

Reverse Aging

What would you say if I told you that men and women in their 60s and 70s can become as fit and energetic as people 20 and 30 years younger? You can look and feel years younger if you are willing to make simple changes in your behavior.

As we get older, our cardiovascular and respiratory fitness is reduced. There is a loss of muscle and bone, a stiffening of the joints, and the skin thins and wrinkles. But the good news is that these changes *accompany* aging, and are not necessarily the inevitable result of aging. There is considerable evidence that shows these aging effects can be slowed down, and in some cases, reversed.

This chapter will cover many areas—from the regenerative power of nutrition and proper exercise to the human potential concepts that will help you achieve what you really want out of life. It is not meant to conflict with your own doctor’s advice, which you should obtain before making any changes in your lifestyle.

1. Exercise!

Exercise is the easiest and surest way of affecting how you look and feel. It only takes a few minutes a day and the benefits far outweigh the burden. Studies show that you don’t need a particularly strenuous exercise program to achieve the equivalent of ten years’ rejuvenation. You just need to be reasonably active.

Adequate oxygen is critical to your cardiovascular and respiratory performance, and declines about one percent a year from age 30 on. Yet research has documented that this can be reversed with an intelligent exercise program. Taking consideration of your age and physical ability, begin an appropriate exercise regimen immediately.

Walking is excellent for any age. Walking can decrease body fat and increase overall fitness. Go for a stroll, meander down to the end of your street, saunter over to your favorite book store. Walking rejuvenates you. Brisk walking can lower your blood pressure, relieve arthritis, and help you to lose weight.

Swimming, cycling, rowing, yoga, and lifting light weights (3 to 15 lbs.) can have a tremendous impact on how you look and feel. The most important thing is to stay active. The more inactive you are the more difficult it becomes to do routine things like unloading the trunk of your car, gardening, or picking up your child or grandchild. Take the stairs instead of the escalator. Park farther away from your destination instead of right in front. Go to the gym instead of a movie. There are many opportunities to make the active choice every day.

2. Develop your ability to consume more oxygen.

As we age, our heart’s ability to carry oxygen and nutrients through the bloodstream steadily declines—approximately 50 percent between the ages of 20 and 90. However, like our other muscles, the heart will stay strong and efficient if it’s exercised.

A five year study of more than two hundred people from ages 57 to 87 was quite dramatic. They walked, jogged, did calisthenics and stretched three to five times a week. Some had been active all their lives, but others had not worked out for years. As early as six weeks into the program, men and women in their 60s and 70s became as fit and energetic as people 20 and 30 years younger.

So consider fast walking, running, calisthenics, aerobic classes, bicycle riding, swimming – anything that will increase your aerobic capacity.

3. Learn the key factors to reduce blood pressure.

Although in our society we've accepted that blood pressure creeps up as we get older, in primitive societies blood pressure rises little, if at all. In these societies, hypertension is practically unknown. Obviously, in our culture we need to relax more and reduce stress, tension and hassles in our lives.

A longevity center in Santa Monica, California tested the effects of exercise and diet on a group of volunteers averaging 78 years of age. The diet was high in complex carbohydrates and fiber, and low in fat, salt and cholesterol. Twenty-six days into the test, serum cholesterol dropped from an average of 222 to 179, triglycerides fell an average of 15 points and 9 out of the 18 participants with high blood pressure stopped using their antihypertensive (high blood pressure) medicines.

Proper exercise is obviously a key factor in lowering blood pressure. An easy way to reduce your blood pressure is meditation. You should also bring your weight down to where it belongs, reduce your salt intake and get plenty of calcium.

4. Stretch and stay limber.

I first studied yoga in the early '70s with a teacher in Los Angeles. She also spent two days a week conducting classes in a nearby retirement community. My teacher loved to relate stories of her students who would come to their first class, unable to even bend over to pick up a newspaper. A few months later, they were capable of performing complicated, pretzel-like yoga postures, and walking like they were in their thirties and forties, not their seventies. No matter what your age, yoga and stretching exercises will assist you to act and feel younger. Daily sessions are usually great therapy for backaches and stiff joints. More energy and regular elimination are other benefits awaiting you in a proper stretching program.

