



KEYS TO EMBRACING AGING 101

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What you do today will affect your future. Nowhere is this as true as it is in issues regarding aging. The way you take care of yourself through the years, both physically and mentally, will impact the natural process of aging. No one knows this better than centenarians, people who are 100 years old and older. Centenarian studies demonstrate that life does not diminish with aging. In fact, 100-year-olds are teaching us that the acceptance of aging can be positive, joyful and exciting. They demonstrate that aging brings new experiences, knowledge, wisdom and a greater ability to engineer a positive approach to the aging process. Many centenarians contribute their longevity to the following:

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

- A positive attitude affects overall happiness, health and well-being. A positive attitude can also help you better manage life's transitions and challenges.

EATING SMART AND HEALTHY

- Eating right can help prevent illness and chronic disease. It can also provide you with more energy so that you can be alert and a better decision-maker. Eating healthy includes a well-balanced diet and a healthy relationship with food.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Regular exercise is associated with decreased death and/or disability from diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and cancer. It is also associated with positive psychological benefits such as improved quality of life. The most important thing to remember about exercise is to do it. Make exercise a habit.

BRAIN ACTIVITY

- A healthy brain is crucial to survival, growth and everyday successes. Similar to the rest of the body, the brain needs exercise and maintenance in order to optimize and protect its current and future health. In particular, the brain needs socialization, mental stimulation, physical activity, nutrition and sleep.

SOCIAL ACTIVITY

- Engaged people are often healthier, happier, less depressed and demonstrate enhanced brain vitality. Social activity also improves academic performance, inspires a positive attitude, enhances self-esteem, connects you to family and peers and reduces the risk of illnesses and disease.

TUNING IN TO THE TIMES

- Staying in tune to the times throughout life promotes lifelong learning, which increases knowledge, problem solving and decision making. Staying on top of the latest technology and keeping up with the news also enhances brain stimulation and helps broaden social opportunities and networks.

SAFETY

- Practicing safety is important because it helps keep you out of harm's way. From locking doors to learning how to swim, it is important to be safe in the various realms of life including home, transportation, health, recreation and emergency preparedness.

KNOW YOUR HEALTH NUMBERS

- Certain health numbers can save and extend your life. These numbers are associated with cholesterol, blood pressure, triglycerides, blood sugar, body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference. A lifestyle including regular visits to a health care provider, proper nutrition and physical activity promotes these numbers and contribute to healthy aging throughout the lifespan.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Appropriate stress is healthy and useful; however, when stress overwhelms you, it can become distress, causing anxiety, tension, irritability and a number of health problems. Learning what causes stress and how to manage it in positive ways helps you to cope and live a more balanced, healthy life.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

- Good financial management is important whether you earn minimum wage or are a millionaire. The first step to healthy financial management is to balance income with expenses. With a money management and spending plan in place, you are more likely to meet your financial goals.

SLEEP

- Sleep has a major impact on overall health and quality of life, including the way we look, feel and perform on a daily basis. Our bodies need sleep to repair muscles, consolidate memories and regulate hormones and appetite. When you sleep well, you wake up feeling refreshed and alert for daily activities. Sleep prepares you to concentrate, make decisions and fully engage in school, work and social activities.

TAKING TIME FOR YOU

- In today's busy world, you juggle multiple priorities and responsibilities. You make time for others before making time for yourself. Taking time for yourself is to take care of you, which makes you a better family member, friend, co-worker, caregiver or leader. If it is just for 10 minutes a day, a time out is good for your mind, body and soul.

CONCLUSION

Since there is no magic potion to stop the aging process, it is important to take care of your body, mind and spirit throughout your whole life. These 12 keys, and many additional healthy behavior practices, encourage optimal aging throughout the lifespan.

REFERENCES

Keys to Embracing Aging Program Publications:

- Attitude Is Everything...Be Positive
- Eating Smart and Healthy
- Physical Activity
- Brain Activity
- Social Activity
- Tuning in to the Times
- Practice Being Safe
- Know Your Health Numbers
- Stress Management
- Financial Affairs
- Sleep
- Taking Time for You