



## Run For Your Life - By Amanda Gardner, HealthDay Reporter

It may, in fact, be possible to outrun death, and even the creeping ravages of time. at least for a while.

Research spanning two decades has found that older runners live longer and suffer fewer disabilities than healthy non-runners.

And the findings probably apply to a variety of aerobic exercises, including walking, said the study authors, from Stanford University School of Medicine, whose findings are published in the Aug. 11 issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine.

"This is telling you that being a runner, being active is going to reduce your disability, and it's going to increase your survival," said Marcia Ory, professor of social and behavioral health at the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health in College Station. "Late in life, you still see the benefit of vigorous activity."

In 1980, the study's lead author, Dr. James Fries, emeritus professor of medicine at Stanford, wrote a landmark paper outlining his "compression of morbidity" hypothesis. The theory held that regular exercise would compress, or reduce, the amount of time near the end of life when a person was disabled or unable to carry out the activities of daily living, such as walking, dressing and getting out of a chair.

"Illness would be compressed between later age of onset and age of death, and that paradigm was controversial, because it went against conventional wisdom and had no proof," Fries explained.

At the time, many experts believed that vigorous exercise would actually harm older individuals. And running, in particular, would result in an epidemic of joint and bone injuries.

But this new study proves otherwise.

Two hundred and eighty-four runners and 156 healthy "controls," or non-runners, in California completed annual questionnaires

over a 21-year period. The participants were 50 years old or over at the beginning of the study and ran an average of about four hours a week. By the end of the study period, the participants were in their 70s or 80s or older and ran about 76 minutes a week.

At 19 years, just 15 percent of the runners had died, compared with 34 percent of the non-runners.

Also, said Fries, who is almost 70, runs 20 miles a week and plays tennis, "Running delayed the onset of disability by an average of 16 years, and that is largely a conservative number, because the control group was pretty darn healthy."

And the slew of predicted orthopedic injuries never materialized.

Surprisingly, the health gap between runners and non-runners only increased with time. "I always thought that the two curves would start to parallel each other and that eventually aging would overpower exercise," Fries said. "I think that will happen, but we can't find even a little twitch toward that gap narrowing in the present time."

Which is not to say that running is the only activity that's good for you.

"Vigorous activity has a really dramatic impact, but we can't ignore that there are also helpful benefits to people who are active at all levels, meaning those people who are just out walking" said Ory. "It's so important to be physically active your whole life, not just in your 20s or 40s, but forever."

Added Dr. Suzanne Steinbaum, director of women and heart disease at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City: "Exercise is like the most potent drug. Exercise is by far the best thing you can do."

SOURCES: James Fries, M.D., emeritus professor of medicine, Stanford University School of Medicine, Stanford, Calif.; Suzanne Steinbaum, D.O., director, women and heart disease, Lenox Hill Hospital, New York City; Marcia G. Ory, Ph.D., professor of social and behavioral health, Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health, College Station; Aug. 11, 2008, Archives of Internal Medicine



## Lose Weight... Of Course! But How? - By Sophia Abdelkafi, Dt.p.

There's no secret to losing weight! It's very simple: eat when you're hungry and stop eating when you're not. The best way to lose weight over the long term is therefore to become reacquainted with how to listen to your signs of hunger and satiation.

Before that, certain concepts must be carefully applied:

**1** Eat three meals a day. Always start off your day with a good breakfast. If you have three meals on a regular basis, particularly breakfast, you are less likely to have cravings during the day, you will burn more calories, and store less fat.

**2** Have a snack in the afternoon. If there is a big time gap between lunch and dinner, plan a nutritious snack that is a source of protein. You will therefore avoid eating excessively at dinner. Some examples of snacks: a handful of roasted almonds, yogurt, etc.



**3** Consume a lot of vegetables. Vegetables are low in calories and rich in fiber, vitamins and minerals. Consuming a lot of vegetables is one way of reducing your total calorie intake while satisfying your hunger. Half of your plate at lunch or dinner should contain vegetables.



**4** Consume protein at every meal. Contrary to foods rich in carbohydrates, which are a quickly used energy source, foods rich in protein prolong the effect of satiation, which prevents you from feeling hungry between meals. The following are low-fat sources of protein to be included at every meal: fish, legumes, poultry, lean meat, low-fat cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, and all-natural almond or peanut butter.

**5** Limit excess calories by making simple substitutions:

- Remove the cheese from your sandwich and save 200 calories.
- Use mustard instead of mayonnaise and save 100 calories.
- Use a low-fat dressing instead of a regular creamy dressing and save 100 calories.
- Drink water (natural spring, flavoured or carbonated) instead of a regular carbonated or fruit drink and save 150 calories.
- Remove the skin from chicken and save 100 calories.
- Choose an English muffin instead of a bagel and save 200 calories
- Choose a turkey sandwich instead of a chicken salad or tuna salad sandwich and save 250 calories.

Other source: nutritionists at Medisys.



