

Exercise to reverse the ageing process

By Christian Vila, RSA.

The 49-year old (Is this you?)

When 49-year-old Mike came to me seeking advice he had barely noticed how much he had 'lost it'. Daily drinking, unhealthy eating and insufficient exercise were leading Mike into a deepening rut. He had allowed himself to decline health-wise and weighed close to 19 stone. In an attempt to rectify the situation, we began to prepare for what was to become a life-changing experience. We altered his eating habits and set a regular training programme. After 84 days Mike had lost 54lbs in bodyweight. He had more strength and energy than he'd ever had before, and he'd regained his self-respect.

The ageing process

As you get older, your body changes. Some of the changes involved in the ageing process are listed below:

- Around the age of 30 your muscular strength begins to decline.
- Between the ages of 50 and 70 your aerobic capacity (ability to use oxygen for energy) drops by 30%.
- As you age, you burn fewer calories at rest (ie, your basal metabolic rate [BMR] falls).
- As you get older, your immune function is reduced leaving you more susceptible to infection.
- As you age, your flexibility decreases.

All is not lost

However, the changes listed can be prevented, or the risk of them dramatically reduced, by regular exercise. Aerobic activities such as walking, cycling and swimming strengthen the heart and lungs, prevent obesity and lower the risk of many illnesses.

If you add to that some form of resistance exercise (such as weight training in the gym), you will help prevent bone loss, which can begin as early as mid-30s. Gaining strength provides power for every day life, ensuring your independence through your later years.

Don't Panic

You don't need to run marathons or cut back 800 calories a day to keep fit. We're talking about moderation and consistency. For physical activities such as gardening and walking, aim for 30 to 60 minutes every day. For serious workouts, aim for two to three per week. There are so many fun exercise classes out there now catering for all levels, from the relaxing Pilates and



Yoga, to the energising Boxercise and Bodypump. My 50+ fitness session at the gym is a roaring success. You may

want to get approval from your doctor before starting an exercise programme.

Make exercise a priority. Put it on your calendar today. Couple

this with a healthy, balanced diet, and you'll be on the right track to a new younger you.



Christian Vila is a Personal Trainer and the manager of a gym facility and has 8 years experience in the fitness industry.

