



Exercise Can Slow

The Aging Process

The aging process goes on, year after year, but you don't have to just sit there and take it. Exercise is the way you apply the brakes to the process. As reported in *American Health*:

Endurance

Endurance is measured by the body's ability to get oxygen to all the working muscles of the body. After age forty, the body's oxygen-transporting system begins to decline by one to two percent a year, due primarily to diminished enzyme activity in the heart muscle. Exercise, however, stimulates the heart muscle enzymes.

Strength

Muscle strength peaks about age 30 and then begins to decline about 1 percent a year thereafter. Reduced enzyme activity limits ability of the fast-twitch muscle fibers to move rapidly. Exercise stimulates the enzyme activity in the muscles.

Flexibility

Elasticity in tendons and ligaments diminishes with age. This is due primarily to a process in which connective tissues lose their slipperiness and don't slide over one another as smoothly as they once did. Mild stretching exercises help the body maintain fluidity between the fibers.

Reaction Time

Reflexes slow down because nerve cells die. Persons who play specific sports, such as tennis, however, lose little if any reaction time in those activities, perhaps due to replacement of nerve cells. Doing an activity that requires quick movement will help increase reaction time.

Glucose Regulation

As one grows older, insulin's ability to regulate sugar declines. Moderate-to-hard exercise, however, can restore normal glucose regulation.