

Aging with Post-Polio

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Making life changes

A. Consider your options

Why do you want to change?

What is the best way to get what you want?

Does it seem reasonable?

Has the double-blind cross-over study been done?

Has it been done with people like you?

Check your "downside risk". (side effects, money, time and energy?)

B. Set goals to get started

specific, (What? How? Where? When? With whom? For how long?)

Set a time and place to start

measurable, (How will you know if you have succeeded?)

Remember your reasons for changing.

realistic, (Radical programs almost always fail radically)

Keep changes small

and truthful. (Am I really committed to doing this?)

Make permanent changes.

C. Evaluate your change

Feel good about what is right.

Has the change moved you closer to your goals?

Review your goals

Do you want to continue or try something else.

As you go through this handout, mark things you are doing right with a star, things you would consider changing with a check mark. Later, rank the changes you would like to make and start working on the one that is most important to you.

1. Effective relaxation

Relaxation is the nearest thing we have to a magic pill for PPS.

1. Learn three **conscious relaxation techniques.**

- Slow, full, relaxed breathing
- Conscious relaxing of the muscles
- Focusing of the mind on one specific thing

learn and practice

- _____ a 20 minute relaxation technique
- _____ a 6 minute relaxation technique
- _____ a 1 minute relaxation technique

_____ 2. Learn to recognize difficult, high stress situations and use your relaxation techniques to help you to perform better.

_____ 3. Use relaxation over the long haul to lower your day-to day stress level and increase your awareness of your body and your emotions. Your physical and emotional pain is information essential to your health and well-being.

4. Incorporate behaviors you find relaxing into your life

- _____ Laughter -
- _____ Sleep
- _____ Music
- _____ Massage
- _____ Hot tub, whirl pool
- _____ Dinner out
- _____ Listen to tapes
- _____ Loving

add you own relaxing behaviors.

2. Nutrition + Vitamin-mineral supplements

Your body's energy comes from the food you eat.

- _____ Eat a variety
- _____ of unprocessed (and little processed) foods
- _____ with high nutrient density
- _____ in moderate amounts
- _____ during at least three regular meals a day, including breakfast,
- _____ with protein at each meal
- _____ combined with smart snacking patterns (including beverages)
- _____ while drinking at least six glasses of fluid daily, two of them water,

_____ and taking a broad-based vitamin-mineral supplement.

- _____ increase calcium in your diet
- _____ consider estrogen (Premarin and too many other names to mention),
- _____ consider bisphosphonates -Alendronate (Fosamax)
- _____ decrease caffeine
- _____ use alcohol in moderation
- _____ quit smoking

3. Values & Goals Clarification

People grow old only by deserting their ideals. - General Douglas MacArthur.

- _____ 1. Identify your 5 main core values.
- _____ 2. Find concrete, realistic ways to express your values.
- _____ 3. Prioritize your valued experiences
- _____ 4. Plan for specific action for opportunities to enjoy them.
- _____ 5. Make small, specific, concrete changes that reflect your core values.

4. Self affirming Communication

A satisfying long term relationship is one of the main determinants of a long and happy life.

1. Having the courage to reveal to others who you are and what you want.
2. Expressing yourself assertively and listening actively.
3. Replacing self-defeating communication behaviors and styles with self-affirming communication skills.

Specific Communication skills

Nonverbal Communication

_____ Voice Skills

_____ Body Skills

Self-assertive Language

_____ Use I when you mean I

_____ Use "yes" and "no"

_____ Don't explain or apologize without reason.

_____ Avoid the word "but"

Giving and receiving Feedback

_____ Avoid value judgments - describe

_____ Be specific

_____ Report impact Don't judge the behavior

_____ The best feedback is focused on things that can be changed, and immediate.

_____ Get more than one person's feedback

Active Listening

_____ Frame - plan your conversation

_____ Disturbance takes precedence

_____ Listen to all non-verbal messages

_____ Recreate what you are hearing and play it back to the speaker.

5. Appropriate Exercise

Get enough exercise to prevent disuse atrophy, but not enough to produce overuse damage.

Any exercise program should be a mix of

suppleness

_____ try gentle yoga

_____ other stretching exercises

strength (only with great care)

_____ Find out which muscles are polio damaged

_____ build strength in the undamaged muscles

_____ figure out how much weight will fatigue the damaged muscles

_____ lift only 30% of that amount with the damaged muscles

_____ DO NOT FATIGUE the damaged muscles

stamina

**Can you get your heart rate up to training rate without fatiguing any polio damaged muscles?

_____ Yes get your heart rate up to training range three times a week.

_____ No Do not do exercises for stamina.

You might want to try:

_____ Laughter

_____ Sex

There is no magic pill for aging or Post-polio

Some things that have been tried are listed below. I don't recommend any of them.

| Medication | Other Names | Test Results | Problems |
|----------------------|---|--|---|
| Prednisone | Deltacortisone, Glucocorticoid and many other names (most ending in "sone") | no better than placebo | may mask signs of infection, cataracts, increased blood pressure, fluid and electrolyte imbalances, muscle weakness, loss of muscle mass, decreased wound healing, etc., etc., etc. |
| Human growth hormone | Somatropin, Humatrope, Nutropin, Protropin | no better than placebo | headaches, muscle pain, weakness, hyperglycemia, etc. |
| IGF-1 | Insulin-like growth factor, somatomedin-C | no better than placebo | headaches, muscle pain, weakness, hyperglycemia, etc. |
| Pyridostigmine | Mestinon | no better than placebo in multicenter tests. | nausea, vomiting, cramps, muscle cramps, fasciculation and weakness. |
| Bromocriptine | Parlodel | large scale testing not yet done in PPS. Recommended only after lifestyle interventions have failed. | growth hormone suppressant, dyskinesias, hallucinations, confusion, rarer seizures, strokes, or Myocardial Infarction. |

What I found was that the most effective anti-aging interventions are relaxation, good nutrition, working from your own basic values toward your own goals, improving communication skills and appropriate exercise.

There are **many** books on aging interventions. The ones I found most useful are -

_____ *Your Vitality Quotient*, Earle, R., Imrie, D., & Archibold, R., Random House of Canada Ltd., Toronto, 1989

_____ *Live Longer - Live Better*, Reader's Digest Assoc. (Canada) Ltd., 1995

_____ *Reducing your Body Age*, Earle, R., Imrie, D., & Archibold, R.,
web site: www.ivillage.com/bodyage