[IMAGE]

Aging Is Not Inevitable

Reveal the Younger, Healthier, Happier You

By Dr. Ronald Klatz

Every day, 330 American baby boomers turn age 60. Each of them desires to live a long and fulfilling life, full of productivity and vitality, and absent of disease and disability. This quest is why thousands of people just like you are becoming interested in anti-aging medicine.

Simply put, anti-aging medicine is advanced preventive health care based on the early detection, prevention, treatment and reversal of age-related dysfunction, disorders and diseases. The goal of anti-aging medicine is not merely to prolong the total years of an individual's life, but to ensure that those years are enjoyed in a productive and vital fashion.

Some of the "secrets" to anti-aging aren't really secrets at all, and they don't require drugs or surgery. For example, abundant clinical and research evidence suggests consistent physical activity plays a key role in maintaining health and vitality as we age.

Anti-Aging and Physical Fitness

A healthy looking middle-aged woman. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Exercise is one of the most valuable forms of anti-aging medicine. Substantial health benefits occur with regular physical activity that is aerobic in nature (such as 30-60 minutes of brisk walking, five or more days a week). Additional health benefits can be gained through greater amounts of physical activity, but even small amounts of activity are healthier than a sedentary lifestyle. A number of recent studies reinforce this basic concept.

Fitness Level, Not Body Fat, Predicts Longevity in Older Adults

A middle aged man stands in front of his surfboard and the ocean. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Men and women age 60-plus with higher levels of cardiorespiratory fitness live longer than unfit adults, and this correlation is independent of levels of body fat. Researchers at the University of South Carolina examined the associations between cardiovascular fitness, clinical measures of body fat, and death

in older adults. The researchers studied more than 2,600 adults for a 12-year period, during which there were 450 deaths. The team found that those who died were older, had lower fitness levels, and had more cardiovascular risk factors than survivors. However, there were no significant differences in body fat measures.

Across a wide variance of body-fat levels (excluding the most obese), fit study subjects were found to have lower death rates than unfit subjects. Higher levels of fitness also corresponded to lower incidence of death from all causes. In their published report, the researchers comment: "The results add to the existing evidence that promoting physical activity in older adults provides substantial health benefits, even in the oldest old."

Dr. Robert Goldman, chairman of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, observes: "Physical fitness and body physique, both individually and synergistically, play a complex role in lifespsan and health span. This study shows that regular physical activity, sufficient to keep most people out of the low-fitness category, enhances functional capacity and promotes living longer and in better health."

Bulky Biceps, Trim Waist Correlate to Longevity in Men

The size of a man's waistline and the muscle mass of his biceps provide s snapshot of mortality risk in aging men. S. Goya Wannamethee and colleagues from the Royal Free and University College Medical School (London) studied more than 4,100 men ages 60 to 79, and found that those with a waist circumference of less than 40 inches and above-average muscle mass in their upper arms were up to 36 percent less likely to die over a six-year period compared to those with bigger waists and smaller arm muscles. The researchers also found that the combination of waist size and arm muscle mass provided a far more accurate gauge of death risk compared to body mass index (BMI) measurements, which the team found was linked to mortality only among very thin men.

These findings emphasize the role of life-long fitness in longevity. Fitness is a key element in the anti-aging lifestyle, and men who choose this lifestyle can indeed live longer and better lives.

Lack of Physical Activity Accelerates Aging

A middle aged man stands holding his surfboard in front the ocean. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Telomeres are the end caps on chromosomes, and telomeric shortening is thought to govern the number of times a cell can divide. In white blood cells (leukocytes), telomere shortening is used as a marker of biological age. Lynn Cherkas, from King's College London, and colleagues, studied 2,401 twins, tracking

their physical activity levels, lifestyle habits, and examining the length of the telomeres in the subjects' white blood cells. The team found telomere length decreased with age and men and women who were less physically active in their leisure time had shorter leukocyte telomeres than those who were more active. The mean difference in leukocyte telomere length between the most active subjects (who performed an average of 199 minutes of physical activity per week) versus the least active subjects (16 minutes of physical activity per week) was 200 nucleotides. This meant that "the most active subjects had telomeres the same length as sedentary individuals up to 10 years younger, on average."

This study is a clear demonstration that adults who participate in regular physical activity are biologically younger than sedentary individuals. There is, as the authors suggest, a clear "potential anti-aging effect of regular exercise." In general, people should aim for 30 minutes of moderately intense physical exercise at least five days a week.

Live Longer, Live Healthier

A middle aged man runs along a beach at sunset. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark According to Dr. Shripad Tuljapurkar of Stanford University, "[W]e are on the brink of being able to extend human lifespan significantly, because we've got most of the technologies we need to do it." Dr. Tuljapurkar estimates that between 2010 and 2030, the average age of death will increase 20 years if anti-aging therapies come into widespread use. This would increase the average lifespan in industrialized countries from approximately 80 years to 100 years.

Remember to check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program. Future articles in this series will address other natural anti-aging strategies to prolong your health and wellness as you age.

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