

Food and Fitness After 50: Eat Well, Move Well, and Be Well

Table of Contents

Each chapter will provide be structured in the following way for consistent information:

- The Bottom Line
- Case studies from individuals 50+ to illustrate and inform the chapter content
- Consistent chapter headings:

The Bottom Line

Introduction

Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment Review

Clarifying the Science

Confronting the Myths

Commonly Asked Questions

Confidence to Make It Work for you

Conversation with an expert (short interview with an expert in the topic area;

Each expert will tell us how he/she stays fit and eats healthy after 50, what challenges he or she faces in maintaining health and fitness, and what one piece of advice he/she would give to others over 50 to eat better or be more active)

Tips from the Authors (what Chris and Bob try do to eat well, move well, and be well, matched to each chapter's content)

Chapter Summary and Key Takeaway Points

Useful Resources

Preface

Chapter 1: Introduction to Normal Aging :

This chapter provides the background on how normal aging changes our physiology and how we can affect those changes with food and fitness. We explain how aging changes our cardio-respiratory fitness, muscle function, bone density, sensory systems (vision, hearing, etc.), gastrointestinal function, metabolism, immune system, and body composition. Many associate aging with disease, but the problems that arise from disuse of our bodies is distinct from those of disease. This chapter also introduces the principles of healthy and enjoyable dietary patterns, rather than searching for a superfood or following the latest diet craze.

Section 1: Eat Well

Chapter 2: Eating for Optimal Aging

This chapter begins with a quick assessment of a “typical day” by asking when you eat, what types of foods you eat, and the level of satisfaction with current eating habits. Instead of dwelling on calories, carbohydrate, protein, and fat, this chapter presents four different dietary patterns for optimal aging: The Mediterranean Diet, the DASH Eating Plan, The Flexitarian Diet, and the Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) Diet, and shows how each plan might work for an individual. There is a brief primer on energy needs, carbohydrate, protein and fat. Each section describes the basic properties of the macronutrient, such as why it is needed, and presents the most healthful choices for optimal aging.

Chapter 3: Water Really is a Nutrient: Hydration Strategies for Active Adults

This chapter explains the physiological need for the most essential nutrient—water. Busy lives, physically active lives, and aging combine to challenge our ability to remain well hydrated during each day. Allowing ourselves to dehydrate during the day can sap mental and physical energy, and possibly increase the risk of kidney stones, constipation, and other disorders. Hydration is one aspect of life that we can control and this chapter highlights simple, easy ways to conquer that challenge.

Chapter 4: Micronutrients and Phytonutrients: Foods and Supplements

This chapter provides guidance for a food-first approach for the vitamins and minerals that fall into functional categories listed below:

- Energy producing (Vitamins B1, B2, B3)
- Immune maintenance (Vitamin A and Zinc)
- Bone-building (Calcium, Vitamin D, Magnesium, Vitamin K)
- Blood-building (Iron, Vitamin B12, Folic Acid)
- Antioxidants (Vitamins C and E)

Diets that are rich in the above mentioned nutrients are also likely to be rich in the so-called “super” foods that contain bioactive compounds (aka, phytochemicals or phytonutrients). This chapter also includes discussion of dietary supplements: what they are, how to know if you need one, and how to choose one if you do.

Section 2: Move Well

Chapter 5: Aerobic Fitness: How to Get and Stay Fit

We all know that being fit is good for our health, but establishing a routine that gradually builds fitness is much easier said than done. Luckily, improving fitness does not have to involve health club memberships or fancy exercise clothes. There are simple, everyday steps we can take to improve cardiovascular fitness and add to the quality of our lives. This chapter provides recommendations that can easily be adapted to suit whatever constraints life presents.

Chapter 6: Strength: Gaining and Maintaining Muscle Mass

With age, everyone is confronted with a decline in muscle strength and mass. After age 50, that decline can be rapid and in some cases debilitating. As with all tissues in the body, muscles

gradually adapt to their environment. If that environment is one of little physical activity, muscles wither over time, reducing strength and mass, limiting basic daily activities, and increasing the risk of falls and injury. But if muscles are physically stressed, they respond by increasing strength and slowing the age-related reduction in mass. Physical activity and nutrition combine to keep muscles strong. Those considerations and more are covered in this chapter.

Chapter 7: Staying Independent and Injury-Free: Balance, Flexibility, and Agility

This chapter describes the importance of maintaining balance, flexibility, and agility as we age. After spending 30 or more years sitting at desk or engaged in other low-activity pursuits, it should be no surprise that our bodies lose many of the physical attributes we developed as active children, foremost among those balance and flexibility. Being able to bend down to pick something off the floor and walking stairs without concern of falling are activities we take for granted when we're younger. As we grow older, basic acts of daily living can become compromised by previous decades of relative inactivity. The good news is that balance and flexibility can be improved, helping us maintain the quality of life we desire.

Section 3: Be Well

Chapter 8: Weight Management After 50

Weight creep is a common occurrence with aging. Gaining a couple of pounds every year doesn't sound like a lot but fast-forward 20 years and a 40-pound weight gain can be the result. Nearly 70% of adult Americans are overweight or obese and a collision course with aging and disability is approaching if weight management is ignored. This chapter looks at some of the age-related changes in key hormones and the effect on body weight and composition and how we can be at a healthy weight for life. This chapter also defines a healthy weight vs. an "ideal" weight that many people strive for but never achieve. While not a diet book, popular diets are analyzed and guidance for weight control is provided.

Chapter 9: Why Sleep, Stress, and Social Connections Matter to Optimal Aging

This chapter reviews the latest research on diverse topics that are neither food nor fitness, but can greatly affect both. Normal aging can disrupt usual sleep habits and emerging research on sleep quality and quantity ties it to obesity. Stress is a part of everyone's life, but aging brings new challenges to our well-being. Role changes, from retirement to caregiving, can bring distress to even the healthiest older adult. Social support has been shown to enhance our lives as we age and there are many levels of social connectivity that we explore. We discuss how exercise can be used as stress releaser, sleep enhancer, and connector for social interaction.

Chapter 10: When Bad Stuff Happens: Using Food and Fitness to Manage Chronic Disease and Combat Injury

Even with the best eating habits and smart exercise plan, stuff happens. Active adults do sometimes need joint replacement, sometimes they break bones, and even get cancer. Good nutrition and fitness reduces the risk of chronic diseases, but active adults do get high blood pressure or diabetes or heart disease. These health challenges might slow us down but do not have to deter us from our food and fitness goals. For many, a health scare is what it takes to overhaul the diet or start a serious fitness program. This chapter discusses secondary prevention

strategies to keep you well after a health problem has been identified. The authors are living proof of that. Chris is a breast cancer survivor and the proud owner of an artificial hip. Bob lives with atrial fibrillation, undergoing numerous cardiac ablations and one open-heart surgery. Both can share how living with health issues need not slow you down.

This chapter covers common physical problems with aging (osteoarthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, cognitive decline, and cancer survivorship, along with common acute problems, such as tennis or golfer's elbow, back pain, and knee pain) and discuss dietary supplements and functional foods and beverages that might be beneficial, along with alternative physical activities to keep fitness level high.

Epilogue

Works cited