

AGE-OLD Lessons

What is “normal” aging? We can look at many theories over the years and find no consensus. The aging process remains a mystery. The Baltimore Longitudinal Study on Aging, sponsored by the (U.S.) National Institute on Aging, has been seeking the answers for more than 50 years. Here are some findings:

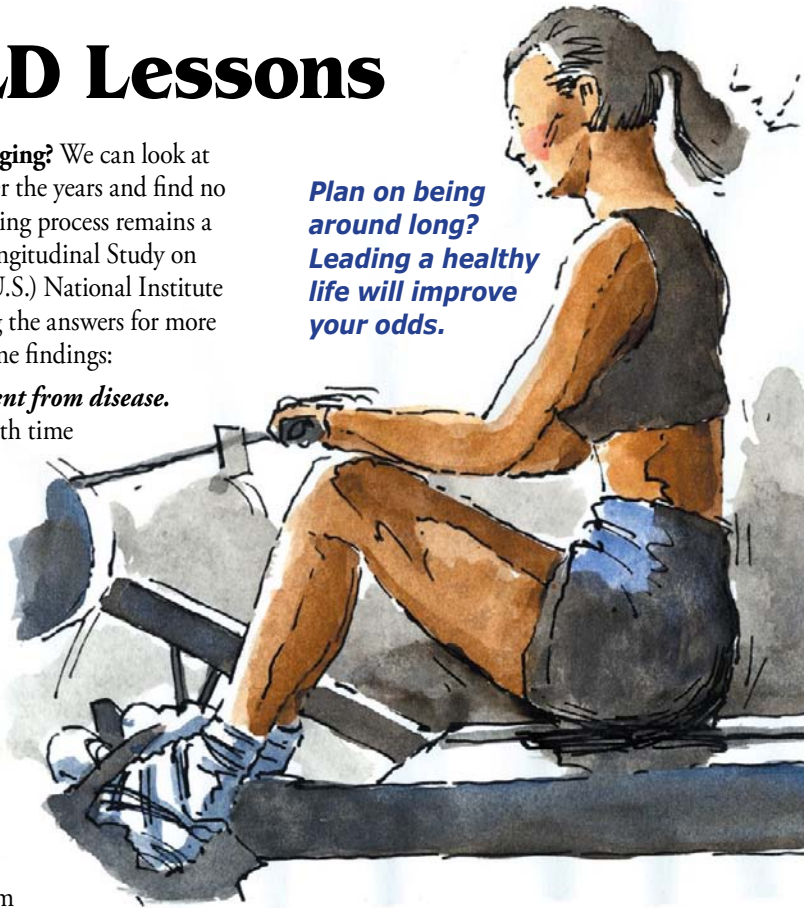
Normal aging is different from disease.

As our bodies change with time and use, virtually every major system – cardiovascular, nervous, muscle, skeletal, digestive – gets weaker and less efficient on a cellular level. But these changes do not automatically lead to such common diseases as high blood pressure, dementia and arthritis. Disease often results from processes other than wear and tear.

We all age differently. Some people stay strong and active much longer than others. Genetics, environment, and illness affect the rate of aging. Those differences become more apparent as we get older – and make the study of aging very complex.

Most gerontologists don't expect to find a magic bullet to prolong life or youth, but believe we may avoid speeding up the aging process

Plan on being around long? Leading a healthy life will improve your odds.



through personal lifestyle. The choices are obvious: Don't smoke. Avoid alcohol and weight gain. Get adequate nutrition and sleep. Relax and enjoy yourself.

And exercise! If maintaining a healthy heart, mental function, strong muscles and flexible joints are part of staying young, then exercise is essential. Unlike expensive potions that promise to detain or reverse aging, exercise usually costs nothing, except a few minutes each day – remember this when you want to slow the hands of time.

HEALTH notes

Take these steps to fight the flu.

