



A Step Above

Personal Training Concepts

Aging is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity and strength. ~ Betty Friedan

jinjer's thoughts . . .

EXERCISE BENEFITS FOR THE OLDER ADULTS



My name is Massie Ferguson, and I would like to get some information about what I need to do in order to exercise correctly so I don't get hurt. I'm 68 years old. My cholesterol is slightly elevated, but I'm on medicine for that. My back is a bit stiff in the mornings, but once I start working it loosens up. I've noticed that I don't seem to have the muscle strength in my legs like I use to. My hips, knees and shoulders are great, considering the type of work I do on the farm. Is it possible to increase my muscle mass and flexibility so that I could become a little more agile?

I remember when I used to play football, baseball and basketball in high school. I liked working out and playing

hard, so I'm accustomed to muscular pain and sweat. I did not stop exercising until I was in my forties, when my family and job took precedence. Now that I am 68 years old, yet still active, I would like to lose maybe 5 to 10 pounds and just feel stronger overall. What do you suggest?

Well, Massie Ferguson, we can start a low-and-slow program for you. Research has shown that, overall, a general lack of physical activity can likely contribute to a 10 to 30 percent loss of biological function between the ages of 40 and 65. However, the decline could be greater if there is disease present or some type of pre-existing injury(s). Some environmental and genetic factors could also possibly make this decline greater, as could a state of poor mental health and so forth. (NCSF, 2007)

No worries! We will teach you functional movement first. This will help you with your everyday activities out on the farm. For example: How about a simple "**bend and lift**" technique? Learning to correctly lift heavy items could prevent further straining or injury in your lower back, especially as you learn to breathe correctly when lifting those 50-pound feed bags. Another important

component is learning balance. Part of this is done when building core strength. The stronger your center mass, the better your spine is supported and the less likely you are to fall. This will come in handy when you're climbing on and off your tractor. Furthermore, as your core muscles get stronger, if you did start to trip, you might be more apt to catch yourself before you fall. After a few sessions of my showing you functional movement skills and transition of movement, your agility will improve.

One great thing about you, Mr. Massie Ferguson, is you are very active on the farm, you don't have high blood pressure problems, and your heart rate is that of a 40-year-old who works out most days of the week. Did you know that 50% of individuals between the ages of 65 and 74 have at least one physical limitation, and that 30% report several limitations? Another interesting fact is that 50% of most people over the age of 65 are diagnosed with hypertension. You, my friend, **do not fit** in those statics. I feel we can meet your goals successfully by designing a low-impact program that best fits your needs. Then, as you slowly understand your exercise techniques and why you need to do the

Exercise Benefits for the Older Adults ... (continued)

exercise, you will become more fluent in what you are doing. It takes approximately four to five weeks before neural adaptations occur in the body. After that, we will teach you specific exercise programs that focus on increasing your core muscle strength (body resistance, lifting weights, etc.) and your cardiovascular fitness (taking short, brisk walks several times a day to increase your heart rate). I promise you will notice significant changes in your body, and I will work personally with you every step of the way to ensure safety. Even though you are a farmer, keep in mind that physical activity and exercise are two different things. Studies show that people who are continually on the move doing things, will live longer than individuals who are sedentary.

As a personal trainer, I have found over the years that working with the older population is more important in health and fitness than working with the general population. According to research, by the year 2030, the number of individuals in the United States 65 years and over will reach 70 million. Individuals 85 years and older will be considered the fastest growing segment of that population. Therefore, just focusing on a combination of aerobic activity, strength training and flexibility training can facilitate a person's overall physical, mental, and emotional health. The good news is that it is never too late to start exercising in our older adult life. Yes, make sure you check with your family doctor first; and if you are unsure about how to get started, it might be worth a small investment to meet with a personal trainer to learn about what you need to do.

What age is considered "old"? If you have two men the age of 68 in your fitness class, the men may only have their age in common. One may be in

great shape like Mr. Massie Ferguson, while the other may be suffering from high blood pressure, severe arthritis, or maybe just has never participated in any type of exercise ever in his life. When older adults understand the importance of daily exercise, this can enhance their functional independence and improve their overall quality of life. Below is a copy of the General Guidelines for Older Adults when exercising (provided by the National Council on Strength and Fitness 2007).

FLEXIBILITY TRAINING

- Encourage light warm up first. Example: half jacks, brisk walking, etc.
- Static stretching (not bouncing) through PAIN-FREE RANGE OF MOTION should be performed 2 to 3 times per week, using 2 to 3 sets of 15- to 30-second holds.
- Encourage **NOT** holding breath. Relax breathing through movement.
- Dynamic Stretching (example: slow high knee marches) Range of Motion — 2 to 3 sets, 10 to 15 repetitions.

RESISTANCE TRAINING

- 2-3 times per week, using 8-10 exercises, 10-15 repetitions. Progressions can be similar to healthy, young adults.
- Encourage functional-based, full-range of motion activities.
- Include functional power activities, including hip flexion and extension.
- Healthy, older adults can use heavy resistance training but should avoid holding their breath and isometric contractions, "**unless supervised**"!

AEROBIC TRAINING

- De-conditioned older adults should accumulate 30-40 minutes in 10-minute sessions most days of the week, (making sure to increase heart rate enough for a benefit. Makes talking a bit more difficult but not to uncomfortable)
- For healthy, older adults, sessions can be anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes - gradually increasing heart rate up to 60 to 80 percent intensity (would make it hard to hold a conversation when working at this level)



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