



Painting the Rainbow Newsletter

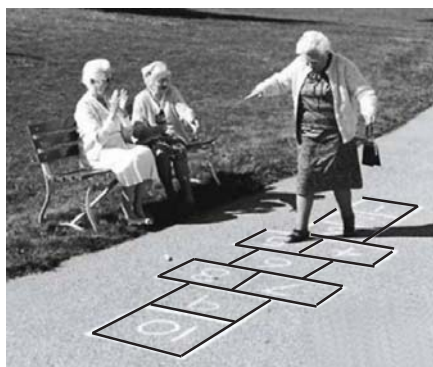
<http://www.paintingtherainbow.co.uk>

Community Based Tai Chi & Chi-Kung for everyone

Improvement cannot always be measured, it is something you feel

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Growing old is inevitable, Living old is optional

First, let's start by addressing how you feel about your true age, whatever it may be.

Do you tend to scoff when others tell you: "you're only as old as you feel"? Well, you may have to think again. Because one important element which can make us seem and feel much older than we really are is the social and psychological effect of passing a landmark birthday, such as your 60th or 70th.

Some people seem to crumple and give up. They become slower, more cautious, less interested in the world around them. They talk constantly about the past, lamenting the passing of 'the good old days', and are fearful of the future. Often, they are negative and pessimistic in their attitude to life — which may in turn lead to them becoming depressed.

Why should this be? It's because too many people have let themselves be influenced by the prevailing negative stereotype of old age. For some, the problems start with retirement. Until then, you've been defined by your job — as a teacher, electrician or manager, for instance. But when this clear-cut role disappears, it can often seem that the world at large has reclassified you as merely 'elderly'.

Before we move onto the ways you can improve your physical health, you should start by thinking more positively about growing older. Instead of thinking of yourself as in your 50s, 60s or 70s — with all of the pre-conceived ideas that you and others have about those decades — try imagining yourself as being 43, or some other random age for which there are no such assumptions.

Here are some statements for you to ponder, and repeat to yourself, that can help you realise age really is just a number:

- I differ from other people aged 60/70/80 in many more ways than I resemble them.
- I'm not really different from the person I was at the age of 43.
- I don't care what other people think about ageing; much of what they believe is wrong.
- Life has taught me a great deal.
- I have a lot to offer other people.
- I know who I am — both my strengths and weaknesses.

The three golden rules

No matter what age you are, it's seldom too late to start regaining some of your youthful energy, strength, flexibility and appearance.

There are three crucial elements that will increase your chances of having a relatively trouble-free and independent old age.

- 1 You have to become fitter — even if you already have one or more long-term conditions.
- 2 You must actively reduce your risk of developing disease
- 3 You need to adopt a positive attitude to life, its problems and opportunities.

All three of these goals are realistically within your grasp. And don't worry: they don't involve wearing Lycra, going on a

starvation diet, or chanting every day before breakfast. But you will need to do some simple exercises to increase your strength, stamina, balance and suppleness, as well as helping to lower your risk of contracting a disease. You can start with the simple balancing exercises. With improved fitness, even your risk of getting Alzheimer's is likely to decrease. Among others, Professor Carol Brayne, who leads the research programme on Cognitive Function and Ageing at the University of Cambridge, has concluded that just having a vigorous walk a few times a week can lower the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's. No wonder it's one of the main keys to good ageing. No matter what age you are, it's seldom too late to start regaining some of your youthful energy, strength, flexibility and appearance.

How to walk yourself fit

A wealth of research has proven that walking is one of the easiest and best ways to maintain general fitness, and no matter what your age, you should be aiming for at least 30 minutes of walking a day.

If that seems too daunting, then break it up into segments, for example three walks of ten minutes a day; take the stairs rather than the lift. On top of this, it's very important, even if you're already in your 70s, to do exercise of moderate intensity for ten minutes or more each day. (There's no single medical condition that will be made worse by moderate exercise — but, if in doubt, consult your GP.) I'm not talking about only going to the gym, by the way — though you can obviously do that if you enjoy it. **Tai Chi is perfect as it strengthens your balance and increases your heart rate.** All that's required is that you feel a change in your breathing — not so much that you can't

talk but certainly enough to know you're out of your normal comfort zone. The trick here is to build exercise into everyday life so that it doesn't feel like a chore.