❶ Get a flu shot every year, recommended for most everyone. ❷ Practice prevention. Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizers. Use a tissue or your elbow to cover coughs and sneezes. If you get the flu, stay home. ❸ Avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes. ❹ Use antiviral flu drugs with your provider's okay; take within 2 days of symptoms.

■ **Better bone sense:** You may be surprised to learn that certain digestive disorders and their treatments can negatively affect your bones. Lactose intolerance, celiac disease and proton pump inhibitor medication for acid reflux can decrease intake or absorption of vital bone-building nutrients. Corticosteroid use for irritable bowel disease can also interfere with bone formation. If you have any of these conditions, consult your health care provider for the best advice on keeping your bones strong.

Tips for avoiding Lyme disease:

Check your clothing for ticks before going outdoors, wash clothes in hot water, and check your body carefully. If you find a tick, see www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/lyme-eng.php for the proper removal method. The risk of Lyme disease is small if ticks are removed within 24 hours. Symptoms may appear within 3-30 days. Get medical help if fever, chills, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, aches or a rash develop.

SEPTEMBER GOAL:

CRAVING SWEETS? Wait 15 minutes, brush your teeth or drink water. Omitting alcohol, excess sugar and caffeine may curb cravings.

Terminal Fitness

Do you sit in front of a computer each day? In 2008, 40% of Canadians surfed the Web 15 hours or more each week, according to the Canadian Internet Project. Whether the draw is Web surfing or work, an ergonomic workstation can help you avoid eyestrain and common overuse injuries. Give your workstation a once-over with the checklist.

Monitor:

- Clean your screen.
- Adjust brightness and contrast to comfortable levels.
- Position 20-26 inches/50.8-66 cm directly in front of you.
- Keep the top of the monitor at eye level when you're seated.
- Tilt the screen back 10-20 degrees.

Chair:

- Adjust the height of your chair backrest to support lower back.
- Keep feet flat on the floor.
- Avoid slouching on armrests.
- Avoid sitting still for long periods – get up periodically and move around.

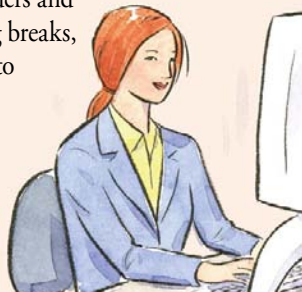
Keyboard and mouse:

- Adjust keyboard so shoulders can relax.
- Keep keyboard and mouse close so you don't need to reach for it.
- When keyboarding, keep forearms parallel to the floor and wrists in a neutral position.
- Place your mouse next to keyboard and at the same height as keyboard.
- Do not rest your hand on your mouse when you're not using it.

Lighting:

- Close drapes and blinds to reduce glare.
- Place monitor at a 90° angle to windows.
- Reduce overhead lighting.
- Use a glare screen on your monitor.

Tip: Blink your eyes often to keep them from drying out; shift your vision away from your screen frequently to reduce eye muscle fatigue. Periodically stretch your wrists, shoulders and back. During breaks, walk briskly to increase your circulation.



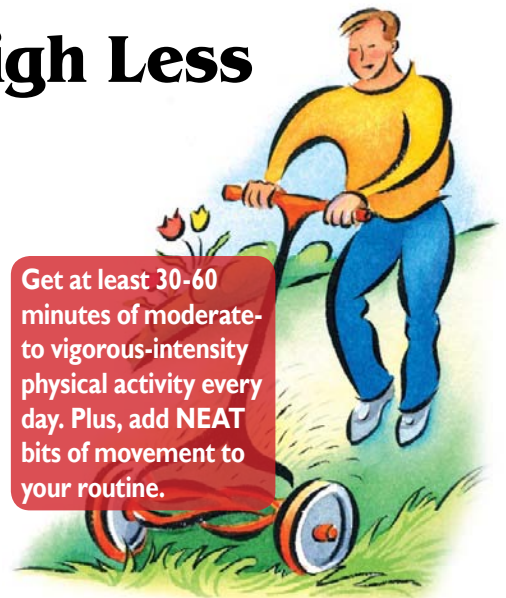
NEAT Ways to Weigh Less

You may not know it, but every time you write, talk, fidget and even sleep, your body experiences *non-exercise activity thermogenesis* (NEAT).

