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# 50+ LifeStyles



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## Getting Wings

By Gary P. Joyce

Let's face it. With my less-than-illustrious personal history with things aeronautical, learning to fly shouldn't be on my short list. But once again, I was about to prove to those who know me that yes, it is a mystery how I, out of the millions of competing sperm, succeeded in reaching my destination. Let me digress . . . *Story continues in Centerfold*

## Middle Boomers: A Separate Demographic Group

*New Study Examines Differences Among the Baby Boomers*

For decades, American Baby Boomers have been characterized as a bloc of people who think and act as one monolithic generation. However, recent data from the MetLife Mature Market Institute, show that Young, Middle and Older Boomers grew up during disparate eras and are now at different stages in their lives. They should, perhaps, be treated as

separate demographic groups. In both a series of demographic profiles and a new study, *The MetLife Study of Boomers in the Middle*, facts are emerging about how distinct the segments are. "The Middle Boomers, now 52 to 58 years old and 29 million strong, are very much a generation of the 60s," said Sandra Timmermann, Ed.D., director of the

MetLife Mature Market Institute. "They identify with the Vietnam War, the Kennedy assassination and the women's movement, identifying the war as the event that most influenced them in their youth. They are distinguished most by a change in culture through political and social activism. But, like the proverbial often neglected 'middle child,' they have rarely been noted as having an identity of their own, although they are different in many ways from the Oldest and Youngest Boomers."

From a business and financial standpoint, the Middle Boomers are looking forward to retirement (setting their sights on age 65), have a high net worth (\$100,000 or more, excluding their home value) and are currently

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My Crazy  
Neurotic  
Wonderful  
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# Why Resistance Training Matters

By Carolyn Nutovic

What are your health and fitness goals for this spring? Are you looking forward to getting out in your garden, playing tennis or golf with friends, or traveling to a new destination? Whether your dream is to keep up with the grandkids, or be swimsuit ready for your cruise this summer, resistance training can help transform the dream into an achievable goal.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), American Heart Association, National Institutes of Health, and National Institute on Aging all recommend regular resistance training for men and women 50 and older, within specific guidelines. This is because the most dramatic declines due to aging are in muscle strength (Crandell 2006) "Unless you do resistance exercise — strength training with weights or elastic bands — you lose six pounds of muscle a decade," says Wayne Wescott, author of *Strength Training Past 50*.

Resistance training is a form of strength training in which various muscle groups in the body are engaged to oppose a force. Muscle groups either move against, or hold still against the force. Exercises may

employ equipment using a cable system, such as the Total Gym or Resistance Chair, or may involve props as simple as a chair and dumbbells.

ACSM recommends beginning with a cable system and progressing to free weights to avoid injury. A safe, effective workout regimen should include daily stretching and balance exercises, and resistance training two- to three-times a week alternating with three to five days of moderate cardiovascular conditioning. However, individuals with chronic conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, arthritis, or osteoporosis should always seek professional advice when evaluating frequency, duration, intensity, and number of sets and repetitions. Chair-based exercise routines are an ideal starting point for such individuals because they provide a stable, low-impact environment in which to increase strength and cardio capacity.

What are some of the benefits of resistance training? First, if you regularly incorporate this type of strength training into your routine you'll ensure greater long-term functionality. This simply means that "resistance training makes muscles substantially stronger and helps people do better at everyday activities



such as walking, climbing steps, and standing up from chairs." (*Boston Globe*) Such basic day-to-day activities help senior adults to maintain independence. Also implied is the ability to continue enjoying other activities such as hiking, bowling, cycling, and romping with the grandkids.

Secondly, an exercise regimen that includes resistance training has broad health benefits. Susan Crandell, author of *Thinking About Tomorrow: Reinventing*

*Yourself at Midlife*, reports that "strength training just 20 minutes a day, two or three times a week can rebuild three pounds of muscle and increase your metabolism by seven percent. [You'll] feel more energetic, more alert, more vital and alive. Plus, the added muscle has a halo effect on many systems of the body, reducing blood pressure, improving your ability to use glucose from the blood by 25 percent, increasing bone mass by one to three percent, and improving gastrointestinal efficiency by 55 percent." (*AARP Magazine*)

Lastly, we'd all like to look great on the beach, wouldn't we? What's the relationship between resistance training and weight loss? The bottom line in weight loss — medical conditions such as thyroid aside — is that when you burn more calories than you take in, you lose weight. An intelligent weight loss program includes both nutrition and exercise, variables determined by the specific profile of the person attempting to lose weight. Research has shown circuit resistance training produces the same calorie burn as a brisk walk, while also building lean muscle mass. (*Clark*)

Carolyn Nutovic is a certified personal trainer with the National Academy of Sports Medicine and a customer service representative at VQ ActionCare. For more information please visit, [www.vqactioncare.com](http://www.vqactioncare.com).