

TEN TIPS FOR STAYING HEALTHY AND FIT AFTER 50

1. Cultivate your passion, retirement is around the corner

Don't be one of those people who goes home from their retirement party feeling like someone died. Long before you retire you need to find your passion and make it a part of your life so that when you retire you can totally immerse yourself in it. When you start following your passion, magical things happen. You will find your energy increases. You will find that as soon as you awaken you JUMP out of bed excited to start the day. Your mood improves too, you sleep better, and you are generally fired up about life. If your passion is collecting baseball trading cards then get started NOW. Read everything you can about trading cards, work on becoming the world's #1 expert, join clubs, make a website. Who knows, your passion might end up making money so that you can retire early and get paid doing what you love.

2. Volunteer – Do something for others

Be selfish, volunteer! If you ever catch yourself feeling sorry for yourself, you need to drop whatever you are doing and volunteer ASAP. Think YOU have problems? Find a way to volunteer at a VA hospital or a children's hospital and it will put your problems in the proper perspective. The volunteers often seem to get just as much or more out of the charity than the people being helped. Think outside the box and find something that takes advantage of your unique talents. It's even better if you could couple it with your passion, and kill two birds with one stone. Using the example above, if you are becoming an expert at baseball trading cards, consider creating a website to help others learn the joy of collecting. Or perhaps couple it with your work. If you are a plumber, consider volunteering for Habitat for Humanity. Whatever knowledge and skill set you have, think of a unique way to share it. Can't think of anything? Try volunteering at the local animal shelter.

3. Read one book a month – keep your brain engaged

Reading is a great for many reasons but mainly because it makes you think. It exposes you to wonderful and strange ideas you may not have thought of. It keeps your brain young. It can be an excellent component of a stress reduction plan. Read anything and everything that interests you. If reading really isn't your thing, come up with something cerebral that works for you: Crossword Puzzles, Sudoku, Words with Friends, Luminosity, etc

4. Find your retirement sport

Hopefully you have a sport you love by now but if not you need to find one asap! It doesn't matter what it is as long as you love it: shuffleboard, hiking, cricket, golf, horseshoes, etc.. If you already have a sport you love, it might be time to think of a

more age appropriate one. Skateboarding is fun in your 30s and 40s, but it's probably not advisable for 70 year olds, so think about cultivating another sport.

5. Diet – Eat as unprocessed as you can

1. Drink water like a fish
2. Eat vegetables like a rabbit – full color spectrum
3. Eat fibrous whole grains like a horse
4. Eat only lean cuts of meat
5. Eat full color spectrum of fruits
6. Minimize fast food and junk food

6. Make weight training part of your daily life

Bodybuilding style weight training is excellent for older folks as are all bodyweight workouts, and many DVD workouts – find a style that you like. Being strong helps you have a higher quality of life, for a longer period of time. What good is living to age 90 if you can't do the things you enjoy doing? Strength training not only makes you look and feel better but it keeps you doing the things you find fun longer, be it gardening, golf, or marathon running and it helps you maintain your balance – a great fall preventer.

7. Make cardio part of your daily life – get a dog!

Over age 50, cardiovascular health is most people's #1 problem – make cardio part of your daily activity. If you've never done daily cardio, try getting a dog, and walking it twice a day. Having a dog is a great way to force you to do your daily cardio and if you haven't established a solid habit of daily cardio by age 50 then having a dog to walk is a great way to start. And cardio isn't the only benefit. It's known that pet owners live longer, happier lives. And even better, do a good thing and adopt a dog from the local shelter! Rescue dogs are the most loving dogs on the planet.

8. Throw away your alarm clock

Alarm clocks only serve one purpose and that is to wake you up before you've had enough sleep. And sleep deprivation is known to have many problems associated with it. Reduced reaction times, increased stress levels, decreased ability to concentrate, increased body fat, to name a few. Get rid of your alarm clock and give in to your natural body rhythms.

9. Do the important things first and forget about the rest.

Sleep is important, do it first. How do you do this practically? Easy! Go to bed about 12 hours before you have to be to work and don't set an alarm. When you wake up naturally, begin your day by doing the most important things first. You have precious little time left in this world, make the time count. Do a time audit to see if you are truly spending your time on the important things. Just for one day, keep a 'timecard' and

'charge' every activity down to the 0.1 hour. Is spending an hour on Facebook every day really that important? Will the earth stop rotating if you don't clean your house weekly? Is spending an hour watching the news a priority when you can read it in 5 minutes? How important is watching those three sitcoms you love? Make the most of your time and you will be happier and healthier.

10. Take control of health and be minimally invasive

Take control of your health

YOU are the only one who can make and keep yourself healthy, not your doctor. Your doctor can assist you, but it's 95% you. Even when surgery is involved, the outcome is as much more dependent on YOU than it is your surgeon. The surgeon makes the healing possible but if you don't follow thru with your share of the work, the surgery will fail. If you get knee surgery but don't do any rehab other than what they force you to do in those six post-op sessions, then your knee will never be 100%.

Don't blindly do what the doctor says, weigh the pros and cons and make your own decision. Remember that doctors need to CYA. If they don't order all possible tests, they could be sued, but that doesn't mean that it's always in your best health interest. Take CAT scans for example; these expose you to hundreds of times the radiation of an x-ray and increase your risk of cancer. If your doctor recommends a CAT scan, ask them why, what they expect to learn, and how their treatment of you will vary depending on the outcome of the test. It's your body and you need to decide if the benefit of the test or procedure is worth the risks. If your doctor can't explain the risks and benefits clearly, find another doctor and ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS, get a second opinion. If your doctor tries to bully or intimidate you into doing something you are uncomfortable with, find a new doctor. It's just that simple. It's your body – honor it.

Be minimally invasive

- Stress: Try exercise, yoga, and meditation before medication
- Sleep: Try exercise, yoga, and meditation before medication
- Joint and back pain: Try PT and Yoga before surgery
- High Cholesterol: Try exercise and diet before medication