NEAT refers to the calories you burn doing virtually anything other than planned exercise. Researchers have found that people with a healthy weight burn more calories through NEAT, or simply by *moving more*, than those who are overweight or obese.

It's a challenge to stay active in our busy, sit-down world. Whether you want to lose weight or keep it off, balancing calories consumed with calories burned is the key.

You can take small steps to a NEAT lifestyle. You don't need to join a gym or buy fancy equipment to burn more calories.



Get at least 30-60 minutes of moderate-to vigorous-intensity physical activity every day. Plus, add NEAT bits of movement to your routine.

Note: Get your health care provider's okay before changing or beginning your exercise routine.

IF YOU DO THIS:

Take the bus to work.....	Get off one stop early and walk.
Have dinner delivered.....	Walk to the restaurant to eat.
Use the elevator.....	Take the stairs.
Watch your kids play.....	Play with them.
Use the closest parking spot.....	Park at the edge of the lot.
Buy pre-cut foods.....	Slice up produce by hand.
Watch TV after dinner.....	Use a treadmill while you watch.
Sit still in your chair.....	Fidget.
Use the carwash.....	Wash the car by hand.
Use an electric or gas mower.....	Mow with a push model.
Float in the pool.....	Swim or tread water.
Sit while you talk on the phone.....	Pace while you chat.

TRY THIS:

Write Way to Raise Your Spirits

If you're suffering an unhappy event, writing about it in a journal can make you feel better, based on research. In part, writing organizes your thoughts, which makes the experience feel less chaotic. It also provides an emotional release and insight into yourself and your ability to manage the situation.

A study in the *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* (8/02) found that participants who used journaling to express and understand their feelings derived the most health benefits, including less stress and improved well-being.

Putting negative emotions into words doesn't always come naturally. There are no rules, except these writing sessions are for you alone unless you choose to share them. Your personal journal allows you to explore and quietly vent your negative



feelings. In the private world of journaling, grammar, spelling and format are irrelevant. What does matter is the opportunity to release troublesome emotions about anything or anyone in your life.

Journaling allows you to examine stressful or negative circumstances and move forward with a solution. Just knowing you have choices builds confidence, reduces the stress that's disrupting your life and increases your sense of control.

Set aside time each day to journal, or as often as you can. Choose a quiet, private place to write. No matter what the problem, if it's negatively affecting your life, pull out your pen (or fire up your laptop), and get started. Do it for you.

Web Surfing Safety for the Family



The Internet offers endless learning opportunities, fun and exploration for adults and children alike. But the online world is not without risks. You can encounter questionable images, cyber bullies, chat room stalkers, sexual predators, and identity thieves. It's a high-tech problem that calls for old-fashioned advice:

1 Post rules for Internet use at computers.

Include these:

NEVER give personal information (e.g., name, Social Insurance Number, phone numbers or photos).

NEVER open email from strangers.

NEVER download files without parental permission (they may contain inappropriate material or damaging viruses).

NEVER arrange to meet someone encountered online without parental permission.

2 Install software to block inappropriate websites, email, downloads and other potentially harmful Web features. Use software that allows you to customize access for children based on age. Ask your Internet service provider for advice.

3 Keep computers in a common area where you can easily view monitors.

4 Establish all Internet accounts in your name and do not allow secret passwords for your children.

5 Create email addresses and screen names that are age- and gender-neutral.

6 Monitor chat rooms and instant messaging.

7 Learn online lingo kids use, such as POS (Parent Over Shoulder). Visit www.missingkids.com/adCouncil/lingo.html to learn more.

