



OFF-SEASON HEALTH PRACTICES



February 2019

A Different Perspective As You Age

It is almost too obvious to state but let's face it; we're not getting any younger. More of us baby-boomers are approaching the second adulthood AKA retirement. We (Julie and Simon) made the 'retirement' jump in 2018 to pursue our passion: distance walking. But in the off-seasons we need to maintain a fitness and general health base so that we can accomplish our next adventure. Through some research we've discovered that it may be worth changing a few habits as we age!

In this article, we share some of our findings and thoughts to maintain good fitness and health as we age. Our own focus is Long Distance Walking and we find the following stats very interesting - about 25% of distance walkers are between 50-79. This shows a dramatic increase in the last 10 or so years.

Basic science suggests that to minimise disease and ill effects of aging, one must eat a nutritious balanced diet, exercise regularly, manage stress, and have adequate rest everyday. There is a lot of confusing advice on nutrition out there in the ether. Fads come and go. What is clear is the need to choose a diet plan that provides your body type with adequate macronutrients (carbohydrates, protein, fats). Eat a variety of foods, especially vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds, legumes/animal protein to maximise digestion and micronutrient (vitamins and minerals) absorption.



Enjoy Different Activities During the Off-Season

As you get in your fifties and older those basic principles still apply but with a twist. For example, we (Simon and Julie) have different metabolisms and have learned that Simon needs to eat more or else he will loose too much weight (muscle mass) when exercising. Julie has a slower metabolism and must keep an eye on carbohydrates to maintain her weight. In the winter months, we eat a lot of vegetables, healthy fats, and vegetable and animal proteins. During the walking season, our food choices are limited to what is available in the communities we cross. We burn 3500 Cal (Julie) to over 5000 Cal (Simon) a day, we must eat a lot of food – mainly increasing carbohydrates and fats! :o)

This simple fact didn't seem as important in our 20s or 30s but it matters now!

Anti-Aging Practices

There is some focus lately in the media about anti-aging practices. This is relatively new (1990's), so time will tell which practice provides good, safe results. Biohacking suggests nutritional supplementation, hormonal replacement and other bio-chemistry to fool or slow down the aging process. As we age, we absorb less nutrients from our food and our hormone production decreases. Men will produce testosterone throughout their lives but the production decreases as they age. Women will have a significant decrease in estrogen and progesterone – as they reach and



Another Natural Anti-Aging Activity

after menopause. This will affect some health markers such as bone density, heart health, and athletic performance (to name a few). Depending on your health, it may be worth considering nutritional supplements, hormone replacement or herbal supplements to enhance your personal output goals.

Subtle Tweaks to Your Exercise Practices

Our research regarding exercise has shown that older athletes are best suited for endurance sports. What worked when we were 20-40 does not necessarily work for our bodies now. We encourage you to do your own research; incorporate what's right for your circumstance; and most of all have fun.



Push-ups With a Weight Vest

It is important to know your weak areas; what muscle groups does your favorite sport utilise/ignore? In the off-season, maintain your fitness base by incorporating a variety of exercise protocols focusing on those areas. This will help maintain your muscle mass, strength and endurance levels, and help prevent injuries.

In cardiovascular exercise, vary the type of cardio you perform during the off-season. Try a different activity/sport such as long snowshoeing walks or cross-country skiing outings, alternate moderate intensity longer duration with high out-put interval training. In your weight lifting work-outs focus on

more weight and less repetitions. Push yourself. Chose functional exercises such as squats, lunges, push-ups, chin-ups and core work as these exercises use muscle groups in a life mimicking way. Add plyometric exercises such as jumping jacks, burpees, jump squats to minimise the loss of fast twitch muscle fibers. We tend to lose fast twitch muscle fibers as we age. These fibers provide us with those spurts of speed and power we need for running across a busy street or hoisting a heavy pack on our backs.

Basically, most of the fitness experts we researched suggest that the older athlete needs to push more intensely; have shorter, more powerful work-outs. Focus on more functional exercises. We need to work-out smarter. Remember to allow more recovery time and lots of rest as our bodies need this to recuperate after a hard work-out. Napping, yea!



Don't Stop Trying New Activities

Managing Stress

As for managing stress, this is a challenge at any age. Family concerns shift to elderly parents; deciding when to retire can bring on anxiety due to financial concerns and work/life identity changes. But exercise, meditation and maintaining a good circle of friends with whom you can commiserate will help bring down stress levels. Having fun, playing and being grateful all contribute to feeling more fulfilled.



*Stress Management – Lesson #4
Canoeing With Friends*



*Stress Management – Lesson #17
Paddle Board with a Nephew*

This topic is near to our hearts. As we get older, we wish to have the best life we can. We understand that the discipline and determination it takes to pursue our personal dreams can only come from us and our life choices. With a little luck, support from our friends, we hope to have many more adventures in the years to come. Hope you can join us along the way!



*Stress Management – Lesson #61
Build Snow Structures with Friends and Kids*



*Stress Management – Lesson #114
Snorkling with Friends while Salmon are Spawning*