

[IMAGE]

Maximize Your Golden Years

By Editorial Staff

Are you approaching the so-called "Golden Years": the time of life after retirement from active work? Free from the constraints of a job / boss / workplace, you can at last enjoy the freedom to do what you want, when you want – or at least that's how it's supposed to work. But for too many people, the "Golden Years" fail to live up to their promise, at least from a health perspective. With age, the body begins to break down, particularly if you haven't taken care of it for decades.

Fortunately, it's never too late to start building a better, fitter you to not just survive, but *thrive* during your Golden Years. Getting old doesn't mean you have to lose your health and vitality if you do it right. Here are four tips to take to heart:

1. Movement matters: We can't stress enough the importance of staying active with age. Continual activity keeps your body functioning optimally (particularly your heart) and prevents stagnation from setting in, which can lead to poor range of motion / stiffness (a risk factor for strains, sprains and other injuries) all the way up to cancer and other illnesses in which the body's cells start to mutate.

2. Don't be afraid to socialize: Research suggests people with an active social calendar live longer (and enjoy it more) than people who tend to be isolated with few friends and acquaintances. A healthy social circle not only gives you a support group when times are tough; it also gives you ample opportunity to laugh, talk, de-stress and enjoy life with people who matter.

seniors - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *3. Change things up:* By the time you reach the average age of retirement (65), you've spent more than six decades on the planet. Over time, you've likely fallen into a variety of routines that sometimes feel comforting, but other times feel restrictive and draining. In your Golden Years, it's your chance to break out of whatever mold you fit yourself in and explore new trails. Who knows? You may find the hobby you've been putting off for 60 years is the one thing you wish you'd done your entire life.

4. You are what you eat: If you haven't been on the healthiest course (pun intended) when it comes to nutrition, now's the time to jump on the "good foods are good for you" bandwagon full force. With

abundant data suggesting sensible eating habits can prolong the quality and length of your life, what are you waiting for? If you've spent half a century eating poorly and don't know where to start, talk to your doctor about simple, incremental diet changes you can make to get you on the right track.

Maximizing our Golden Years boils down to making smart choices that bring us vigor, vitality, energy and excitement. Who would possibly want the opposite? In fact, these tips work for people of all ages; after all, if you live a healthy life when you're young, you'll plant the proper seeds to continue living right when you're older.

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