

GET FIT & GET HEALTHY

Aging healthily is not a mystery

Whether it's fruitful or not, people tend to worry more about their health as they age. For some, the worrying can be productive, forcing them to overhaul a lifestyle that might not be healthy. For others, the worrying might only compound existing problems.

While it's understandable and necessary to focus more on health as the aging process progresses, taking care of oneself and aging healthily doesn't have to be as hard as it seems. Instead, having an understanding of the human body and what happens to it as it ages can go a long way toward maintaining a healthy lifestyle well into one's golden years.

Whenever health comes into question, the first thing to cross most people's minds is their diet. Dietary changes are necessary as we get older for a variety of reasons.

• Shifting energy levels: One of the foremost reasons diet changes are needed as we age is the loss of energy that comes with age. Because the body's energy levels decrease over time, fewer calories are needed to function on a daily basis.

If caloric intake is not reduced as we age, weight gain and other negative physical consequences can result.

• Weakening bones: Dietary changes are also necessary to defend oneself against injuries that can result from bones

weakening as the body ages. As we get older, bones begin to lose mineral content, making them more susceptible to breaks and other injuries.

In addition, the body is more susceptible to osteoporosis, a condition in which bones become brittle and fragile, as it ages. Calcium can help prevent injuries to bones and osteoporosis, emphasizing the importance of making calcium a part of your daily diet.

• Shift in production: Ever wonder why a middle-aged man can eat the same diet as a young man but the physical evidence (namely the difference in body type) will not indicate this to be true?

This is because as a body ages it begins producing more body fat and less muscle. This means reducing the amount of fat in your diet as you age and exercising more to combat the reduction in muscle tissue production is necessary.

It's best to consult a physician for any specific dietary changes, but in general reducing fat intake while including more protein in your diet is a good start toward combating the production shift that takes place as the body ages.

Another thing to expect as you age is changes to your cardiovascular system. The most noticeable change is the heart loses some of its efficiency with respect to pumping blood. Part of that loss of effi-

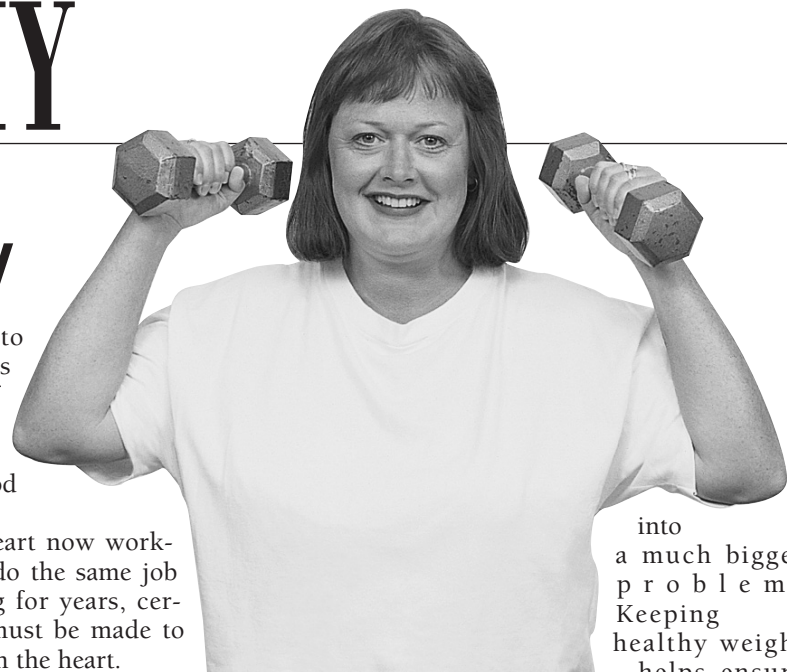
ciency is due to blood vessels losing some of their elasticity, making it harder for blood to be pumped.

With the heart now working harder to do the same job it's been doing for years, certain changes must be made to reduce stress on the heart.

One is reducing fat intake. Someone who has a diet high in fat runs the very dangerous risk of having fatty deposits form on their artery walls, stiffening those walls as a result while increasing blood pressure and making it even harder for the heart to pump blood. This is another reason to reduce fat intake as you age.

Being underweight can be damaging: While much of the discussion thus far has focused on ways to lose weight and maintain a healthy weight, many people, particularly the elderly, find themselves underweight as they get older. Unbeknownst to many, being underweight can be just as damaging as being overweight.

Perhaps the biggest risk you run when being underweight is associated with turning a cold or other short-term illness



Daily exercise, regardless of age, is one way to ensure the aging process is a graceful one.

into a much bigger problem. Keeping a healthy weight helps ensure that your body is resilient, fully capable of handling

some ailments, such as cold or flu, that can afflict anyone, regardless of age. Being underweight lessens your energy reserves, meaning you won't be able to bounce back as quickly should you get the flu or a cold. Sometimes, you might not be able to bounce back at all, leading to permanent disability or, in some cases, death.

For those who are underweight, be sure to eat three meals a day. Underweight people can find that finishing a meal is tough. If you're in that boat, this is okay, but make sure you eat the highest calorie foods on the plate first. If you need to leave anything on the plate, don't leave the items that will help you get back to a healthy weight.




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GET FIT Get Healthy



Q: How can I get my child to stay on the right path?

A: One of the most important responsibilities of being an adult is to help children and teens get on and stay on the "right path". Logically, part of the right path is to be involved with fitness, since involvement plays a huge role in the prevention of diabetes, hypertension and obesity, not to mention that it helps our young people to be stronger, more flexible, more alert, more confident, and more optimistic. As is true of most things in life that are "good for you", sometimes our kids need a gentle push in the right direction, and sometimes we, as adults, need to be reminded to provide that push. The Canadian Revenue Agency has announced a new "Children's Fitness Tax Credit" to help make fitness a more important, and affordable part of their lives. The credit is available to children 16 years of age and under. So what programs qualify for this tax credit? Well, for starters, a membership at PowerZone qualifies! And specialized programs (for members & non-members) like Personal Training, Self Defence, Sport Specific Team Training and Teen Training also qualify. If you would like more information on the Tax Credit, our membership and specialized programs that we offer, come into PowerZone and we'll be glad to go over it with you! And let's help keep our young people on the "right path".

Power Zone has a great new youth contest coming up! If you or someone you know is between the ages of 12-18, apply to Cathy at Power Zone for the "Get Fit" Contest.



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*Try something new, your body &
soul will thank you!*

Mini-spa event on Saturday

Looking to recharge your batteries to get through those busy days? Treat yourself to healthy foods, relaxation with-a-little-help, and learn about sound lifestyle alternatives.

On Saturday, February 23, from 9 a.m. to noon, the Mini Spa event at X-Marks the Fitness Spot in Acton will provide just that!

Join others to hear tips about your health and beauty choices. Indulge in a brief introductory massage to relieve tight muscles with registered massage therapist Kasia Sitarz.



Have fun hearing about and seeing the local fitness centre in action during your tour, and meet experts who can help find the right approach for your exercise and wellness needs.

Personal trainers, Kevin Harris and Sara Murray will be on hand to answer questions and offer advice.

Take advantage of opportunities to sample exciting products during a relaxing footbath and group cosmetic demonstration and consultation with spa organizer Lina Addesi.

Keep your eyes open to fresh alternatives that fit your lifestyle and personal interests, and give your body and mind a chance for good health! The cost is \$10. To book your spot call Lina, 905-702-8777.