You could try, for instance, taking stairs two steps at a time, taking a lively dog for a walk, cycling to the shops, swimming or even taking dance classes. And of course, Tai Chi.

Boost your energy levels

Your metabolism is the rate at which the body's energy — from food and oxygen — is produced and used, and it is true that it slows a bit as we grow older, but only a little.

If you notice a loss of energy, this is likely to be due to other factors — such as disease, depression, lack of fitness, or the side-effects of medication. The main metabolic problem that affects people in their 60s and 70s, and which thus impacts on their general quality of life, is something called 'metabolic syndrome' — a combination of Type 2 diabetes, raised levels of cholesterol and being overweight. This is often thought to be caused by the consumption of too many calories — and the scientific evidence is certainly that many people, perhaps more than half the people in the UK aged 70 and over, would improve their health if they lost weight, and their joints would heave a sigh of relief, too.

Some people are fortunate and lose weight after retirement as they are no longer tied to desk work, or hours of commuting by car or train, but others may find the pounds start to pile on. As a general rule, remember your weight at the age of 30 and aim for that as your target. To help reach that weight, older people require less of some foodstuffs, but also an increase in others. So as the years advance, it's more important than ever to change your diet by:

Eating MORE...

- Vegetables and fruit (at least five helpings a day)
- Fibre (both soluble fibre, such as found in oats and beans, and insoluble fibre, such as found in pulses and wholemeal foods)

- Fish and chicken instead of red meat
- Semi-skimmed or skimmed milk (this has the least fat and the most calcium per glass)

... and eating less

- Sugar, biscuits, cake, sweeties, chocolate and sugar in any form
- Sausages and processed meats like salami and ham
- Fried food
- Alcoholic and sweet drinks
- Low fibre food such as white bread (read the packaging and look for breads that have less than 10 grams of carbohydrate to one gram of fibre).

Remember, too, that how you eat is as important as what you eat.

People in countries in which obesity is common often eat while watching television, with the result that when the plate is empty the person looks down and still feels hungry because their brain has not registered the fact that they have been eating.

However, there is a growing consensus among health professionals that the change that correlates most closely with the increase in obesity is not diet, but the increase in car ownership. Yes, more walking — to the shops, to a friend's house, **to the park for your tai chi class** — combined with a better diet, really is the most effective way of preventing, treating and curing metabolic syndrome and thus making you feel so much more youthful.

No Excuses For Not Starting Now

Let's imagine you're in your 50s or 60s and feel perfectly OK.

Are you happy with the idea of becoming one of those 80-year-olds who can no longer do their own shopping, bend to tie their own shoelaces, walk up the stairs without getting breathless or even reach the loo in time?

Didn't think so. But that's what you risk happening if, by your 60s and 70s, you don't start to pay proper attention to your levels of fitness. Remember: decline is

definitely not inevitable. So whether you're 50 or 80, make today the day you decide to effect the small changes that will make a big difference to your future.



Remember to book for the Christmas Party Sunday 13th December



It's that time of year again when we need to be planning the **Kai Ming Christmas Party**. Last year we all went to Flavourz and the feedback was excellent...

It's a buffet restaurant near Junction 2 of M5 and serves 4 regions of food – Indian, Chinese, Italian and Mexican – plus has a fun relaxed atmosphere and is great value at around £15 per head.

We also had Christmas meal at lunchtime rather than in the evening which was really well received so we are planning this year to be a lunchtime event too. The date will be Sunday 14th December and the time 2pm.

We need £5 per person minimum deposit ASAP and the balance no later than 30th November

Please let your instructor know what you would like to do or contact Mark & Jenny on markpeters@kaiming.co.uk or phone 0121 251 6172



If you wish to experience peace, provide peace for another.

If you wish to know that you are safe, cause another to know that they are safe.

If you wish to better understand seemingly incomprehensible things, help another to better understand.

If you wish to heal your own sadness or anger, seek to heal the sadness or anger of another.

Dalai Lama.