

Exercise and Aging

Journal Article Review #2

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Larson, E., & Bruce, R.A. (1986). Exercise and aging. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 85(105), 783-785. Retrieved September 10, 2011 from the ERIC database.

Exercise and Aging

Although there are few new revelations to be found in this article written by two medical doctors, it nonetheless is an article that is relevant to any and every person. The authors go into great detail to explain some of the biology behind the headlines that exercise and aging are great traveling companions on the journey from cradle to grave.

The article would be a great publication to lift from the *Annals of Internal Medicine* and publish in large print in a future edition of *Reader's Digest*. Persons of all ages need to read it because the aging process indiscriminately affects all people. Nevertheless, closing the gap between “knowing what is right and doing what is right” is the responsibility of good physicians and educators alike.

The article allocates considerable space in detailing the benefits of cardiovascular exercise. Drs. Larson and Bruce (1986) state: “By lowering functional aerobic age, conditioning allows a person to function longer at a higher level” (p. 784).

One of the few surprises included in the article can be found in this quote: “The cardiovascular benefits of exercise depend on not only vigorous training in youth but on moderate levels of habitual exercise in later years” (Larson & Bruce, 1986, p. 784). This research should breed hope in the lives of millions of middle age people.

Issues and Benefits

<i>Table 1</i>	
<i>Exercise & Aging: Issues and Benefits</i>	
Common age related issues	Common benefits of exercise
Increased weight	Prolong active life expectancy
Increased body fat percentage	Reduce recovery time from illness and surgery

Decreased maximum heart rate	Reduced risk of injury from falling
Reduction of flexibility	Improved balance
Increase in likelihood of falling and resulting injury	Improved cardiovascular health
Muscular strength declines	Retard onset of osteoporosis
Bones more brittle due to onset of osteoporosis	Increased energy levels
	Relieves mild to moderate depression
	Improves sense of well being
	Maintain independence
	Enhance quality of life
Source: Adapted from the article "Exercise and Aging" by Eric B. Larson, M.D. and Robert A. Bruce, M.D.	

Other Factors Related to Aging Health

Other factors in addition to exercise that have a direct, proportionate cause-effect relationship to aging include:

- Water consumption
- Rest
- Diet & nutrition
- Flexibility
- Prescription medication
- Regular medical examinations
- Healthy relationships
- Freedom from addictive behaviors

Conclusion

The authors recommend two to three weeks of moderate exercise ranging from 20-30 minutes per exercise period will gradually produce a conditioning effect. To sum it up in relation to exercise and aging, the authors assert: "The longitudinal implication is that

conditioning effects may enhance and prolong independent lifestyle, thereby increasing active life expectancy” (Larson & Bruce, 1986, p. 785).

Personal Reaction

My personal reaction to this article is one of a non-medical person but one who values common sense. It seems that the main thing is to get moving...and stay in motion for as long as possible, literally and metaphorically. I intentionally began twenty years ago making health decisions for twenty years from my current age (fifty-one). I realize that the choices we make today – in healthy food consumption, adequate water intake, and a lifestyle of regular exercise (or a lack thereof) – determine our health condition tomorrow. There are some truths that are self evident and very easy to understand. The link between exercise and aging seems to fall into this category. The law of sowing and reaping has not been repealed.