

Can You Stop the Clock?

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There are many theories that attempt to explain the underlying cause of aging. While none of these can explain the aging process fully, research has provided a much better understanding of how your body changes as you grow older. An article in our Walk Kansas Celebrate Healthy Living Newsletter #7 in 2017 had the following to say about aging.



Aging is inevitable. There is really no way to stop the clock; but you can slow the march of time with regular exercise, better nutrition, and reducing or managing psychological stress.

Regular exercise is helpful in slowing down the aging process on the outside as well as the inside of your body. Muscles begin to change around age 35 when you start to lose muscle mass and gain fat. Exercise can slow down muscle loss and keep your metabolism high, which also prevents weight gain. With regular exercise, most people have less joint pain, less bone loss, and retain their mobility longer. All of these things change the way you look because your posture is better, and you are able to walk and move with less pain.

Exercise has a huge impact on the health of your body on the inside and is key to preventing many types of disease. In fact, it is hard to find a disease that exercise doesn't help! Regular weight bearing activity strengthens bones; so enjoy walking, hiking, tai chi, weight training, climbing stairs, playing tennis, and dancing. Even yoga can build bone health in your hips, spine, and wrists — bones that are most vulnerable to fracture.

Another benefit of an active life is a healthier heart. Your heart is a muscle and it gets stronger with exercise just like any other muscle; and it is never too late to start exercising and reaping the benefits. Your chances of getting heart disease are almost double if you are not active.

Development of type 2 diabetes is influenced by genes you inherit, but they take a back seat to lifestyle and behaviors you choose in determining if you will develop the disease. For most people, type 2 diabetes can be prevented by losing weight, exercising regularly, making better nutrition choices, and avoiding smoking. For those who have diabetes, balancing good nutrition and exercise is the key to managing the disease.

Exercise is good for your brain, too. With regular activity your brain functions better, your memory improves, you have a brighter outlook on life, you feel more confident, and you have more energy.

While you might prefer a quick and easy road to the Fountain of Youth, exercise is well worth the effort you put into it.

K-State Research & Extension offers a number of programs that help people enjoy good health. Walk Kansas; Stay Strong, Stay Healthy; and Dining with Diabetes are just a few of our options.

For more information about these programs and others, contact the Wildcat Extension District offices at: Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Wilson County, 620-378-2167; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district.

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