

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



JANUARY 2024



Welcome to our January newsletter!



Khrista Boon, District Program Supervisor – VON SMART

On behalf of our VON SMART Exercise and Fall Prevention Team, I'd like to offer a note of gratitude to our SMART participants and partners for a memorable and successful 2023!

As we *move* into this new year, we already have so much to look forward to: new exercise class locations, fall prevention workshops, welcoming new SMART volunteers and much more.

Our growing community of fitness friends is stronger than ever as we continue to stay active and engaged in ageing well and preventing falls – together.

The VON SMART Program

Helping to keep our community dwelling older adults active, engaged and free from falls!

For more information about SMART exercise classes and fall prevention workshops please contact:

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IT'S YOUR CHOICE: YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR VIEWS OF AGING AND IMPROVE YOUR LIFE - KFF HEALTH NEWS

People's beliefs about aging have a profound impact on their health, influencing everything from their memory and sensory perceptions to how well they walk, how fully they recover from disabling illness, and how long they live.

When aging is seen as a negative experience (characterized by terms such as decrepit, incompetent, dependent, and senile), individuals tend to experience more stress in later life and engage less often in healthy behaviors such as exercise. When views are positive (signaled by words such as wise, alert, accomplished, and creative), people are more likely to be active and resilient and to have a stronger will to live.

These internalized beliefs about aging are mostly unconscious, formed from early childhood on as we absorb messages about growing old from TV, movies, books, advertisements, and other forms of popular culture. They vary by individual, and they're distinct from prejudice and discrimination against older adults in the social sphere.

More than 400 scientific studies have demonstrated the impact of individuals' beliefs about aging. Now, the question is whether people can alter these largely unrecognized assumptions about growing older and assume more control over them.

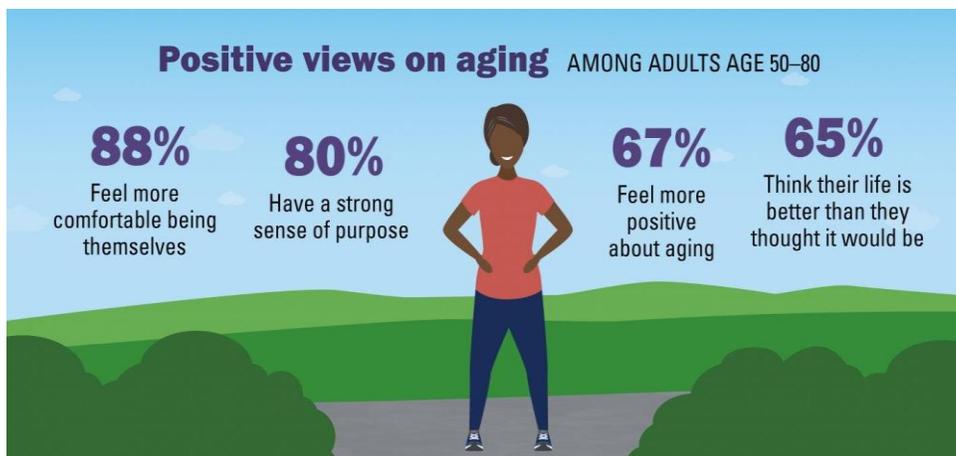
In her new book, "Breaking the Age Code: How Your Beliefs About Aging Determine How Long and Well You Live," Becca Levy of Yale University, a leading expert on this topic, argues we can. "With the right mindset and tools, we can change our age beliefs," she asserts in the book's introduction.

Levy, a professor of psychology and epidemiology, has demonstrated in multiple studies that exposing people to positive descriptions of aging can improve their memory, gait, balance, and will to live. All of us have an "extraordinary opportunity to rethink what it means to grow old," she writes.

Healthy ageing, also known as positive ageing, can increase life expectancy and your overall wellbeing – but what does it actually mean?

What is positive ageing?

