[IMAGE]

The Fountain of Youth

By Editorial Staff

Scientists can speculate on what it takes to live well into your 90s, but why not ask someone who's done it? In this exclusive interview, learn how Jack La Lanne, the 93-year-old "Godfather of Fitness," stays in better shape than most 20-somethings.

What exercise and nutrition recommendations do you have for people looking to improve their health and lifestyle?

Exercise is king, nutrition is queen. Put them together and you've got a kingdom! You have approximately 640 muscles in your body and they all need their share of work. Exercise helps build up those muscles. If I were to recommend an overall exercise for the body, it would be swimming. You do not have to be an excellent swimmer to exercise in water. If you do not have access to water, I recommend weight training, and I'm a big believer in vigorous walking. If you can do push-ups or chin-ups, those also are good overall exercises. If you have access to circuit training, even better. As far as nutrition is concerned, if you eat right you can't go wrong. The food you eat today you are wearing tomorrow, or the food you eat today is walking and talking tomorrow. If you put the right fuel in your human machine and you exercise regularly, it's like putting money in the bank - the more you put in, the more you can take out. Remember, you are a walking billboard.

What kind of workout do you do?

Jack LaLanne flexing his arms. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark I work out one hour with weights and I spend another hour doing water exercises in the pool, rain or shine. I completely change my program every 30 days. You don't have to be a crackpot and work out like I do two hours every day, but if you can't stand 30 minutes of exercise 3-4 times a week to take care of your most priceless possession - your body - you've got to be sick.

We travel so much and I lecture all over the world. Every hotel has a gym now, so I never miss a workout. And I hate it! But, I like the results. Dying is easy; you have to work at living. Life is an athletic event. You have to really be in shape for it.

What is your diet like?

If man makes it, I don't eat it. I eat 10 raw vegetables in a chopped salad and five pieces of fresh fruit. All my grain has to be 100 percent whole grain. I get my protein from cooked egg whites and fish, and I use my juicer at least five times a week.

I just bought a new sports car. Would I put water in the gas tank? How about your human body? People have to learn about keeping in shape for life. Living is tough. People believe what they see, hear and read. Sugar products with preservatives and artificial coloring are advertised to kids. And you wouldn't give that to your dog. Ever read a label on canned soup? You can't even pronounce all those artificial ingredients and additives. And people put that in their bodies and end up in the grave.

What do you think of the trends you've seen over the years toward obesity, quick-fix diet pills, etc.?

There are more fat people now than ever before in history. Many people have high blood pressure and heart trouble, and their sex life is gone. They want a quick fix, but there is no quick fix! They need to keep in shape for their health's sake, so they should start building their health account. Would you get your dog up in the morning and give it a cup of coffee, a cigarette and a donut?

Do you ever splurge?

Never. I've got a conscience you wouldn't believe. If I can't set an example and help myself, I sure can't help you. You'd be surprised how many people are just searching for the truth. I tell the truth and try to set an example. That's what it's all about. I can't afford to die; it would wreck my image. I'm going to live forever, maybe longer.

Do you use any other forms of alternative health care?

Absolutely. Acupuncture is great for various aches and pains. I have a massage at least once a week. In fact, that's how I started my fitness line back in 1936. I couldn't pay my rent so I had to massage people. Massage is actually very scientific.

During your college years, you studied to become a medical doctor and also graduated from chiropractic college. Why didn't you end up becoming a chiropractor?

After having to drop out of school for six months when I was 14 due to ill health, my mother took me to hear a health lecture, which changed my life. I joined the local YMCA and took up wrestling. Later, I saw two fellows lifting weights, which were kept in a locked box. I asked if I could use them, and the answer was no. I said, "If I wrestle the two of you and win, will you let me use the weights?" I won and immediately went out and bought *Gray's Anatomy of the Human Body* to learn more about how the body works. All through high school, I studied the body. My mother wanted me to be a medical doctor, but I wanted to open a physical culture studio and go to chiropractic college. In 1936, I opened the first modern physical culture studio (today, it would be called a health spa). I never used my chiropractic degree.