5. Protect against bone loss.

At about age 35 your bones begin to decline in thickness and strength. The best way to minimize this loss is through dietary change and exercise. Eat a nutritionally regenerating diet and increase your calcium intake. Your body will respond to exercise by strengthening your bones. Inactivity weakens bones. Research has also proven that exercise is doubly effective when combined with higher calcium intake. This can be in the form of dairy products or supplements. One study concluded that women over 35 need to take 800 to 1,000 milligrams of calcium a day to maintain healthy bones.

6. Maintain muscle tone.

Although muscle tone declines more slowly than other aspects of fitness, it will always respond to exercise, regardless of age. Muscle strength generally increases up to about age 30 and remains stable until age 50 when it begins to decline. But studies have shown that there is almost no difference between the muscle tone and joint strength of 18 to 40 year old marathon runners, and between that of 40 to 58 year old runners. It is never too late to start using your muscles and reverse the aging process.

A routine of light weight lifting is often more healthy than using heavier weights. Three sets of ten using small free weights (anywhere from three pounds to fifteen pounds) will have dramatic results on your muscle tone in just a few regular sessions. Find a video instruction tape or join a health club to learn routines you'll enjoy and benefit from.

7. Improve the condition of your skin.

There is a lot more than plastic surgery that you can do to improve the condition of your skin. First, dermatologists say that wrinkling on the skin, sagging, and spotting of the skin, are part of the aging process, but age alone doesn't cause them. Sunlight is the primary factor in aging skin. Women have only to look at the underside of their breast to know what their skin would look like if it were not exposed to the sun. Begin minimizing sun exposure and use a sun block on your face, neck, hands, and any other exposed skin.

Next, consider exercise—it will flush your skin with blood. In his book *Jump For Joy*, Dr. James White explains that the cells in the base layer of skin become more active with exercise. He has measured the depth, width and distribution of wrinkles in test groups of women. His research showed that those who spent 30 to 40 minutes a day working out on a small trampoline or jogging (using a sun block), had fewer wrinkles than non-exercisers. Plus, the exercise group received an additional bonus. The bags under their eyes vanished.

Exercise increases the skin's oil and sweatgland production, thus slowing down the aging process. It also eliminates toxins from the body that can dull the skin and cause pimples and other blemishes. Exercise naturally raises the temperature of your skin which increases the production of collagen.

Cigarette smoking is also harmful to your skin. Not only does it assure vertical wrinkle lines in the upper lips, it also causes wrinkles all over the face because nicotine constricts the capillaries that nourish the skin. Two additional factors responsible for skin aging are improper diet and stress.

Creams and lotions containing vitamin C help your skin to synthesize new collagen. A small amount of this cream applied to skin rejuvenates and enlivens the face and skin.

Alpha-hydroxy acids can also be effective in plumping the surface skin cells and giving your skin a healthy glow. Don't be fooled by some cosmetics companies who offer preparations containing as little as two or three percent alpha-hydroxy acids. These low concentrations are virtually ineffective. Look for products containing five percent or higher. If you have sensitive skin, be sure to closely monitor the effects of these lotions as they may irritate your skin. Start with one of the lower concentrations and work up to the higher levels.

8. Exercise your brain.

Studies have proven that 75- to 85-year-olds can learn as fast as high schoolers. Your brain doesn't shrink or deteriorate with age, but if you don't use it, you'll lose it. In other words, you have to exercise your brain just like the rest of your body. In addition to thinking yourself younger, exercise will accelerate the process. The more the exercise generates oxygen to the brain, the more effective it will be.

9. Think of yourself as young and vibrant.

The power of thought is the highest power in the universe, and you are what you think. If you think of yourself as young and vibrant, you will be younger and more vibrant. But be warned – it also works the other way.

You are the sum total of all your past experiences from your birth to the present moment. These experiences represent all of your programming; memories wholly retained in your subconscious memory banks. Thus, your subconscious mind has made you what you are today – your talents and abilities, problems and afflictions are the result of the intuitive guidance of your subconscious. It has been directing you and it will continue to direct you, often in opposition to your conscious desires.

