

FOREVER ACTIVE

PERSONALIZED FITNESS AND WELLNESS FOR MEN 50 +

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French cyclist
Robert Marchand
sets new record
aged 105 - BBC
News

Age is No barrier to Improving Your Level of Fitness and Health

Introduction

“I am too old.” How often have you heard that excuse from someone when it has been suggested to them that they should become more active? Maybe you have even used that excuse yourself. This newsletter is going to present to you a story and scientific facts that prove that age is no barrier to becoming more active, improving your level of fitness, health and quality of life.

Never Too Old

Fact: a 105 year old cyclist is more fit than most 50 year olds and it appears that he is getting fitter as he ages. Robert Marchand, an amateur cyclist, recently set a world record in one hour cycling, an event in which someone rides as many miles as possible on an indoor track for 60 minutes.

A new study published in the Journal of Applied Physiology used Marchand as a test subject. The study tries to reset scientific expectations of how our bodies age and what is possible for any of us athletically, no matter how old we are.

Conventional exercise science suggests that it is very difficult to significantly add aerobic fitness after middle age. In general, VO_2 max, a measure of how well our bodies can use oxygen which is the most widely accepted scientific indicator of fitness, begins to decline after about the age of 50, even if we frequently exercise. However, researchers with this study found that if older adults exercise intensely, they could increase their VO_2 max.

Marchand was by no means a tried and true tested athlete. He had not exercised regularly during most of his working life. After his retirement, he began cycling, but at a relatively easy and leisurely pace. In this research study, the researchers measured Marchand's VO_2 max, heart rate and other measures of cardio vascular fitness prior to Marchand beginning a structured intensified exercise regime. All these markers were measured as above average.

The exercise program Marchand followed for the study involved performing 80% of his exercise at an easy intensity but the other 20% at an intensity 30-50% higher. This program was followed for 2 years and then the same cardio vascular fitness markers were measured again. The results showed that his VO_2 max was 13% higher and his leg strength and power improved by 40%.

The researchers concluded that the data strongly suggest that we can improve our cardio vascular endurance and muscular strength and power at any age. The researcher recognized that genetics, nutrition and lifestyle could also have a significant effect on a person's ability to exercise as they age. Interestingly, the researchers noted that Marchand was “very optimistic and sociable.” Many studies have suggested that a positive attitude and strong social ties are linked to a longer, healthier life.



Please refer to the following Forever Active newsletters for more information the influence of attitude on your health;

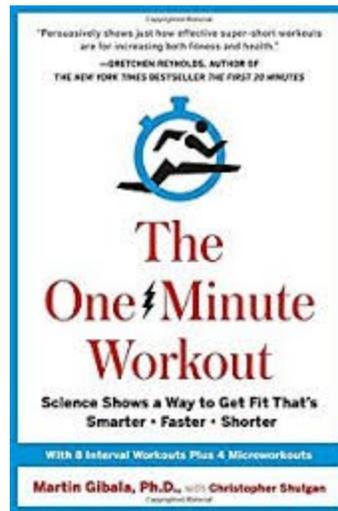
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High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) is a big buzz word in the fitness industry these days, and for good reason. More and more research has been presented in recent years that shows that a higher level of fitness can be achieved in less time if you are willing to work at a high enough intensity when you are exercising.

A new book, *The One-Minute Workout* by Martin Gibala, the chair of the department of kinesiology at Mc Master University in Hamilton, presents evidence that HIIT is not a trend in the fitness industry, but a sound scientific approach to high performance training and can improve anyone's general level of fitness, even those that are untrained.



The basic theory for HIIT is that short bursts of intense exercise separated by periods of recovery will get you as fit as exercise that is longer, less intense and at a constant pace. What this means is the harder you exercise, the more benefit you will get per unit of time. The “catch” however is that to gain the full effect of HIIT you have to go HARD, where the short burst of exercise are so intense that as Gibala says, “it feels like your legs are giving birth.”

Is HIIT Appropriate for the Older Adult or Unfit

Some of the best research on HIIT training has involved cardio vascular patients suffering from heart failure and recovering from bypass surgery. Cardiac patients used to be told to limit their activity but now exercise is a central part of their rehabilitation because exercise helps heal the heart. The more intense the exercise, the quicker and stronger the rehabilitation process.

Like cardiac rehab patients, many older adults and untrained individuals cannot walk continuously for 15 to 30 minutes, but they can walk briskly for 30 seconds and then slowly for a couple of minutes and then repeat that task a few times. So the “intensity” of the workout is relative to the fitness level of the individual.

Obviously, the older adult or untrained individual will not be able to work at a “leg giving birth” intensity initially but over time and as the fitness level improves, the intensity level of the exercise burst can and should increase.

Exercise Snacking

Dr. Gibala has demonstrated that “HIIT exercise snacking,” which is fitting short periods of activity, more intense the better, into your daily routine, provides as much bang for the buck as blocking out



big chunks of time to exercise. The fact that only 20% of adults, (even less for the older adult), meet the minimum standards of 150 minutes of exercise per week lends credence to the use of HIIT exercise snacking an effective way to get more for less.

Summary

The bottom line is that the best exercise is the exercise that works best for you. You should always consult your doctor before starting a new exercise program, especially if you are sedentary and have health issues such as high blood pressure or diabetes or orthopedic issues such as osteoarthritis, osteoporosis or history of musculoskeletal injury.

Always remember:

THE BIGGEST RISK IS NOT GETTING ENOUGH EXERCISE REGARDLESS OF WHAT FORM THAT EXERCISE MAY TAKE

Age is no longer a Barrier