



**Mind:** Extending Your Personal Shelf Life

**Body:** Nutrition

**Spirit:** Determination

## Extending Your Personal Shelf Life



### Extending THIS 6 Week Shelf Life Just Might Extend Your Personal Shelf Life!

In the market for a deal on second-hand work-out equipment? Or perhaps a discount on a gym membership? Now might just be the best time!

It is commonly accepted that 60% of gym memberships are left unused; and following an initial flurry of 'New Year Newcomers', the regular gym attendance reverts back to normal by the middle of February. Looks like exercise intentions have a shelf life of about 6 weeks.

We all know that exercise is good for us -- but I wonder if we truly appreciate the depth and extent of the benefits. It has been said that if the benefits of exercise were distilled into a pill or portion, we would have access to the real 'fountain of youth.'

### Exercise and Cognitive Aging

A variety of studies confirm that a regular exercise routine can reduce age-related cognitive decline, and

may postpone or even prevent the onset of dementia. Now that's an incentive!

We already know that exercise contributes toward a stronger cardiovascular system, and we are learning that what is good for the heart is also good for the head. Exercise helps to maintain and stabilize healthy blood glucose levels. Excessive blood glucose levels can lead to shrinkage of our hippocampus (area responsible for memory) and a re-establishment of healthier levels can contribute toward stalling and reversing this condition.

The hippocampus is not the only area impacted in a positive way. Want to think 'smarter' thoughts? Move more! Our pre-frontal cortex, which assumes primary responsibility for our higher 'executive' thinking, actually improves with aerobic exercise. Indeed, the reverse is also true. Less physically fit seniors showed reduced grey and white matter in the frontal and other temporal and parietal cortexes in the brain.

### Exercise and Our Sense of Happiness and Well-Being

In addition to increased energy, physically fit folks have better sleep patterns and reduced anxiety. There is often an increased sense of well-being, accomplishment and confidence. Those who really take it up a notch may in fact reach a place where endorphins give you that often touted 'natural high!'

Appreciate      Respect      Value

Elevating the way the world sees and serves the age 50+.

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Remember our friend, the hippocampus? In addition to helping with memory, it also serves to regulate our mood -- another great reason to exercise to prevent this important area of our brain from dwindling away.

## Exercise and Functional Fitness

You may be thinking that the opportunity to conquer the four-minute mile has long-since passed, so why bother? What about climbing a single set of stairs? Reaching for a glass from a cupboard, getting up from a chair, or bending down to tie your shoes? What about dancing with your sweetheart, walking a dog, or playing with your grandkids? All of these regular daily activities require a basic level of flexibility, strength, and endurance.

## Exercise and Our Cellular Health

There is a lot of buzz in the literature about good cellular health. The cells in older muscles do not regenerate as easily, and become weaker as their mitochondria diminish in vitality and number. Of all age groups, older persons showed the greatest positive impact in cellular improvement and change in response to specific exercise protocols. Although both strength and endurance exercises stimulated positive change, high intensity interval training had the most significant impact on cellular regeneration.

It is, of course, critically important to first check with your health practitioner before starting out on any exercise program. The literature is clear. It is never too late to benefit from a consistent exercise program.

Whether you are motivated by the challenge of your own 'personal bests', are restored by a hike in nature, or enjoy the social connection of a group class, the results will change the quality of your life. Choose now and choose you and just maybe we can extend our own personal shelf life!

Rhonda Latreille, MBA, CPCA  
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## Body



Good nutrition goes hand in hand with a solid exercise routine. Avoid food treats as a reward for your exercise discipline and instead choose a bubble bath, good book, call with a friend, lottery ticket, a movie or a single rose. Remember -- you can't outrun a bad diet!

## Spirit

"I already know what giving up feels like. I want to see what happens if I don't."

*Neila Ray*