



Your Body. *Your Health.*

Your Excuse Is Getting Old

"Your joints ache because you're old." "You're fat because you're old." "You don't sleep well because you're old." "You can't do that anymore because you're old." "This disease you have is common in old people."

Blaming age for a health problem is perhaps the biggest "diagnosis" cop-out in conventional medicine. I've been in practice for 16 years now and I have yet to find a diagnosis code to support someone simply being old; yet I see people all the time whose problems are passed off as just normal aging.

Even the average Joe will use his age to justify why he can't do something anymore. Sure, we all get older, and a typical 65-year-old isn't going to run speeds or lift the weights he did when he was in his twenties, but that doesn't mean that he should be complacent with a walk around the block before fatigue and pain sets in.

It's not uncommon to hear someone, at any age, mention that they have a "bad knee" or some other dysfunctional body part that's preventing them from participating in an activity they used to enjoy and excel in. Now they can't run, ski, or maybe even fully squat because of their current situation. Yet, this too is often just passed off as an aspect of the aging process or sometimes poor health due to genetics. We might not heal as quickly as we did when we were younger, but we should have two good knees, not just one, regardless of our age or genetic makeup.

Playing the Age Excuse

If you have kids, you hopefully take them to the park or to some outside arena on a regular basis. Have you ever noticed how most parents will just sit on the bench (or in their vehicles) while their kids are out playing? For those parents who do exercise, they've been brainwashed into thinking it has to be for 30 minutes on some machine while staring at a screen.

Age isn't only a psychological factor involved in the lack of play in the adult world. Most adults are in a state of health crisis. The average person today is taking some cocktail of medications to keep them somewhat mentally stable, somewhat alert and somewhat functional. When you add in a bunch of pain-relief and anti-inflammatory meds for the headaches, joint pain and other stress disorders, you can see why most adults have a quasi-legit reason to sit on the sidelines when it comes to playing anything.

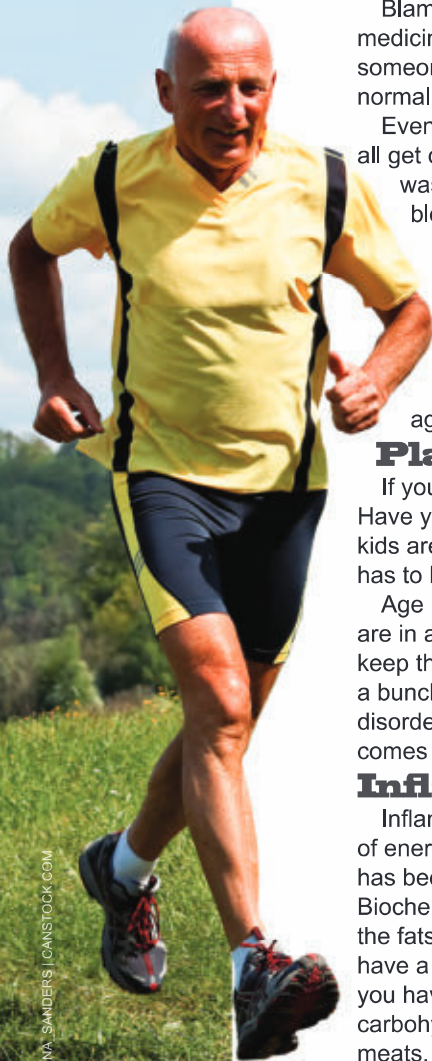
Inflammation Everywhere

Inflammation can essentially be tied into every modern health problem, whether it's a lack of energy or the painful shoulder that's keeping you from throwing a ball. The average person has been taught to take anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) for these types of problems. Biochemically these drugs work by blocking the synthesis of prostaglandins, which are related to the fats in your body. If you ever feel better from taking an NSAID then it's a sure sign that you have a problem with making sufficient and essential amounts of prostaglandins. This means that you have a problem with fatty-acid metabolism. Usually, this is a result of eating too many refined carbohydrates and refined vegetable oils and not enough of the beneficial fats found in grass-fed meats, coconut oil, fish, eggs, butter and cream.

Interestingly enough, your body can actually create excess inflammation from taking too many anti-inflammatory medications. It's not uncommon when I ask a patient how long they've been taking their NSAID to hear they've been taking it for several years but feel little to no relief!

By blocking certain prostaglandins from properly forming into their anti-inflammatory components, you can actually shunt the inflammatory process from that of anti-inflammation to the creation of inflammatory substances called leukotrienes. These leukotrienes can be several hundred times more inflammatory than the prostaglandin! It's pretty crazy to think about your anti-inflammatory meds creating more inflammation – perhaps a lot more inflammation than you were initially dealing with.

Additionally, taking NSAIDs depletes ever-important sulfur compounds from your body. Sulfur is how you repair your cartilage (yes, for that bad knee that is keeping you in your car on your iPhone while your kid runs around). Sulfur is also how you detoxify the majority of hormones via your liver.