8 If your children use computers in their friends' homes, discuss safeguards with their parents.



TIME for Job Safety

If you're on a fast track to being more productive and meeting deadlines, don't lose sight of safety. Are you making mistakes more often, or do you seem more accident-prone lately? Slow down and learn to get the job done safely, as well as quickly. It's about TIME:

T HINK AHEAD. Plan the job in advance; anticipate possible hazards and how to avoid them. Collect what you need before you start and use the necessary personal protective gear.

I NSPECT YOUR EQUIPMENT. Watch for malfunctioning or poorly maintained equipment. If it isn't working properly, don't delay fixing or replacing it.

M AINTAIN A TIDY WORKSPACE. When finished with a job, shut down all machinery and computers properly, following lockout/tagout procedures, if appropriate. Dispose of any waste, and clean up spills. If you work in an office, tidy up at day's end - look around the area and remove any tripping hazards.

E VALUATE YOUR PERFORMANCE ROUTINELY. Take time to think about what went wrong and how you could do the job better and more efficiently next time.

Always stay focused on the task at hand.

Q: Naps okay? By: Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

A: Napping isn't just for preschoolers, the elderly and cats. In recent years, scientists have learned what famous daytime snoozers such as Winston Churchill and Albert Einstein may have known all along - napping can be very beneficial.

While naps don't always compensate for poor or insufficient sleep, a 20- to 30-minute nap can boost your alertness, productivity and mood, according to the (U.S.) National Sleep Foundation (NSF).

Napping isn't for everyone, though. If you have trouble sleeping at night, a too-long nap or napping

late in the day may disrupt your sleep even more. Some people find catching zzz's during the day difficult to master due to distractions. For others, napping makes them feel groggy rather than energized afterward.

Advice from the NSF: Getting a full night's sleep - or adequate daytime sleep if you're a shift worker - is generally best for your health. But a short nap may relieve fatigue. **Tip:** Set your alarm for 30 minutes; if you sleep longer than this, you might feel fuzzy and lose the power of your nap.

INDOOR ALLERGENS ROOM BY ROOM



If you have allergies or asthma, every room in your home may contain allergens - substances that trigger allergic symptoms. Here's how to clear the air as the season moves you indoors more:

HOUSE DUST - It accumulates even in the cleanest home and its allergenic components, such as dust mites, trigger symptoms year-round.

Tips: Keep your mattress, box springs and pillows in allergen-proof zippered covers. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter or double bag. Removing carpeting and heavy window coverings can reduce dust, too.

ANIMAL DANDER - Allergic people react to a protein in the saliva, dead skin or urine from furry animals. If giving up your pet is out of the question, try to minimize exposure. Keep pets out of your bedroom and other heavily used rooms.

Tips: Bathing pets weekly and controlling house dust may help.

COCKROACHES - Roaches are a leading asthma trigger; children are especially vulnerable.

Tips: Keep your home clean and dry. Fix water leaks and keep food and garbage containers sealed. Clean your kitchen regularly and thoroughly. In some regions, professional extermination may be required.

INDOOR MOULD - Mould releases spores that trigger allergy symptoms and grow easily in damp, humid environments.

Tips: Fix roof and pipe leaks. Do not use damp areas for storage. Keep all rooms ventilated, especially kitchens, bathrooms and basements. Run fans in bathrooms after showering.

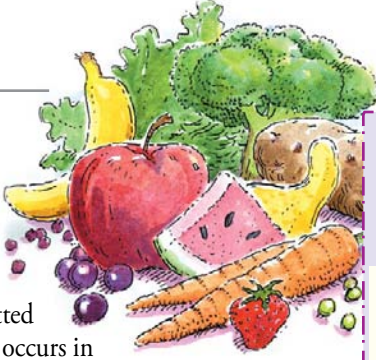


Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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Getting the MOST from Your PRODUCE

Three reasons to store fresh produce properly:
 To maximize its nutrient value, to enjoy it at its flavourful best – and both can ensure that you get your daily quota of fruits and vegetables.

