



## Exercise for a younger you

By Stacia Soliday, ARNP



Newsflash! This just in! The Fountain of Youth has been discovered and it happens to be in Kansas!

In "The Wizard of Oz," Dorothy wants to go home to Kansas. At first, she thinks the all-powerful Wizard will get her there. He turns out to be a sham. Then, she thinks the ruby slippers will take her home. Although they turn out to be helpful, their magic is limited. The true power, it turns out, has been with her all along. It's her own will -- her heart.

You see, there is no magical water, guru or pill which can add years to your life. The true Fountain of Youth has been known for centuries and, like Dorothy, the power to be healthy has been with you all along.

It's your will to exercise.

Now, I know you're moaning and groaning saying, "Tell me something I don't know." O.K., I will.

Although we all are well aware that exercise keeps our cardiovascular system healthy and is a major part of weight loss, I bet I can list at least 10 benefits to exercise and weight loss you may never have known.

1. Exercise improves insulin sensitivity and Type II diabetes complications and symptoms.
2. Improves balance leading to fewer knee and hip injuries.
3. Cuts the risk of breast cancer (and many others) by at least 18 percent.
4. Wards off infection by boosting Immune Cell (T-cell) function.
5. Improves memory and significantly lowers the risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer's Disease.
6. Increases fertility and restores regular ovulation cycles.
7. Lowers the incidence and severity of migraine headaches.
8. Improves sleep quality and quantity.
9. Wards off depression.
10. Eases symptoms of Osteoarthritis (knee, hip, back & neck pain).

So, as you can see, exercise has positive effects on almost every system of the body. Not only is it a natural "Fountain of Youth," but you can also consider it your own personal "Money Tree."

Exercise and proper body weight will keep your physician's bills lower. You're less likely to be seen for catastrophic illness which will save you thousands in medications, diagnostics and hospital stays.

"But Stacia," you say, "it's so hard to get going. I just don't have the time." You don't have to have the time -- you just need the will. Once you have willed yourself to better health, you'll make the time. Start slow. Be realistic. You can do it. Just get out there and walk.

*Stacia Soliday is a Family Nurse Practitioner practicing at the Davenport and Wilbur clinics.*