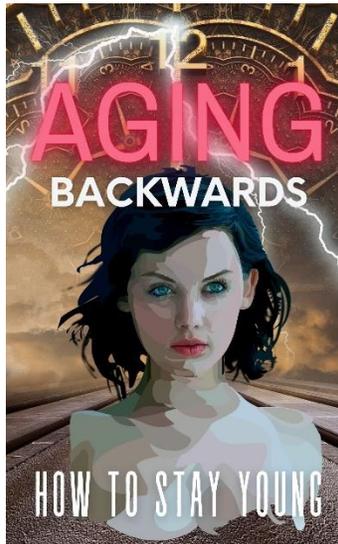


Aging Backwards



PARTNERS EDITION

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Contents

Your Giveaway Rights

Disclaimer

The Fountain of Youth

How & Why We Age

Exercise Need Not be Hard Work

How to Stop Aging

Eating to Stay Young

The Nutrition You Need

Stress: The Silent Killer

Now It's Up to You

Watch the Video

The Fountain of Youth

For centuries, ever since the legendary Ponce de Leon went searching for the elusive Fountain of Youth, people have been looking for ways to slow down the aging process. Medical science has made great strides in keeping people alive longer by preventing and curing disease, and helping people to live healthier lives. Average life expectancy keeps increasing, and most of us can look forward to the chance to live much longer lives than our ancestors.

Many researchers think that the key to our own personal Fountain of Youth resides in our hormones and endocrine system. These are the various organs and glands that make hormones in our bodies.

We are all aging constantly. The unpleasant fact is that every single one of us begins aging the moment we are out of the womb (at least it beats the alternative). If you're living, you're aging; you can't avoid it. But there are a number of things that you can do to keep yourself healthy and active, and to eliminate or at least slow down many of the factors that contribute to aging.

Is it possible to turn back the clock?

Your body was designed with the inbuilt ability to fix itself, as long as you take care of it properly. It is made up of something like 100 *trillion* (100,000,000,000,000) living cells, that will keep themselves strong and healthy with the proper food.

Each and every one of those trillions of cells dies off and is replaced with a new cell at regular intervals. As amazing as it may be to contemplate, your entire body is completely replaced every few years – so you really are not the same person you used to be!

One theory posits that the nucleic acids, or telomeres, in our cells shorten slightly every time one of our cells replicates itself. Each time the cell is duplicated, it's a less than perfect copy of the previous version, and this eventually leads to the body's aging, breakdown, and death.

What happens with your cells is the key to slowing the aging process because, when a cell dies, one of three possible things must happen:

- If the cell has not been receiving proper nutrition, its replacement will be an inferior version of the cell. In this scenario, your body is degenerating.
- The replacement cell may be identical to its predecessor. In this case, your body would essentially remain at the same place in the aging process.
- An intriguing third possibility is that the new cell could be stronger than the previous one. If this could somehow be accomplished, you would actually be regenerating your body, and reversing the aging process.

Somewhere in our thirties, many of us start noticing the first signs that we aren't kids anymore – a few gray hairs begin to appear, we see lines in our face, our skin starts to sag here and

there. As time goes by, other signs gradually appear – it's a little harder getting up in the morning, our vision and hearing aren't what they used to be, our sex life isn't as lively as we remember. And we look around us and see the same things apparently happening to our friends and family. Most of us pretty much accept what we see as an inevitable process of our biological nature, over which we have no control.

But this is a huge mistake!

The human body can take an awful lot of abuse and neglect. We don't always think about our bad habits, since it may take years or decades for the effects to become apparent. But neglect yourself long enough, and you may one day find yourself suffering through the late period of your life with a wide range of maladies and complaints, from difficulty seeing and hearing to cancer, heart disease, brittle bones, and many other problems.

Yet it only takes a little knowledge and a bit of application to prevent most, if not all, of these common old-age problems from manifesting. There's no magic pill or instant cure, and it may take some effort on your part. But the results will be well worth it - how much would it be worth for you to enjoy your final years as a healthy, active adult, able to continue doing many of the things you most love?

People are living longer than ever these days, due to advanced medical breakthroughs, increased awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and other related factors. But you can go

a lot further. You can most definitely affect your rate of aging by using the principles outlined in this book.

As you notice your body looking and feeling younger, your mindset will improve too, which will motivate you to continue your anti-aging practices, and that will set up a positive feedback loop, instead of a negative one, and so the process accelerates.