Why? Because the subconscious has no reasoning power. It simply operates like a computer, functioning as the result of programming. Every thought programs the computer – you have to think something before you can speak or act. Thus, if you are thinking more negatively than positively, you are literally creating a negative reality because your subconscious mind works in pictures, never in words or abstract concepts. You create a picture of yourself as old, and then attach the message, "But I don't want to be that way." Unfortunately, your subconscious mind does not understand a negative command. It does not understand that these pictures you send it are undesirable.

So begin to think in positive images. See yourself as strong, healthy and happy. Visualize your desires and dreams, not your fears and worries. It isn't what you are that holds you back, it's what you think you are.

10. Eliminate the stress and tension in your life.

Stress prematurely ages you, robs you of energy, and is implicated in an ever-increasing number of serious health problems. To learn how to unstress, you have to understand how you became stressed in the first place. Reread Chapter Two "Reduce Stress" to identify other stress factors in your life and how to eliminate them.

11. Accept that what is, is.

There are things you can change in life and things you can't change. And it takes an aware person to recognize the difference. There has been much suffering as a result of people resisting what is.

Gravity exists, that's what is. Your mate is quiet and stubborn, that's what is. More often than not, we waste our time trying to change other people. Be aware that any time you attempt to change your spouse, your kids, your friends, your career, or your business, you are responding to the illusion that other people and events are doing something to you. Instead you need to change how you relate to these people and

circumstances, which are incapable of doing anything to you anyway. They simply trigger feelings that lie within you. You choose how you are going to react.

12. Reverse all the deficiencies in your life.

What aren't you getting enough of? You'll have to review your current life to see what you're missing. It could be sleep or exercise, personal touch, sex or proper diet. Obviously nutrition and exercise are important, but it is equally important to examine your deeper psychological and physiological needs.

Very often, we deprive ourselves of the essentials because we view them as luxuries. We all need to love and be loved. We all need to do things that increase our self-esteem. On your own, complete a deficiency review.

13. Reduce all your excesses.

People who have experienced a heart attack have to change their way of living if they want to *remain* living. This includes strict adherence to proper diet, including a reduction of cholesterol and salt, and many other considerations. Why wait for a life threatening situation to cause you to make the diet and lifestyle changes you know will improve your health? Get your lifestyle nutritionally balanced. Reread Chapters Eleven on reducing cholesterol and Chapter Six, "Lose Weight" for tips on how to do this.

14. Avoid negative people and those who dwell on their aches and pains.

Positive thinking and positive input programs a positive life. Negative thinking and negative input programs negative experiences—and prematurely ages you. So, if you want to be happy healthy, and successful, surround yourself with happy, healthy, and successful people. If you want to be more youthful, associate with people who enjoy doing youthful things. Youthfulness and vitality will rub off on you.

15. Stay sexually active.

Age is no excuse on this one. Anyone can draw upon contemporary sexual technology for assistance if necessary. After menopause, some women who experience reduced sexual desire are using hormone-replacement therapy that include testosterone. Research studies have shown that these women are twice as likely to be involved in a fulfilling sexual relationship, as compared to those who receive estrogen alone.

Statistics show that generally, 40- to 60-year-olds have active sex lives and two out of three men in their 70s are still sexually active.

16. Nourish your primary relationship.

Nourish your primary relationship and be alert to signs of boredom and burnout. Chapter Ten "Improve Your Love Life" goes into complete detail on this subject. Following are the twelve critically important considerations for permanent love:

- 1) LOVE: each will love as the other wants to be loved;
- 2) ACCEPTANCE: treasure the other's uniqueness without expectations of change;

- 3) COMMITMENT: both of you must totally commit to the relationship—physically, spiritually, emotionally and financially. Withholding reflects undermining doubts;
- 4) SUPPORT: encourage each other in ways that increase self-esteem;
- 5) DETACHMENT: let the little things go;
- 6) COMMUNICATION: openly share yourself, discuss mutual needs and compromise on solutions;
- 7) LISTEN: be willing to appreciate the other's position even when you don't agree;
- 8) COMFORT: be friends as well as lovers. Let your union be a refuge of balance and harmony;
- 9) TRANSCEND ANGER: hostility arises only from the expectation of having things your way;
- 10) TIME: share activities that serve as building blocks of a good relationship;
- 11) TRANSCEND BLAME: resist the expression of self-pity, which is incompatible with karma;
- and 12) SPIRITUALITY: foster each other's spiritual growth.

