

Yes, Working Out Keeps You Young

Some things, like fine wine, get better with age. Bodies, not so much.

The way you work out needs to change as you get older, but exercise does indeed slow the effects of aging.

Over time, the parts of your body, like gears in cars, wear out. And, as time goes by, neither works as effectively as when it first rolled out of the factory.

But, in the same way that a well-maintained car can keep going strong miles and years beyond others, so, too, can you.

Beat the clock

A side effect of aging is something called sarcopenia, which is a fancy way of saying we all lose muscle mass as we get older. And less muscle brings a decline in physical function, balance, coordination The list goes on.

But, wait! There's a way to beat the clock. Or at least to slow it down.

"That's the normal process," says UHealth Manager of Fitness Programs Alexis Canaves, "but more and more evidence is showing that exercising according to the American College of Sports Medicine guidelines will help to offset those things, improve quality of life and improve longevity."

Change your expectations

The rules for exercising change as we get older. You can't expect as much from your body, and you can't treat it — or your workouts — the same either.

- You need to pay more attention to mobility and flexibility. (Yes, we all should have been doing this all along, but, hey, I know ...)
- Cardio, of course, is important. Include some intervals. They're good for your ticker, reduce fatigue, *and* they help fight fat.
- You want to put some emphasis on strength training. You can't completely prevent muscle loss, but hitting the weights is a good way to slow it down.
- And we have to allow more time for recovery. You might do weights twice a week instead of three times.
"Twice a week is sufficient for health benefits," says Canaves. And make sure to space those workouts apart. "You want to have at least 48 hours between those two days," she says.

It's never too late

The other thing to remember is that it's never too late to start. And the upside of exercise is that it improves your overall health, not just your muscle tone.

It reduces the impact of illness and chronic disease, improves sleep, boosts your mood, and recent studies say it might even reverse aging in the brain.

Which makes exercise a great way to grow younger as you grow older.

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