

[IMAGE]

Four Sure-Fire Ways to Stay Healthy Into Your Golden Years

By Editorial Staff

With life expectancy on the rise in the U.S. and many other countries, the opportunity exists to live longer – *if* we choose to take advantage of it. Live a life of bad health habits and you'll find your golden years filled with chronic disease or altogether nonexistent. The key to healthy aging is pursuing healthy-living strategies regardless of whether you're in your 20s or your 60s. Here are four sure-fire ways to stay healthy into your golden years and join the increasing numbers of seniors living healthy, productive lives.

1. Keep moving: You can never discount the benefits of physical activity, particularly as it relates to healthy aging. After all, regular exercise reduces the risk of chronic diseases including cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes exponentially. What's more, physical activity has a hidden benefit when it comes to health: it makes you feel – and look – good, which can help fight depression, reduce anxiety and stress, and improve self-esteem, all of which can make a big difference as you age.

2. Keep in touch: Research suggests people who maintain large social circles as they age tend to live longer than those who have only a few friends / acquaintances they connect with regularly. Keeping in touch on the Internet or via e-mail is one thing, but there's nothing like a face-to-face experience to reinforce your reason for being and make you feel alive. You might not think that matters much when you're younger, but consider how it might feel to be alone at age 70 versus surrounded by friends and loved ones.

3. Keep thinking: The brain requires constant stimulation or it starts to decay, evidence suggests. That's why people who continually challenge their brains – with board games, puzzles, learning new skills, etc. – tend to have lower rates of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of cognitive decline than people who don't. Stimulate your brain and your brain will reward you by staying sharp and healthy as you age.

4. Keep calm: There are few things more dangerous than stress when it comes to your health, so do everything you can every day to keep stress levels low. Even when faced with a high-pressure, high-stress situation, take a deep breath and think about how you can defuse the pressure / stress and make it more manageable. Chronic stress has been implicated as a factor in physical and psychological disease, so keep your stress under control and you'll up your chances of living longer, healthier and happier.

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