## CHIP'S SPIN FOR TEENS

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## Aerobics Can Reverse Mental Decline in Older Adults

### Review of studies shows workouts that leave a person breathless boost brain tissue volume

Regular exercise can reverse age-related brain decline, according to a U.S. cognitive neuroscientist.

Prof. Art Kramer, of the Beckman Institute at the University of Illinois, says there's substantial evidence showing the benefits of aerobic exercise and physical activity on such executive-control brain functions as task coordination, planning, goal maintenance, working memory and the ability to switch tasks.

As people age, a deterioration of white and gray matter in certain areas of the brain can cause cognitive decline, Kramer explained. He reviewed published research and found that several studies showed that regular moderate exercise that makes a person breathless increases the speed and sharpness of thought, the actual volume of brain tissue, and the way in which the brain functions.

These benefits have been noted in people with Alzheimer's disease as well as in those

with no signs of progressive brain disease, Kramer wrote in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.

Some studies found that six months of aerobic exercise reversed age-related decline and that older adults' brains retained plasticity, the capacity to grow and develop. Other studies showed that adults with higher levels of physical fitness had less evidence of deterioration in gray matter (involved in thinking) than less fit peers.

In women going through menopause, a decline in levels of the female hormone estrogen is linked with poorer memory and declining brain power. But Kramer cited a study that found older women who were physically fit had more gray matter and did better on tests of executive control than less-fit women, irrespective of whether they had hormone replacement therapy.

There are still many unanswered questions, but, Kramer concluded, "we can safely argue that an active lifestyle with moderate amounts of aerobic activity will likely improve cognitive and brain function, and reverse the neural decay frequently observed in older adults."



## Better Health? It's All Hours

If you've been lax about your exercise routine and aren't sure what you should be doing, new recommendations give adults and kids specifics on what they can do to reap important health benefits.

Adults need a minimum of 2 1/2 hours of moderate exercise per week, or one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous activity. And kids should get an hour of activity per day, according to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans announced earlier this month.

Those are the numbers the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services came up with after a two-year process that included having a 13-member advisory committee review scientific research on the effects of physical activity and health.

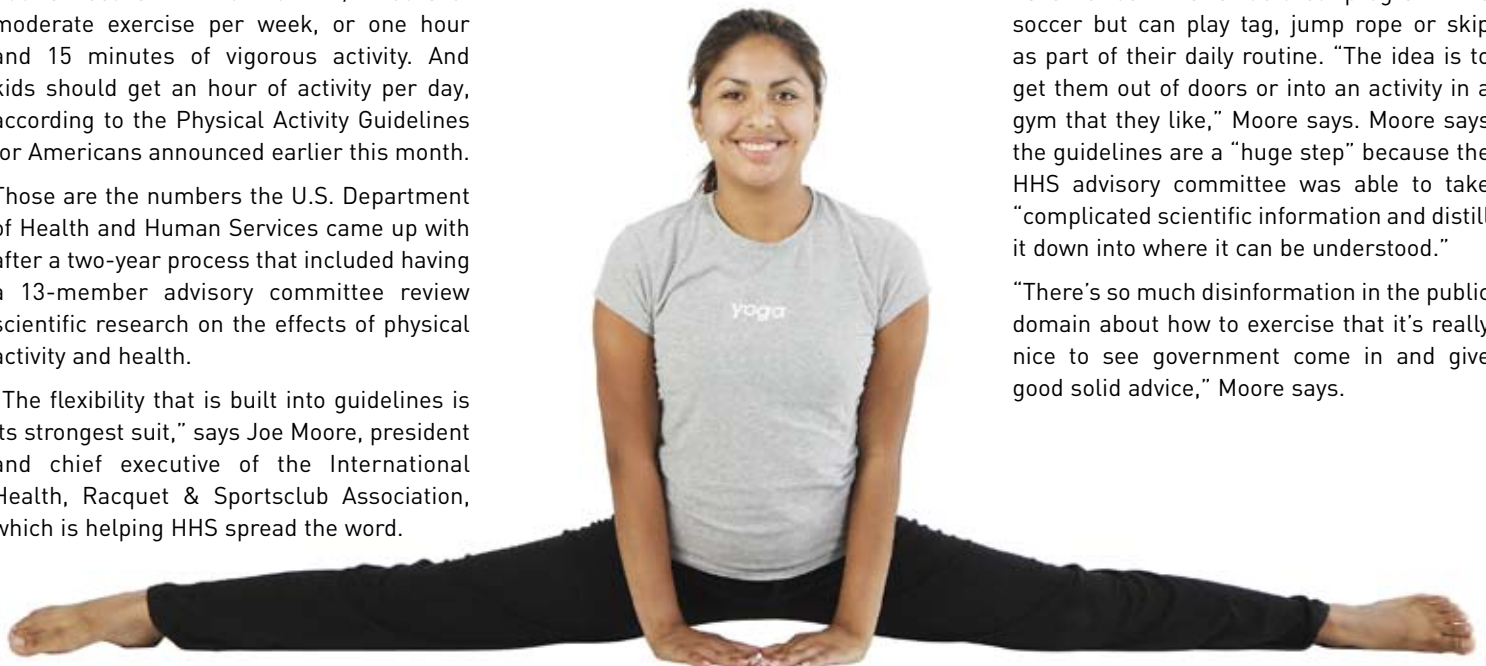
"The flexibility that is built into guidelines is its strongest suit," says Joe Moore, president and chief executive of the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association, which is helping HHS spread the word.

