

WALKING BACK IN TIME - Walking Part I

Times have changed. It used to be common to hear that a natural part of aging is slowing down and that senior citizens must accept a few unavoidable extra pains and aches. Today's senior citizens have reached an age of rebellion - they are no longer interested in what they can't do, but rather what they CAN do.

Most seniors, when asked, would prefer to live longer if they stay healthy, independent and active. How do you live each day to its fullest? One key to unlock a long, healthy, and active life is exercise. Exercise is not limited to Stair Master machines and dumbbells. It can be easy as living an active life and doing the things you enjoy. Any activity that requires your larger muscles, the arms and legs, to work continuously for 20 minutes or more is aerobic exercise. An activity as simple as walking is considered an aerobic exercise. That means your heart, lungs and muscles are benefiting from the activity. This type of activity can reverse or slow the effects of aging.

Some effects of aging on the body include:

- Aerobic capacity decreases. Aerobic capacity is the efficiency at which the heart and lungs



Stay Healthy

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deliver blood and oxygen to the muscles.

- After age 35, women lose approximately 1% of their bone mass every year. Men lose approximately 15% of their bone mass between the ages of 55 and 70.
- Change in collagen structures can cause increased stiffness of joints and related ligaments and tendons.
- Decreased muscle mass can cause strength to decline by more than 20% by the age of 65.
- The body's metabolic rate slows, which means less calories are burned.
- There is an increase in body fat.

A good body fat level for men older than 50 is between 16-25%. For women older than 50, a good level is 21-30% of body fat.

- Blood cholesterol levels increase. This includes the less favorable low-density lipoproteins (LDL), which can contribute to clogged arteries.
- Nerve impulse rates slow. This means slower reaction times and a decreased sharpness in the senses.

Many effects of aging, particularly decreased muscle mass and nerve impulse rates, can lead to an increased rate of dangerous falls among senior citizens.

The good news is that it is never too late to turn back the hands of time and become more active. Exercises can give you head-to-toe benefits!

BRAIN

Improved concentration and alertness.
Improved sense of well-being.
Less anxiety.
Sounder sleep.

LUNGS

Ability to process more oxygen with each breath.
Increase strength & endurance of

breathing muscles.

HEART

Stronger and more efficient heart muscle.

Slower heart rate.

More blood pumped with each beat.

BLOOD

Ability to deliver more oxygen.

Greater blood volume.

More efficient cooling of the body.

Blood removes more waste products from cells.

Blood chemistry is improved with higher HDL (good) cholesterol levels and lower triglycerides.

Thus, the risk of a heart attack and stroke is reduced.

BLOOD VESSELS

Improved flow of blood to all parts of the body.

More blood vessels are available.

Reduced blood pressure.

Lower risk of developing atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries).

DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

Improved digestion and waste removal.

Increased appetite control.

MUSCLE

Improved capacity to send and receive messages.

Delayed deterioration.

COORDINATION

Faster reaction times.

Improved overall balance.

The fit senior is less likely to suffer a fall.

BONE

Maintained bone density.

Delayed development of osteoporosis.

TENDONS

Improved flexibility.