Even if your relationship isn't everything you want it to be, seek joy and fulfillment in what you have before looking elsewhere. It will probably be much wiser to make some changes in your own internal standards, instead of searching for emotional stimulation in a new situation.

17. You create your reality with your beliefs.

It is your beliefs that generate your thoughts and emotions that create all your experiences. It doesn't even matter if the beliefs are true or not. If you believe something it becomes true for you – and it programs your subconscious mind.

Your beliefs are not hidden. They are part of your conscious awareness. It's just that they are probably unexamined because people don't normally explore beliefs, or more often they accept them as facts. Obviously, most of us are aware of our religious and political beliefs, but it is harder to pin down beliefs about how, who and what you are, and how these beliefs are creating your reality.

So, the question to be asking yourself is, "What are my deep-seeded beliefs about getting older?" Maybe you've been negatively programmed by observing some bad examples. Maybe you've accepted some ideas that just aren't valid. Remember, it doesn't matter if the beliefs are true or not. But the good news is this also applies to positive beliefs about aging, and reversing the aging process. Isn't it time you programmed beliefs to make yourself younger?

18. Investigate all the anti-aging nutrients.

Proper doses of vitamins and minerals can change your life. Most nutritionists suggest supplements, but you need expert advice, or you need to do your own research before purchasing vitamins. A good health food store is one place to find books on the subject.

19. Learn and apply the concept of aliveness.

When life isn't as fulfilling as you want it to be, it is time to explore your level of aliveness. Aliveness is excitement; enjoyment in doing what you do. It's the blood

pumping exhilaration, challenge, joy, stimulation and pleasure that makes life worth living.

Have you traded freedom and aliveness for security? Is your life so routine and dull you have to look for places to hide? Some people hide by becoming couch potatoes addicted to TV, others gossip on the telephone. Some go to bars or seek out other empty distractions.

You need to know that your mind can't accept a mundane reality for long. Eventually, it will subconsciously create some excitement to make life more interesting. It might make you sick, cause you to have an accident, or create some other kind of complication. It can generate circumstances that will result in the destruction of your relationship, health or career just so you'll have the challenge of rebuilding it.

People who feel and act younger, and get sick less often than their peers, are people who are excited and enthusiastic about life. They have goals they want to accomplish, and dreams they want to experience. They are open-minded people with a sense of humor and strong self-esteem. They are also people with personal discipline and a real sense of responsibility. And they usually have a personal philosophy that gives their lives meaning.

20. Regardless of your age, find a new pastime/hobby.

Chasing dreams is for the young at heart. What if, like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, you could just click your heels and make a wish, to develop a new ability, or get involved in an exciting activity? What would you wish for? Don't limit your thinking. There are always many ways to experience something. And, one step at a time, create it.

21. Enjoy your work.

Your life's work should be something that you do naturally and well ... something you love to do. Something that brings you joy. It will keep you forever young. Maybe we're here on earth to learn that life is what we make it ... and it's to be enjoyed.

22. Use self-hypnosis.

Daily use of self-hypnosis mind programming will support your goal of reversing aging. The final chapter tells you how.

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4. Stretch and stay limber.
5. Protect against bone loss.
6. Maintain muscle tone.
7. Improve the condition of your skin.
8. Exercise your brain.

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12. Reverse all the deficiencies in your life.
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16. Nourish your primary relationship.
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• *Affirmations* •

The final chapter explains how to use the following affirmations as self-talk and how to include them in a self-hypnosis format for daily mind programming.

“Every day I feel more youthful and enthusiastic.”

“I now unleash the youthful vigor that lies within me.”

“I choose to live a healthy lifestyle of proper diet and exercise.”

“I am excited about life and I feel vigorous.”

“I am as young as I feel and every day I feel younger.”

“I now recapture my youthful vigor and enthusiasm.”

“Every day I think more positively.”

“I really feel good.”

“One secret to reverse aging is proper diet and exercise.”

“What I think I am creates my reality.”

“I detach from stress and allow it to flow through me without affecting me.”

“I no longer resist what I cannot change.”

“I now eliminate all excess in my life.”

“I balance my life and my life works.”

“I now act younger and feel younger.”