I wanted to help people learn to work all of the muscles in their body. When I started my first gym, no one was around. I was the first one to have women working out with weights, the first to have seniors working with weights. When I received my chiropractic degree, medical doctors and chiropractors didn't get along too well. However, in those days, I had many medical doctors sending me patients. Now, they exchange patients and there's room for everyone.

My life has come full circle. Recently, I became involved with two chiropractors out of New York, Dr. Roger Russo and Dr. Anthony Lauro, who started a program called Stay Fit Seniors. It is a nationwide program exclusively for those 60 years old and over that combines exercise and chiropractic care. It offers an exercise facility for seniors right inside the chiropractor's office, and it will soon be offered to chiropractic offices throughout the country. Patients receive chiropractic care and free exercise sessions as long as they are a patient. The exercise program consists of a 30 minute circuit-training program consisting of seven strength-training stations and seven aerobic stations performed on state-of-the-art exercise machines that are joint-friendly and designed to work at your own pace. If people want more information, they can visit www.stayfitseniors.com.

Why did you choose to be a sponsor for Stay Fit Seniors?

When Drs. Russo and Lauro approached me, I liked the idea and knew it was something I could fully endorse. It's tremendous. Whether you're 60 or 90 years old, there's something for you. Seniors in the program report that their aches and pains are leaving, their sex life is better, their skin looks better. They're working at living!

So many people over 40-50 years old think they’re over the hump. They say, "I can’t do this" or "I’m too old for this." It’s ridiculous. There are more older people getting in shape now than ever before. And this plan we have is really something. When you join Stay Fit Seniors, you get everything - a complete gym to work every part of your body, nutritional advice and exercise, plus chiropractic. This should’ve been done a long, long time ago.

You’ve received dozens of awards and honors, including a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. What has been the highlight of your success?

The highlight of my success is marrying my wife, Elaine, whom I call "LaLa."

Looking back at your life, is there anything you would change?

Nothing! The only thing is I would do it with more energy and more vigor, if that’s even possible. Being a pioneer, you take a lot of ridicule and torture; but if you believe in something, you’re going to succeed. Practice what you preach is my philosophy.

A young Jack LaLanne posing on the beach. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark I was the first to have a health and fitness show on television, which ran for 34 years. The medical doctors claimed I was a crackpot for having women, elderly and athletes working out with weights, assuming women would look like men and elderly would die of heart attacks. These days, there’s not one world-class athlete not working out with weights, and doctors emphasize working out with weights so the elderly can build muscle. You have to overcome resistance.

Without exception, doctors recommend 5-6 raw vegetables and 4-5 pieces of fresh fruit each day. When you have access to all these healthy foods, you just have to make the right choices.

Good health has to start in school. We have to teach kids pride and discipline in how they feel and what they do. Kids need compulsory physical education in school and we have to get the junk food out of school cafeterias. They learn bad habits when they’re young, and by the time they reach 50, their bad habits have taken their toll. All of this can be remedied with exercise and good nutrition.

Jack La Lanne’s Historical Feats of Strength

Age 42

Set a world record of 1,033 push-ups in 23 minutes on "You Asked for It," a TV show with Art Baker.

Age 45

Completed 1,000 push-ups and 1,000 chin-ups in 1 hour and 22 minutes.

Age 60

Swam from Alcatraz to Fisherman’s Wharf, for a second time, handcuffed, shackled and towing a 1,000-pound boat.

Age 61

Swam the length of the Golden Gate Bridge underwater for a second time, handcuffed, shackled and towing a 1,000-pound boat.

Age 62

Swam 1 mile in Long Beach Harbor, handcuffed, shackled and towing 13 boats containing 76 people.

Jack LaLanne swimming and pulling 70 boats with 70 people in Long Beach Harbor. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Photo courtesy of Leo Hetzel. **Age 65**

Towed 65 boats filled with 6,500 pounds of Lousiana Pacific wood pulp while handcuffed and shackled in Lake Ashinoko, near Tokyo.

Age 66

In Miami, towed 10 boats filled with 77 people for over a mile in less than 1 hour.

Age 70

Handcuffed, shackled and fighting strong winds and currents, towed 70 boats with 70 people from the Queen’s Way Bridge in Long Beach Harbor to the Queen Mary for 1½ miles.

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