

Aging Gracefully



What does this mean to you? Hopefully, not an acceptance that as your age goes up so does the number of aches and pains you have as well as the number of things you shouldn't do when it comes to staying active.

Unfortunately, there seems to be an unspoken agreement of just that.

Yes, of course, as you have more and more birthdays, you'll notice certain movements don't come as easily as they once did in your younger days and tasks that used to be easy before seem to have switched to an expert level of difficulty (here's looking at you, shoehorn).

However, the saying "if you don't use it you lose it" may just have a leg to stand on with this topic. If you want to keep being able to move, well, you need to keep moving! It's no secret that with Canadians living longer and fewer babies being born in favour of smaller families, the average age is higher than what it used to be. More and more studies are being done to provide information for our aging population on what they can do to prolong independence, maintain quality of life, and prevent functional decline. Happily, positive outcomes of all three are strongly correlated with the maintenance of mobility.

What is mobility? It is literally how you move - in terms of ease and efficiency. Quality of movement depends on many factors like muscle strength, flexibility and endurance, to name a few. For most, these factors are well within your ability to influence and optimize. Even if you haven't been active or done exercise for years because someone may have wagged a finger and mentioned your age or, Lord forbid, made a hip replacement joke.

Now, if you're thinking to yourself - "Well, I do have a hip replacement, my vision isn't

so great anymore, and I in fact do have many aches and pains"- you're still not out of luck. This isn't something you have to do on your own. There exist many programs in the beautiful Okanagan (I'm sure if you thumb through this book, you'll find many!) that have been created for all different ages, young to old, with all different levels of physical abilities in mind.

So, in a way, yes - aging gracefully does encompass a level of acceptance. An acceptance that with age things are different but that you have a level of control over these changes and with some help from an array of health care professionals including hydrotherapists, personal trainers, physiotherapists, and exercise physiologists, you can continue to do what you enjoy, prolong your independence, and maybe even find a new hobby to partake in with your friends.

Aging gracefully is a choice, and it's yours to make. You just need to make the first...move.



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