

LIFESTYLE

GROWING OLDER, GETTING BETTER

There are a lot of positives to the aging process

By Jane Peterson
For Digital First Media

Aging isn't what it used to be as people continue to rewrite the definition of "old."

"Baby boomers feel younger than they are," said Heather Dillaway, PhD., associate dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and associate professor, Sociology at Wayne State University.

"They are working longer, playing sports, traveling and show no signs of stopping or slowing down," she said.

By working longer and waiting to have children, some people find themselves still raising children and supporting a family well into their 50s or 60s.

For many, it's not their chronological age that matters, it's about how they

feel. Dillaway said research shows that as women age, they become more confident, self-esteem goes up and they have an increased sense of freedom.

They may pursue a new hobby, get back to an old passion, volunteer, travel, join a community group or just hang out with friends and have fun.

"Aging isn't always negative," said Dillaway.

Staying busy and keeping a schedule can help, said Sudha Purohit, MD, Internal Medicine at St. Joseph Mercy Oakland. Plan for the day ahead whether your schedule includes yoga, walking, playing with your grandchildren or meeting with friends.

"It's important to have some kind of activity you look forward to," she said.

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Today's seniors are working longer, playing sports, traveling and show no signs of stopping or slowing down.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
For many women, it's not their chronological age that matters; it's about how they feel.



The best way to ensure a healthier future is to lead a healthy lifestyle now, says Heather Dillaway, PhD., associate dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and associate professor, Sociology at Wayne State University.

HEALTHY AGING AND EXERCISE: As women age, exercise provides many advantages. **PAGE 36**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

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Aging

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“Aging is not a disease. Age is just a number.”

Remember, everyone is aging right now. Every minute you are another minute older.

You might not think about it until you hit middle age, enter peri-menopause, have your kids move out of the house, become

a grandparent or have a health scare, but it’s happening right now.

“Aging is a lifelong process,” said Dillaway.

In order to have a good aging experience, prepare for the future.

Dillaway suggests these tips for healthy living now that will pay off down the road:

Be healthy

Get regular checkups from a primary care doc-

tor and talk about ways to stay healthy as you age.

Stay active and involved. Be an advocate for yourself

Be educated

Familiarize yourself with some health conditions that may impact you later in life, like cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis.

Read up on menopause so you know what to expect when it begins happening

Be prepared

Plan for your future emotional well-being.

Most women are likely to outlive their partners, so they need to be prepared for the reality of that by knowing how to manage their finances, for example.

Surround yourself with friends who will provide a lifetime of joy and support and be there when you need them

Be connected

Stay involved with community groups, attend church and enjoy activities at the local senior center — whatever keeps you socially active.

Maintain a network of friends to avoid isolation

Don’t discount the importance of a healthy lifestyle, either.

Eat nutrient-rich foods, stay physically active and

manage your stress, said Purohit.

Especially after menopause, women have a tendency to put on five to 10 pounds.

With a healthy lifestyle in place, you could avoid the weight gain that may contribute to making you feel old one day.

The best advice: Enjoy the age you are right now by exploring your dreams and doing whatever makes you happy, said Purohit.