from some health issues due to exercise.

Report

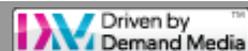
July 8, 2010 11:51 AM EDT

[KB1152929](#) – Staying physical is the key to aging slowly and gaining healthy rewards. It is the best solution to staying actively physical and mentally fit. Also eating a healthy diet in small portions and physically working those calories off is another plus. Hydration when exercising will keep your body in sync. I think the key to losing weight is staying focus and mindful of what you eat and how much you eat. This is my theory and how I'm going to lose 5 pounds @ a time and even reverse the effects of aging. I have a bad back that requires me to do limited exercises, but I do a lot of walking, gardening, and cycling. I'm on my way.....When walking I often think about the show

"Dance Your A## Off (one of my favorite) and know I can do it. Good music when walking will get you pump up-try it.....

Report

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