"The beauty of this is that you can look at the total hours people are active - whether they're going to a health club, walking to work, climbing the stairs or doing any other activity they enjoy - and figure if it's meeting

the guidelines," Moore says. "The message is to find what you enjoy because research shows that you will stick with it."

For children and adolescents, the recommendations are similar. Kids don't have to be in a structured program like soccer but can play tag, jump rope or skip as part of their daily routine. "The idea is to get them out of doors or into an activity in a gym that they like," Moore says. Moore says the guidelines are a "huge step" because the HHS advisory committee was able to take "complicated scientific information and distill it down into where it can be understood."

"There's so much disinformation in the public domain about how to exercise that it's really nice to see government come in and give good solid advice," Moore says.



## The Simple Pushup, made harder - By Mike Mejia

### Perfecting the Pushup

Here's how to take the classic move up a notch—no equipment required.

The pushup is unquestionably one of the most effective, time-efficient exercises you can do. If the gym ever gets too crowded, you can always drop down to the floor and give your upper body and core a great workout. But even a move as classic as the pushup isn't beyond tweaking. Here are a few ways to add some much-needed variety to this time-honored exercise.

### Triangle Pushup

Make a triangle with your forefingers and thumbs, and lower your chest down as close to your hands as possible. This variation works the triceps especially hard.

### Swiss-Ball Pushup

Resting your shins on a Swiss ball really increases the demand on your core (your midsection, hips, and spine).

### T Pushup

Rotating your torso and balancing on one arm at the top of each rep is a great way to improve shoulder stability.

### Pike Pushup

Keeping your butt up high in the air and legs straight makes your shoulders and triceps work harder.

Source: U24. Used with permission.



## Finding Balance - By Christine Fennessy

### Doug Leonard overcame cancer and became a marathoner

After brain surgery, learning to walk while dreaming to run.

For years, whenever Doug Leonard ran, he ran long—marathon long. As the miles accumulated beneath his feet, his body switched to autopilot. His mind grew quiet, steeped in the motivational tapes he carried that inspired him to lead a positive life. Then life took its own, devastating turn.

On September 12, 2001, mere hours after the nation was plunged into a powerful, collective grief, Leonard lay down for a nap in his Houston home, suffered a massive seizure, and awoke in the hospital, nauseous and doped up on strong, antiseizure medication. Monitored closely for the next 3 years, the 50-year-old software designer never had another seizure, but his daily meds kept him feeling sick, tired, and incapable of maintaining his former 75-mile-a-week running schedule. His fitness naturally declined. Then, on June 30, 2004, it bit the dust.

That was the day Leonard had surgery to remove a cyst from his brain—the interloper that caused his initial seizure—and the operation and the meds that followed

erased his sense of balance. The four-time marathoner could barely walk, much less run.

“Doug’s was the fastest transformation I’ve seen in anybody.”

He tripped over slight cracks and small dips in sidewalks. He couldn’t ride a bike. He lost the upper-body strength to rise unassisted from a seated position or to exit a car. Once athletic, outgoing, and optimistic, he felt cloudy and insecure, sidelined from a world moving at a pace he could no longer match. “When your physical balance is off, your mental balance is equally off,” he says.

Eager to feel “on” again, Leonard joined the Brand Boulevard 24 Hour Fitness in Glendale, Colorado, in January 2007, shortly after his doctors reduced his meds. Still, he couldn’t balance on one leg for more than 1 or 2 seconds or raise more than a 3-pound weight above his head. Trainer Courtney Shelby remembers the face of the man who sat before her, asking for help; it was tired, drawn, weak. Five months later, it was the face of (near) triumph.

“Doug’s was the fastest transformation I’ve seen in anybody,” says Shelby. To restore his balance, Leonard practiced single-leg

step-ups, balancing for a second or two on each leg, with no weights. He did shoulder presses with 3-pound free weights while balancing on a Swiss ball. Shelby emphasized good posture, stretching, and massage to strengthen his abs and lower back to further improve balance. Leonard built leg strength with ball squats and sessions of standing from a seated position on a bench, using just his heels.

As we went to press, Leonard was cranking through three sets of 12 step-ups while holding anywhere from 20- to 35-pound weights in each hand and balancing from 5 to 7 seconds on each leg. He can do single-arm shoulder presses with 10- to 20-pound weights. He can leg press 75 to 90 pounds. He’s back on track—literally—walking every day.

Fifteen years ago, Leonard ran part of Angels Landing Trail in Utah’s Zion National Park. The challenging climb offers stunning views of the canyon. Leonard’s goal? To run that trail again.

“When you run in nature, you become a part of it,” he says. “That’s my goal. When that happens, I’ll have totally come back.”

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