

This Is the Least Amount of Exercise You Need to Get the Best Results

Many people fear getting older means losing their independence, memory and mobility. However, it doesn't have to be that way.

Barbara Hannah Grufferman proves it's never too late to turn back the clock. At age 61, she feels happier and healthier than many people half her age.

"We can't control getting older, but we can control how we do it," she said.

Couch Potato Since the '80s

Although Barbara is the picture of health now, until about a decade ago, she ate the wrong foods and never exercised.

"The last time I had worked out seriously was back when Jane Fonda was doing those tapes, you know, feel the burn and all that stuff," she laughed.

By middle age, she put on weight, felt sluggish and believed her best years were behind her.

"And I was starting to feel, 'Is this what turning 50 is all about?' And it was a very upsetting moment for me and it was a very scary time for me," she said.

In the midst of her depression, she chose to take a little walk.

"I put one foot in front of the other," she recalled. "I literally took my first step to my whole new life. I didn't realize it then."

Chain Reaction

The walks started happening more often, became longer and she soon started mixing in a little jogging.

"I was starting to lose the weight," she said, "I was starting to have more energy, I was starting to look better and starting to feel for the first time since turning 50 actually positive about my future."

That positive feeling led to her completing five marathons, writing three anti-aging books, including her latest, *Love Your Age*, becoming an AARP ambassador and staying medication-free.

Exercise: Ditch the Pills, Avoid Disease

Doctors say regular exercise means we can ditch a lot of the pills we take like antidepressants, blood pressure medication, sleeping pills, cholesterol medicine and more. Exercise also reduces the risk of chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease and diabetes, according to the Cleveland Clinic's Dr. Michael Roizen.

"Well it's never too late until you're six feet under," Dr. Roizen smiled, "So it's never too late until they're putting dirt on top of you."

In his book *Age-Proof*, Dr. Roizen cites research showing exercise can significantly strengthen our immune system.

"This is really strange," he said, "Because nobody expected this."

Scientists now tell us our ability to fight off everything from the common cold to Alzheimer's Disease is largely determined by the bacteria in our gut.

"Believe it or not," Roizen explained, "Exercise was one of the great things at changing the bacteria inside you, we don't

know why, into being much healthier.”

But not just any exercise. Researchers developed a four-pronged approach that delivers the best results for the least amount of effort.

The Winning Formula

- 10 thousand steps a day: Many people enjoy using fitness trackers to measure their steps.
- 20 jumps each morning and night: Just jumping in the air is fine or traditional jumping jacks.
- 30 minutes of resistance training three times a week: Resistance training is also called weight-bearing exercise.
- 20 minutes of cardio three times a week: Cardio, which is short for, “cardiovascular,” is exercise that raises our heart rate. Roizen says it’s the type of exercise that “makes you sweat in a cool room.”

Avoid Falling; Don’t Break Anything If You Do

As a spokeswoman for the National Osteoporosis Foundation, Barbara feels particularly passionate about the importance of resistance training, which she says far too many people avoid. Resistance training strengthens our bones, which is especially important as we age.

This is because starting in our thirties we start losing bone density. As our bones become less dense they become more brittle and therefore to break.

“This is critical,” she explained, “Because people, when they fall at an advanced age, can be debilitated for the rest of their lives. And that is something I think about.”

Grufferman recommends getting a bone density test each year and points out that while we cannot regain lost bone density, we can prevent losing even more. In fact, she said since age

50 she has managed to maintain her bone density thanks to resistance training combined with plenty of calcium and vitamin D.

Grufferman says while many people prefer to do resistance training by lifting weights, she likes using her own body weight as resistance with exercises like pushups, planks and squats.

While resistance training helps reduce the risk of a broken bone, balancing exercises reduce the risk of falling in the first place. Grufferman says simply standing on one foot is enough to significantly improve our balance, and can (and should!) be done just about anywhere such as standing in line at the grocery store or in the kitchen fixing dinner.

Grufferman said although she never planned on a total health overhaul, when she started moving more, she naturally began adopting other healthy habits.

“Because I was feeling so much better and motivated to live a healthier life,” she recalled, “I decided to investigate, ‘Well, what should I eat?’”

Grufferman said she switched to a mostly plant-based diet, and avoids sugar and processed foods.

So while aging is inevitable, don’t give up on life. Walking, cardio, resistance training, balance and jumping can help us avoid many of the pitfalls of getting older. {eo}

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