

Exercise Is Medicine: How Physical Activity Boosts Health and Slows Aging

Judy Foreman

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The general consensus is that exercise is good and leads to a better quality of life than sedentary habits do, but according to Judy Foreman's *Exercise Is Medicine*, there is an additional benefit that should be promoted more widely.

Jumping right in to ask "what is aging, really?", Foreman lays out a formidable list of nine "hallmarks" of aging, including mitochondrial dysfunction, stem cell exhaustion, and genomic instability; these were detailed by a team of scientists led by Carlos Lopez-Otin and Guido Kroemer. All of these, the book says, can be mitigated through exercise.

While it doesn't suggest that exercise completely eradicates aging, the book explains how muscle mass and mitochondria loss can be slowed by regular exercise, and how good blood flow, larger arteries, and independence in advanced age can be prolonged. Helpful sections lay out how much of which type of exercise—moderate or intense, endurance or strength training—is most likely to lead to each benefit.

Exercise Is Medicine is thoughtfully arranged to maximize understanding for those of various levels of interest. Foreman professes her love of the hard-core science behind the theories of exercise benefit, but recognizes that some prefer less-technical details. Each chapter gives its "big picture" first, followed by in-depth technical details that reveal the science behind them.

Inspiring profiles include that of cross-country skier and age-group gold medalist Trina Hosmer, who at seventy-three years of age bikes between thirty and fifty miles every other day (among other exercises), and of Bessie Kemler, who reaped the benefits of productive longevity by leading a movement-filled life while caring for her family.

Exercise Is Medicine is compelling as it argues for the permanent incorporation of regular exercise, promising that aging doesn't have to be as feared as it is.

TANISHA RULE (November / December 2019)

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