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The cortisol you're pumping out of your system to deal with everyday stress and your injury needs that sulfur to properly break down.

So before you pop another NSAID, or even if you're nursing an injury while staying drug-free, consider your diet to be top priority if you want to play again and still be active well into your AARP years.

Train Smart: Play Smart

Stamina is an important element in moving well. Kids, at least the ones who are active, have a lot of stamina. Most kids can maintain some level of moderate energy for a prolonged period of time. With the scary misinterpreted research coming out over the past several years saying that "chronic cardio" is a killer or at best a waste of your time – while high intensity interval training (HIIT) is the way to go – many people now neglect the fact that a strong aerobic system is a huge component of health and fitness.

Your aerobic system provides a solid foundation for good health. It is the predominate system for efficient movement throughout the day, as it involves the muscles that support your overall posture. Training your aerobic system will increase mitochondria in your muscle cells to generate energy (ATP) and also increase capillary vascularization for increased oxygen utilization. These mitochondria burn fat and glucose (sugar), yet they're much more efficient at using fat than glucose for energy – twelve times more efficient. Burning stored fat thus results in more stable energy for a longer period of time.

During low-intensity aerobic workouts you'll burn more fat than glucose but during higher-intensity (anaerobic) activity you end up burning more calories, which can lead to more fat loss. These are all good things, but realize that HIIT (anaerobic) workouts, being promoted by some as "the only cardio you need to do," can be very harmful to your health and your fitness if done too often or too soon in a training program if you're unfit to begin with or suffer from health problems.

Let's not forget the lifestyle of our ancestors millions of years ago – they didn't just sprint, lift, throw and repeat as their sole form of movement. Hunter-gatherers traveled across vast areas over time – that's an aerobic quality. They didn't always run as hard as they could, but they maintained a steady aerobic pace. In persistence hunting one had to be in superb physical condition, especially aerobic condition, to track an animal for so long, and then utilize the anaerobic system for the sprint and the final kill (the throwing of the spear).

If you want to play long into your life, then training the aerobic system should not be neglected. No, you don't have to go out and run at some slow to moderate pace for hours (unless you want to) to develop your aerobic system. Walking and moving at a steady comfortable pace for 30-60 minutes at least five

days, if not every day, of the week will get you headed in the right direction. For many, this is all you need if you're looking for general good health and fitness to keep up with the "young'uns." By the way, aerobic endurance is a huge factor when it comes to healthy sex if that sparks your interest any more.

Easy Days Required

Not every day has to be devoted to a long period of intense time for play (or call it exercise if that makes you feel any better). Rest is required, of course, and that goes beyond sleep. Plus, we all have days when it's impossible to find the time to get some good training in.


So make what you can of it. Get up from your desk and move around some. Work on some squats for a few minutes or freak everyone out and do a pistol at your desk. Find something to balance on and practice that for a while. There are huge rewards to these types of movements not just for your body but for your mind. It'll get your muscles and joints moving, relax your nervous system and calm your brain so you can maintain focus. So keep moving!

As often and as comfortably as you can, remove your shoes. The more your body can feel and connect with the ground the better for your proprioception, which is your sense of body position in space, as well as all your body parts in relationship to one another. Healthy people have the ability to sense changes in their environment and adapt quickly and efficiently.

Always Busy? Chill Out

We all know someone who just love to tell others how busy they are. Maybe you are one of these individuals. People get stuck in the daily grind of working hard all day long then cramming in a workout if they're lucky. Most often this is some form of HIIT training which will only further increase their stress hormones and inflammation levels. Sure, not too many have succeeded by being a slacker, but you may consider reevaluating working so hard now to max out your 401(k) with hopes that you can retire early and play in your so-called Golden Years.

Most people who retire early with this mindset quickly fall into poor health. Some of this may be due to no longer feeling like a productive member of society, but it can also be due in part to pushing their body too hard for too many years. So they spend their entire working years missing out on playing and enjoying whatever they may be interested in only to find that at the point in their life when they have the time to do what they want, they're unable to because their body has broken down. You're not going to easily develop a healthy aerobic (or anaerobic) system and reduce chronic inflammation when you're 70 or 80 years old if you've neglected your health for so many years.

To put it simply: there's no better time than the present to change your lifestyle to maximize your play-to-work ratio. 

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- Research indicates that inactivity can cause seniors to lose their independence. It actually **can lead to more illnesses, doctor visits, and use of medicine.**
- **Exercise can help you look and feel younger.** Plus, you will stay active longer. Regular physical activity lowers your risk for a variety of conditions, including Alzheimer's and dementia, heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, high blood pressure and obesity.
- Regular exercise, by building strength and stamina, prevents loss of bone mass and improves balance. **Exercise actually reduces your risk of falling.**