

# Move It. Or Lose It.

By Karl Knopf, Ed.D

**When many people over 60 think of "aging," they imagine becoming more and more disabled.**

Previous Surgeon Generals have estimated that close to 85 percent of our most dreaded diseases could be prevented with appropriate lifestyle changes such as good diet and regular exercise.

Proper health style behaviors and sensible exercise would not only prevent disease and untimely death but would improve the quality of life at any age. It is never too late. Exercise will allow 60 plus people to not only survive but to thrive!

Age is no excuse for infirmity. The concept of unhealthy living is not what our bodies are programmed for but rather longevity and vigor.

Real purpose of exercise is not to increase years to one's life but rather life to one's years

While aging is inevitable and extremely desirable when compared to the alternative, being frail is not considered desirable. Unsuccessful aging is the result of abuse, neglect and misuse of the human machine.

This is much like the old grandfather clock in the living room that does not work. Does it not function fully because the springs have lost their ability to recoil or because they are over-worn or is it because somebody forgot to wind it up? Which analogy best represents your body?

The expectation of a slow, steady decline with progressing years is not true for those individuals who show interest in fitness and healthy lifestyles. We now know that a fit person (someone on a regular exercise



Karl heading to the beach to catch a big wave

program) of 70 can be compared to an unfit person of 30. As remarkable as that may seem, more and more evidence supports the fact that chronological age has very little to do with aging and is nothing to worry about.

Research has proven that the more a person sits, the more it correlates directly to decreased life span, increase in metabolic diseases and cardiovascular diseases. Sitting is as hazardous to your health as smoking.

The solution "Move it or Lose it" has real meaning to the 60 plus generation.

Most older adults don't want to just survive, they want to thrive.

"Active aging is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving with regrets but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming, WOW, what a ride!"

If you are looking for the fountain of youth, forget the miracle supplements but rather find yourself a fun filled fitness class. Swimming or water

exercise is an excellent method to increase fitness for those with orthopedic issues.

Lifting weights 2-3 times a week is a great way to maintain strength to perform activities of daily living. Getting involved in a gentle stretching program does wonders to bring suppleness back into tight muscles.

More and more research support that being socially engaged is good for your health so find an activity that you enjoy that matches your personality. Also match the dose of exercise that is aimed at your particular goal. Never let any trainer "should" on you. Do what you like and like what you do. Slow and steady wins the fitness race fitness and he/she who comes in last in the game of life is the winner.

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