

How to Live 100 Years

Be Youthful, Vigorous, Healthy and Happy for a Lifetime

Never underestimate your power to change your life. You can teach an old dog new tricks. But first you need to know what the old dog needs to change and what new tricks he needs to learn. Age, per se, does not undermine the ability to learn and grow. With the right attitude, you can revolutionize your life. The human body is incredibly resilient. After years of a terrible diet, too much stress, not enough sleep, cigarettes, too much alcohol, and minimal exercise, many people manage to live five or six decades. The body never functions optimally under these circumstances, but it somehow manages to adapt and at least survive. One of the miracles of the human body is its ability to heal itself when treated properly. The DNA in each of your cells remains unaltered and your body knows how to rebuild itself remarkably well if you work with it, rather than against it.

A 92-year-old gentleman by the name of Sam Gadless is an inspirational example of the healing power of the body even after a lifetime of abuse. When Sam was in his 70s, his health was failing. His doctor told him he did not have long to live. Now, 20 years later, at age 91, he has competed in his seventh New York City Marathon.

Sam emigrated from Poland as a young man to escape the Holocaust. He was a heavy smoker until a life-threatening stomach ulcer put a stop to his tobacco use. By the time he was 70, he had arthritis so severe he could not lift either arm above his head. His cholesterol and blood pressure were very high and he was a borderline diabetic. His doctor told him his prognosis was very poor. Sam summed up his outlook on life saying that; "I was very unhealthy all of my life and I don't have good genes. My father died when he was 42 years old."

So how is it that Sam is still alive and running marathons 20 years later? Sam saw his life deteriorating into disability and suffering, and he decided to do something about it. He was determined to "take control" of his health and his life. He read everything he could about preventing disease and living a healthy lifestyle. He also began to cook his own meals, avoiding high-fat meats, sugar, and white flour and instead opting for fruits, vegetables, grains, and modest amounts of red wine. He also dined on salmon, sardines and white tuna.

"I don't eat the bad stuff like milk shakes or the matzo ball soup my wife used to cook with butter or chicken fat." Instead, he is eating a 16-bean soup and "garlic by the pound." He trains by doing aerobics, stretching and swimming. He enjoys light weightlifting and walks up to 40 miles each week. He is not setting any records for the fastest time in the New York City Marathon, but he is the oldest competitor. He has an irrepressible spirit and recently had his left ear pierced to celebrate his 90th birthday. Sam says, "Age is just numbers. When I was younger, I was sick as could be. I am living my youth now."

It was not too late for Sam and it is not too late for you. Your body will respond to an optimal lifestyle and mental attitude by healing illnesses and building strong new tissues. Dramatic healing like Sam experienced is possible but does not happen by coincidence. For your body to recover its vigor and vitality, you need to get smart about your diet and exercise program.

Many people have mixed emotions about living to an advanced age because they see images of old people who are disabled and living in nursing homes. But, if you could enjoy life, run marathons, and have your ear pierced to celebrate your 90th birthday, you would probably be just as happy as Sam is to be alive and young at age 92.

"The Key Features To Successful Aging" as outlined by Lynn Peters Adler, founder of The National Centenarian Awareness Project (a great web site) has found the following seven characteristics almost universally common to all centenarians.

- A positive, yet realistic attitude
- An adventurous love of life
- A strong will
- Spiritual beliefs
- The ability to renegotiate life when necessary
- An insistence on aggressive medical care when necessary
- A sense of humor

The real beauty of these findings is that the lifestyles that bring joy to our lives – humor, faith, a happy outlook, a love of adventure, curiosity, and loving relationships – are the very same factors that will keep you alive and well for 100 years. Other characteristics of centenarians, like a strong will, the flexibility to renegotiate life, and a willingness to find expert medical help when needed are crucial to overcoming the mental and physical maladies that we all develop sooner or later. Today more than ever, staying healthy is not a matter of fate, genes, or luck, but rather a function of your lifestyle, your diet, and how you monitor your health and respond to problems that will inevitably appear.

Sure, your genes play a role in how you feel, how you look, and how long and healthy your life will be; but today more than ever, we're learning how to overcome many genetic shortcomings. It's just a matter of identifying what the problems are and taking steps to care for or prevent them. About 80 percent of chronic serious medical conditions like heart disease, cancer, arthritis, Alzheimer's and diabetes are preventable with the right diet, lifestyle, attitude, and medical care. How healthy and happy you will be in the long term is not a coincidence, it is the by-product of your day-to-day lifestyle.