How & Why We Age

Most people just shrug and accept aging as something that can't be avoided – like death and taxes. Perhaps we haven't figured out how to cheat death yet, but recent scientific discoveries have shown that common conceptions of aging are largely mistaken.

For most species on the planet (as well as humans until quite recently) it was unlikely to survive long enough to die of simple "old age." Events such as starvation, accident, being eaten by a predator, disease, and other causes were much more common reasons for death. So, it's relatively recently, with increasing numbers of people living longer lives, that the role of phenomena such as free radicals has become important enough to study.

Free radicals are a special type of molecule with an extra electron that steals electrons from other molecules as it passes through your bloodstream, causing damage to your body's cells. The exact role of free radicals is still uncertain, and much research is still being done, but studies have established that the presence of free radicals plays a key role in the progress of diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, hypertension, and other age-related issues.

Free radicals cause progressive damage to the body's tissue and functioning, thereby increase the rate of aging. However, a good stress response is known to be effective in fighting off the

free radicals, which in turn slows down the aging process and increases your lifespan.

In addition, there are a number of substances that function as anti-oxidants that work to bind the unstable free radicals and render them harmless. Many of these substances will be discussed further on in this book, but they include vitamin C, vitamin E, beta-carotene, grape seed extract, and melatonin.

Some researchers have focused on DNA which is, effectively, the blueprint for our individual body, and is inherited from our parents. One theory is that our individual code causes us to age at a predetermined rate, possibly to keep humans from overpopulating the planet. But it is thought that this apparently pre-coded genetic clock can be slowed down, causing us to age much more slowly. This can be accomplished mainly by improving our diet and general lifestyle, and avoiding pollution and other environmental toxins as much as possible.

Scientists have also found a direct link that links the presence of excessive fat in your body with the process of aging. Studies found a direct correlation between excess fat and cellular aging i.e. that the more that someone weighs, the faster their cells age. The exact mechanism by which this process happens is uncertain, but possibly the fat cells weaken and possibly destroy important genetic structures.

It was found that being overweight might effectively make a person up to **nine years older** in biological terms! So many of the most common health problems we encounter later in life, such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and other greater and

lesser maladies, may occur as a result of fat cells hurrying up the process of aging.

Exercise Need Not be Hard Work

We know that proper nutrition and exercise can make a huge difference to how our body ages. Bad habits, such as smoking and excessive consumption of both sugar and alcohol may not show effects for years and years, but very few people ever get away without repercussions. Cardiovascular disease, cancer, and osteoporosis are three debilitating diseases that diet and exercise can have an extraordinary effect upon.

Studies have shown that living a sedentary lifestyle actually represents a higher risk for heart disease than high cholesterol and even smoking! So, no matter what your age, whether you're closing in on 40, racing past 50 or 60, or older, you will significantly improve your health and mood by exercising regularly. You'll feel better and have much more energy than you did before. Tests in nursing homes, involving residents in their 80s and 90s showed that they became stronger and more independent through a program of exercise.

Some of us are better than others at sticking to our exercise plans, but the benefits of regular physical activity are almost too numerous to list here. Regular exercise will keep excess weight off, put calcium in your bones and keep them healthy, keep your cholesterol down, make your metabolism more efficient, and help clean your body of toxins through sweating and regular bowel movement.

Even better, regular exercise strengthens your heart, lowers your cholesterol, lowers your stress levels, and helps you to sleep better. When you're in good physical shape, your risk of diabetes, heart disease, and even some kinds of cancer lower dramatically. It also has been shown to help reduce depression.

And you don't have to become a marathon runner or torture yourself through an Arnold Schwarzenegger-style bodybuilding program in order to enjoy the benefits – just 30 minutes of moderate physical activity several times a week will do the trick. Just do something – anything to get started, even taking short walks every day.

If you've never exercised regularly, or have been sedentary for quite a while, you should have a routine medical checkup before starting any new program (just to be on the safe side!). Once you've gotten your doctor's okay – take it slow to begin with! Slow and steady wins the race, as the old saying goes.

It's much more effective to start a measured program that you'll actually stay with for the long term, rather than racing out of the gate and burning yourself out after a week. Taking the stairs instead of using the elevator, mowing the lawn, even chores around the house, can easily add up to 30 minutes over the course of a day.

Before starting your activity, if it's going to be anything more strenuous than walking, it's a good idea to spend between 5 and 15 minutes stretching. This gives you more flexibility and ease of movement, and decreases your risk of straining your muscles or otherwise injuring yourself. A similar period of

stretching after your exercise is useful for cooling yourself down and relaxing.