Here are some basic guidelines:

- For counter top storage keep produce out of direct sunlight.
- Don't store produce in sealed plastic bags on the counter; this slows ripening and may increase off-odours and decay due to accumulation of carbon dioxide and depletion of oxygen inside the sealed bag.
- When storing produce in the refrigerator store fruits and vegetables separately to reduce exposure to ethylene (an odourless, harmless and

tasteless gas emitted after picking); it occurs in all produce but more so in some varieties (see table below) and can accelerate ripening. *Tip:* You can use this to your advantage – to speed up ripening in a bowl or paper bag add one ripe apple for every 5 to 7 pieces of fruit to be ripened.

- For storing fresh greens, place them unwashed in perforated plastic bags with a damp paper towel.
- For storing fresh herbs, snip off the ends and store upright in a glass of water and cover with a plastic bag.

Bottom line: Eat perishable produce when it's fresh. This means within 3-4 days, especially for more fragile foods such as berries, greens and asparagus.

PROPER STORAGE GUIDE FOR PRODUCE

STORE IN REFRIGERATOR	
Fruits and Melons: apples (more than 7 days) apricots Asian pears blackberries blueberries cherries cut fruits figs raspberries strawberries	grapes
Vegetables: artichokes asparagus green beans lima beans beets Belgian endive broccoli Brussels sprouts cabbage carrots cauliflower celery cut vegetables green onions herbs (not basil) leafy vegetables leeks lettuce mushrooms – store in a paper bag okra – store in a paper bag peas radishes spinach sprouts summer squashes sweet corn	
RIPEN ON THE COUNTER FIRST, THEN STORE IN REFRIGERATOR	
Fruits and Melons: apples avocados kiwi fruit nectarines peaches pears plums	
STORE ONLY AT ROOM TEMPERATURE	
Fruits and Melons: bananas grapefruit lemons limes mandarins mangoes oranges papayas pineapple pomegranates watermelon	
Vegetables: cucumbers dry onions eggplant garlic ginger peppers potatoes pumpkins winter squashes sweet potatoes tomatoes	
STORE IN A COOL DRY PLACE	
Vegetables: acorn squash butternut squash onions (away from potatoes) spaghetti squash sweet potatoes winter squash	potatoes (away from onions) pumpkins
STORE THESE HIGH-ETHYLENE PRODUCERS AWAY FROM OTHER PRODUCE	
Fruits and Melons: avocados nectarines peaches pears apples apricots cantaloupe figs honeydew plums tomatoes bananas	

Recipe of the Month

Veggie Penne with Herbs

- 1 tbsp/15 ml olive oil
- 1 medium green bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 cup/250 ml fresh mushrooms, sliced
- ¼ tsp/1 ml red pepper flakes
- 3-4 small shallots, sliced
- 3 medium fresh tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- 2 tbsp/30 ml each fresh oregano and basil, chopped
- 1 15-oz/425 g can low-sodium tomato sauce
- ½ cup/125 ml reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1.2 oz/375 g whole-wheat penne pasta

- 1 In a large saucepan heat oil over medium-high temp; sauté bell pepper, mushrooms and pepper flakes 3 minutes; add shallots and sauté 3 more minutes.
- 2 Stir in tomatoes and herbs and cook 1 minute.
- 3 Add tomato sauce and broth and bring to a boil; lower heat and simmer covered 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, cook pasta as directed.
- 4 Spoon sauce over pasta and serve. Pass the Parmesan cheese.

Nutrition Facts	
Makes 7 cups/1.5 L (5 servings).	
Amount Per Serving	Calories
	341
	Protein 12.2g
	Total Fat 5.4g
	Carbohydrate 66g
	Fibre 8.8g
	Sodium 509mg

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