

Overcoming Myths About Active Aging

You're supposed to be depressed at this age, right? There's nothing to live for after, say, 55 or 60, anyway. Ha! That's one of the most common myths mature people face. In fact, research shows the happiest time of life is 65 to 79.

Like many myths, ageist nonsense like this persists. Millions of active agers who are fit and determined to enjoy life prove it every day. We're here to help you do the same. So, come in and start busting myths with us now!

Myth: The end of cognitive development

Turns out, you can "teach an old dog new tricks". A 2014 NIH study, showed that pursuing new interests *regardless of age* can stimulate the brain and improve memory. Keeping your mind active and working on learning new skills as you age helps you to build a "cognitive reserve," which allows the brain to become more adaptable and potentially compensate for any age-related memory challenges in the future.

Myth: Dementia or other memory disorders are inevitable with aging.

"Mild forgetfulness" is to be expected as we age, and occasionally misplacing your keys or mixing up appointments on your calendar does not directly correlate to a memory loss disorder. Continuing to stimulate your brain with new activities as you grow older. Pursuing interests like reading, painting, playing games like sudoku or chess, and listening to and playing music can keep the mind active.

Myth: Depression is normal and to be expected in older adults

Studies show that older adults are less likely to be depressed than younger adults. Though depression can, of course, occur in senior citizens, they also are likely to benefit from having long-lasting personal relationships, as well as happy memories from throughout life to bring them joy.

Myth: Aging adults should skip strenuous exercising to avoid injury

A decrease in bone density comes with aging and thus a fear of over-exertion leading to injury. But physical activity can support both physical and mental health, helping to stave off health problems such as obesity and diabetes and boost serotonin in the brain. Whether you take a walk in the park with your children and grandchildren or choose another activity like golfing, swimming, or biking, making exercise a part of your regular routine can improve physical health and ensure independency.

Need a push? Ageless Fitness clients work with certified Functional Aging Specialists. We help active aging clients stay active and pain free. For more information go to: www.agelesswa.com

**This info was previously published in the Boston Globe from the "Harvard Pilgrim Aging study".*