It's best to vary your exercise routine. Not only is this more beneficial to your health, you'll be much less likely to injure yourself or get bored. You should be working hard enough that it's difficult to carry on a normal conversation at the same time, but you shouldn't be working so hard that you're gasping for every breath. Also try to find something that you enjoy doing. Obviously, that will make you that much more likely to continue doing it.

Try to mix these three types of exercise: **aerobic**, **strength**, and **flexibility**. Aerobic exercise helps to strengthen your heart, increases your lung capacity, and improves your blood circulation. Strength conditioning helps make you stronger and increases your metabolism and bone density. Flexibility exercises, besides helping you to move more easily (obviously!), keep your joints in good shape and make it less likely that they will be stiff and painful as you get older.

One way to do this is to join your local health club. Then you'll have access to a wide range of stationary bicycles, stair-steppers, and other aerobic machines. Plus, there are usually qualified trainers on staff who can help you design a personal program that's safe and appropriate for you. But you can also plan a very effective exercise program at home. Comfortable clothes and a decent pair of trainers are all you really need to get started.

The better condition you are in, the more efficient your body will be at burning fat. So, while you still want to keep healthy dietary habits, if you need to lose weight it will be far more effective if you exercise regularly.

How to Stop Aging

There are three types of exercise that can actually slow down, or even stop the aging process:

Aerobic

The best way to strengthen your heart muscle is through cardiovascular, or aerobic, exercise. This is activity that will get your heart rate pumped up to between 60 and 90 percent of your recommended maximum heart rate. (To figure your maximum rate, just take 220 and subtract your current age.)

While your body does burn calories constantly through normal functions such as breathing and blood circulation, if you do anything more exciting, your body needs to find some extra energy. It does this by burning glycogen, which is the carbohydrates and fat stored in your body. The most efficient way of burning fat is medium-intensity activities that can be done for a longer period, such as swimming or power walking.

Almost any physical activity you can do will help. Park a little further away from your destination than usual, walk or ride your bike instead of driving. There are ways you can insert regular exercise into your regular life in an organic way – for instance, if you normally watch a lot of TV, get a stationary bicycle or a treadmill and put it in front of the TV, and use it while you're watching. Thirty minute sessions are all you really need, and three 10-minute bursts of activity will work as well as a single 30-minute workout.

If you want something a bit more challenging, you can attend one of the wide varieties of aerobic dance classes at your local health club or community center. The important thing is to find the activities that you enjoy doing, and that fit your current lifestyle and fitness level.

If you have illnesses that restrict your activities, talk to your doctor – there's most likely something that you can do. For instance, if you have arthritis, swimming is a very beneficial activity that won't strain or injure your joints.

Strength

Lifting weights is a great way to build strength, become more flexible, and increase your bone density, which is especially of concern to women as they age. Increasing your muscular strength in this way will make such everyday things like climbing stairs or rising from a chair easier when you get older. By strengthening your muscles in this way, you have more energy and better posture; you're less likely to suffer muscle-related tears or other injuries; and you will look and feel more attractive.

In addition, building muscle mass increases your metabolism rate, which means you burn fat more efficiently, without going on any unhealthy crash diets. You may not weigh less after lifting weights for a while, but an increasing amount of your body fat will be transformed into muscle. Weight training also lowers your cholesterol, reduces stress, and helps prevent a wide variety of diseases.

There are a variety of brands and types of equipment that are commonly used in weight training, from individual dumbbells or barbells to freestanding machines. There are pros and cons of each type of training, although a lot of it will come down to personal preference and what works best for you.

In any strength-training program, the number one concern is always your safety. If you haven't done any weight training before, take it easy at the beginning. Machines with adjustable resistance are the best place to start out. This gives you the chance to work on specific, isolated muscle groups of your choice, and also lets you keep track of your progress, by slowly increasing the weight and resistance that you're lifting.

On the other hand, free weights tend to develop your strength more quickly. They develop more muscles at once, as opposed to resistance machines that isolate single muscle groups.

Free weights are more versatile, since you're not restricted to the machine's specific motions, although as a result, more coordination is needed to use free weights safely and effectively. Free weights are also much cheaper than machines, if you're purchasing them for personal use rather than joining a health club, and they take up a lot less space when you're not using them.

The ideal strength-training program would involve a combination of free weights and resistance machines. If you belong to a health club, there most likely are trainers on staff who can help you develop a personalized strength-training program that's best suited for you.

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