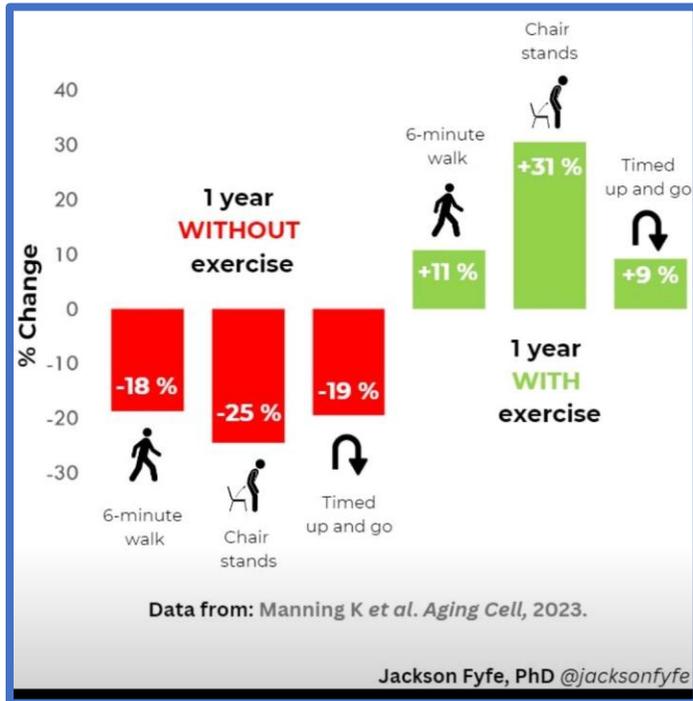
The Australian Psychological Society defines positive ageing as "the process of maintaining a positive attitude, feeling good about yourself, keeping fit and healthy, and engaging fully in life as you age". Ageing can bring many rewarding experiences, but it's also associated with significant life changes. The concept of positive and active healthy ageing focuses on maintaining a growth mindset in your older age to help make life experiences easier.



Did You Know?

Exercising for Older Adults

[Longitudinal analysis of physical function in older adults: The effects of physical inactivity and exercise training \(wiley.com\)](https://www.wiley.com)



It's never too late to get started. Jackson Fyfe, PhD., says "Exercise can reverse the trajectory of physical performance with ageing".

The infographic above highlights the difference a single year of exercise (mixed aerobic, strength, balance, flexibility) can make in older adults 73 years and older.

The study Fyfe refers to found that older adults who initiated routine, sustained exercise were protected from age-related declines in physical performance, while those who remained sedentary suffered cumulative deficits across strength, aerobic endurance and mobility. The research article goes on to say that interventions to reduce sedentary behaviours and increase physical activity are both important to promote multi-system, whole-body health.



VON SMART

Participant Feature!



Move to Be Strong with Olga!

My name is Olga and I strongly believe in exercise. I have been exercising since I was in my forties. Now, at 88, I find it has really paid off for me.

I am able to take care of my house and large garden myself.

I would say the biggest problem I endured was when I hurt my back and was in pain all the time, taking two Tylenol every day. I didn't want to accept there was nothing I could do. I decided to try acupuncture which helped but not completely.

I asked the doctor if I could go back to my exercising. When I initially started it hurt but it (the pain) got better and better with time. If it weren't for exercising, I know I would have to live with all that pain.

I believe exercise is the answer to most of the problems seniors encounter. When people ask me how I stay so fit, I tell them it's because of exercise.

Olga has been a VON SMART participant for several years and inspires many to stay positive and keep moving!

Resources

McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

PAST MENOPAUSE? EXERCISE YOUR WAY TO BETTER BONE HEALTH
(mcmasteroptimalaging.org)



Brittle bones can be a real problem as we age, especially for women after menopause. Osteoporosis is a condition that causes your bones to become weak and break more easily. Breaks occur most commonly in the hip, wrist, or spine. Aging alone increases your risk of osteoporosis, but you may be even more at risk if you are a woman, are past-menopause, have a family history of the disease, or have a small body frame. Lifestyle factors like smoking, alcohol, diet, and exercise can also play a role.

Falling and breaking a bone happens frequently among older adults and can significantly decrease quality of life. Worldwide, an estimated 9 million fractures (aka breaks) occur every year due to osteoporosis. In Canada, osteoporosis accounts for 80% of all fractures after 50 years of age. This means that of the 30,000 Canadians that experience a broken hip each year, 24,000 are due to osteoporosis.

Is bone loss an inevitable part of aging? Yes – to a certain extent – but there are things you can do to slow it down.

What the research tells us

A recent systematic review found that combined exercise programs can improve and preserve bone density in postmenopausal women above and beyond the benefits offered by usual levels of daily physical activity. These benefits to bone density can prevent bone loss and potentially reduce the risk of fractures.

Combined exercise programs may include activities such as resistance training (e.g. upper and lower body training – leg press, squats, weights), impact exercises (e.g. jumping, skipping), and aerobic exercises (e.g. walking, jogging, dancing). Programs evaluated in the review were delivered either at a center, or in both one's home and a center; were fully or partially supervised; occurred 2-6 days/week; and lasted between 8-30 months.

For those who are worried that exercise may increase their risk of falling – no exercise-related injuries were reported in the review.

We all know that exercise is good for building muscle, but combined exercise may be good for your bones too!

VON SMART Updates

NO CLASSES JANUARY 1ST, 2024

NOTE: some locations may take a longer holiday pause, check with your SMART instructor.



VON SMART Exercise & Fall Prevention

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