



Safe Environments

Healthy Workers

ACTIVE AGING AND ACTING YOUR AGE

Have you ever wondered how some people manage to look ageless? Well into their 80s, they have a youthfulness that belies their age, and still participate in activities that younger adults enjoy. There are many factors affecting how we age, including financial security, but aging well, without mental and physical stress on our bodies, is within the reach of us all. Through a few simple daily practices and preventive measures, we can experience our senior years with a quality of life, rather than simply clinging to life.



Aging is no longer considered an unavoidable period of decline that requires withdrawal from active life. Today, we think in terms of active aging as a holistic concept that encompasses physical and mental well-being, maintaining an active role in society and integrating proper nutrition and regular exercise into daily life.

TIPS FOR AGING SUCCESSFULLY

- **Prevention:** Many diseases in later life are preventable through even minor lifestyle changes, even for people with chronic disabilities.
- **Nutrition:** Nutrition is an important component of aging well, since it improves physical well-being while regulating stress and promotes social inclusion and participation.
- **Physical activity:** Physical activity reduces by about 50% the risk of many disorders related to inactivity, such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes.
- **Mental health:** Total health is not merely about the absence of infirmity or disease but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

- **Join a program:** In Canada, the New Horizons for Seniors Program is designed to empower seniors, encouraging them to share their knowledge, skills and experience with others in the community and enhance their social well-being.

HOW TO AGE SUCCESSFULLY

PREVENTION:

Many diseases in later life are preventable and health promotion can even help ensure that older people with chronic conditions and disabilities can remain active and independent, preventing declining health and institutionalization. This can prevent costs both to the individual and to society. Early interventions and preventive behaviour can include physical exercise, attending regular rehabilitation sessions following an injury, not smoking and paying attention to nutrition.

NUTRITION:

Nutrition is an important component of aging well, since it improves physical well-being while regulating stress and promotes social inclusion and participation. After the age of 50, caloric needs begin to decrease, while nutritional needs increase. Malnutrition and dehydration are common in the older population, something that can be linked to higher death rates and longer hospital stays. It also increases the risk of infections, anemia, skin problems, weakness, fatigue and electrolyte imbalances in the blood. Consult the Canada Food Guide for daily nutrition requirements – and add a little spice to your food; as we grow older our taste buds fail us, and adding extra flavor to meals may reignite your interest!

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

According to the World Health Organization, adults need at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity physical activity on most days. Physical activity reduces by about 50% the risk of many disorders related to inactivity, such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes. It also reduces the risk of hypertension, stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness and some forms of cancer. Even older adults with poor mobility should do physical activity three or more days per week to enhance balance and prevent falls. Exercise also increases cognitive ability, and reduces the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

MENTAL HEALTH:

Total health is not merely about the absence of infirmity or disease but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Attending to mental health is therefore another means to successful aging. Many elements of mental health come into play as we age, including perceived autonomy, control, independence, adaptability, coping, self-esteem, positive outlook, goals and our sense of self. Social interaction and maintaining an active role in society is an important factor in mental health. This could involve community leisure activities, volunteering, accessing and maintaining support networks, or simply keeping in touch with old friends.

AGE OF MAJORITY

In Canada, our population is aging rapidly. Statistics Canada reported in 2017 that people over the age of 65 outnumber children under the age of 14: there are more seniors (5.9 million) than children (5.8 million) in Canada. By the year 2021, one in five people will be over the age of 65, and one in three will be over the age of 55. The total number of seniors is projected to reach approximately 10 million by 2036. By 2061, it is projected that there will be 12 million seniors to 8 million children. By the way, we live a long time too: at the time of the survey, there were 8,230 Canadians over the age of 100, and there are five times more women in this group.

NEW HORIZONS

As more Canadians age, it is important for society to support the healthy aging process. In Canada, the New Horizons for Seniors Program is designed to empower seniors and encourage them to share their knowledge, skills and experience with others in the community, enhancing their social well-being. The program provides grants and contributions funding for projects led or inspired by seniors who want to make a difference in the lives of others and in their communities.

For more information about New Horizons for Seniors initiatives in your local community, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/new-horizons-seniors-community-based/projects.html>

Sources and References:

<https://www.activeagingcanada.ca/>

<https://academic.oup.com/gerontologist/article/57/2/197/2631997>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/new-horizons-seniors-community-based.html>