

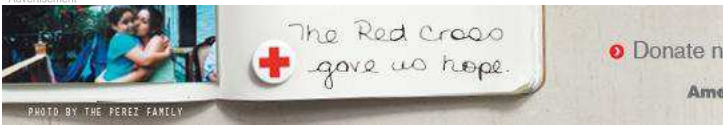
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## Intervals Slow Down Aging Process, New Studies Show

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Article originally published in National Masters News- August/September, 2017

By Robert Weiner and Paula Hong

High Intensity Interval Training workouts, also known as HIIT, are cardio sessions paired with short bursts of interval training designed to drive out the maximum strength of the person who is exercising. Recent scientific studies are showing that HIIT workouts are better than any other form of exercise to reduce degeneration of the aging process. Although HIIT workouts such as burpees have been raved about for a long time, two recent studies have found even more benefits.

Journal Cell Metabolism released a study in March 2017 with an unexpected twist to the usual "running is the best form of exercise" mantra--that higher intensity workouts paired with cardio may be better for everyone, and more specifically, the elderly. The New York Times released a review of the study titled "The Best Exercise for Aging Muscles" on March 23, 2017, challenging all who may have previously used the treadmill or the saying "not-enough-time" as an excuse.

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Chronological age describes how long a human has lived, whereas biological age studies a human's biological telomeres, thus perceiving how old the human seems to be. Found at the ends of DNA strands, telomeres protect DNA during cell division or replication. Through natural aging, telomeres can shorten and wear, but certain lifestyles can accelerate or prolong the process. Scientists are currently examining how the independent lifestyles affect the different types of age. Scientists have used telomeres to predict a person's biological age--helpful for recent studies.

Non-profit medical practice Mayo clinic issued a study in March 2017, comparing 72 sedentary men and women who were either 30 years and younger or 64 years and older. After baseline assessments, the clinic assigned each participant to one of four 12-week workout routines--weight training intense, brief interval strength, moderate routines or no exercise.

As predicted by the scientists, participants who had focused on interval strength improved their endurance more than those who trained primarily with weights and those who had been inactive achieved far less than all other participants. Nonetheless, most everyone improved their health--more so the elderly as professor of medicine at the clinic Dr. Sreekumaran Nair reported, "Older people's cells responded in some ways more robustly to intense exercise than the cells of the young did."

The - Advertisement -  
study

highlighted the impact of cardio-HIIT training on a muscle cell's mitochondrial health--which is most correlated with determining age-related decline.

Although a study published on March 30, 2017 by journal Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases labeled "Running as a Key Lifestyle Medicine for Longevity" concludes that running is the best form of exercise for increasing "reduced risk percentage of premature mortality", the study adds that "people who run consistently and also engage in other forms of exercise, see the most significant health benefits".

In September 2013, endurance swimmer Diana Nyad accomplished her dream to swim the Straits of Florida. 53 hours and 110 miles after she departed the shores of Cuba, Nyad reached Florida, completing her goal in record time and more surprisingly, at a record age, 64.

Nyad's success story shines light on much of today's scientists' research on the differences between chronological and biological aging.

Since Nyad's swim across the straits of Florida in 2013 and her appearance on Dancing with the Stars in 2014, Nyad, along with her best friend Bonnie Stoll, have been encouraging Americans to walk alongside the two friends' movement called EverWalk across the United States. Nyad said in an interview for Women's Running in October of last year, "We're all aging. But here I am at 67 years old and I'm not going to waste time. Moving feels great and keeps me feeling young."

Nyad's message is clear. No matter the age, any form of physical exercise is better than none and will help to reduce risks of premature mortality. There should be no excuse seems to be the message that scientists are trying to get across. Evidence in hand, the public should begin to feel better about how age can really be just a bunch of numbers and that we should begin to support each other on a person's feel for biological age--what really matters.

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*Bob Weiner is the USATF MTF Media Director, former Chief of Staff, US House Aging Committee, and former White House spokesman, and Paula Hong is three-time New Jersey Prep School State Golf Champion and running advocate, and op-ed writer for Robert Weiner Associates and Solutions for Change.*