

Personal Training by Robert J. Bovee

Researched & Written by Robert J. Bovee Certified Master PPT, RTS, ETS, FTS, LMS, WMS, HWFS, SNS,SSCS, MES, E/FT, PSCS, PRCS

SURVIVING THE AGING PROCESS

Inactive people give aging a bad name. Use it or lose it! Time does not respect disuse. Let Joe Montana or Pete Sampras retire from their sport for a year, and their ability would slide drastically. If either of these athletes decided to return to their sport at the high intensity that they left it at, not only would they be off target, they would also risk injury.

A similar condition exists with the average person. Inactive people accelerate their biological aging. They also establish our perception of aging with lack of strength and the use of canes and wheelchairs. The aging process has come to mean the inevitable onset of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes and cancer. We are so accustomed to seeing people who look and act older than their years that we think of it as normal.

Given a perfect environment, our optimal lifespan is supposed to be near **120**. Some of us may be programmed for a shorter life regardless of what we do, but most of us begin early in life to decrease our longevity, largely due to inactivity.

Physiologically and functionally, the average American is **30** years older than he or she is chronologically. An inactive **35-year-old** has the work capacity no greater than that of a fit **70-year-old**. Fit **60** or **70-year-old** individuals lose only **10-15%** of their endurance.

Exercise keeps you young. It slows down the aging mechanisms. It keeps you strong, flexible, and healthy. Exercise makes it easy to maintain youthful activities. (We can start at any age) to offset the ravages of time and faulty lifestyles.

Regardless of age, a stronger person is a better and safer person. Studies at the Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University have shown that the risk of injury in the elderly is associated with weak muscles. About **40%** of people over age 55 fall at least once a year. With injury comes the need for assistance with daily activities. The loss of independence can lessen the quality of life.

Inactivity can even mask an otherwise healthy body with the aging syndrome. Healthy muscles lose their strength from disuse, creating weakness that restricts mobility and form the picture of old age.

If you can function independently regardless of age, you can't be "old". You can postpone aging by simple, expedient building of muscular strength. An older person shuffling along, every step an ordeal, it doesn't have to be that way. Researchers emphasize the importance of increasing muscular strength in the elderly. It seems that clinical problems are related more to muscular weakness than to the lack of aerobic activity.

The fitness trend today concentrates on aerobic activity as a way to prevent cardiovascular disease. By the time you are **70** or more, you are probably not destined genetically to die from cardiovascular disease. Research has shown that an older person may require more than his or her

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available quadricep strength just to get out of a wheel chair or off the toilet seat. When older people need help for those activities they become prime candidates for an institution.

Generally, the legs are the first thing to go. Most of the elderly, even those who are sedentary, have fairly good arm strength because they use their arms in everyday activities. With automobiles, telephones and televisions (remote control), people of the **90's** grow increasingly inactive. Almost **30** million people in the United States are over age **65**; of the very old, most of them women, half need assistance with daily living. In institutions, all of them need assistance. How do you avoid the institution? One way is to develop leg strength. Research programs have shown that strength training for the elderly increases aerobic capacity cardio-respiratory fitness and flexibility as well as large increases in leg strength and muscle size.

For more information, please contact Robert J. Bovee at **(585) 330-0614**.