

A Word from the Forever Young Society: *Keep Moving for a Long, Healthy Life*

"Promoting Active Lifestyles"

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National Family Health and Fitness Day, 2008

By: by R.T. Eady, Director, O2b4Again Inter-generational Balance/Movement Program
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Do you want to be healthy, happy and vigorous to the very end of your life? Silly question, right? Well then, advises **Forever Young Society Director of Inter-generational Exercise and Physiology** Randy Eady, M.Ed, NCC go out and play more now.

"If you want to be healthy, you're going to have to do what the body was designed to do for as long as you can do it. So why not make it easy on yourself and find things you enjoy doing. Probably things you loved to do as a child and want your children or grand children to learn. Besides it's so much easier to stay active than to try to develop the habits and skills late in life," he explains. "It's possible, of course, to become active at any age, but it takes so much more energy investment and motivation."

For that reason, Eady advises (well preaches, actually) that taking a cue from his youngest students can be the most instructive. In his "**O-2-B-4 Again**" **Natural Movement and Coordination Class** he encourages his *mature adventurers* to move as if they were "**young @ heart**" and offers plenty of interactive games to get those youthful juices flowing.

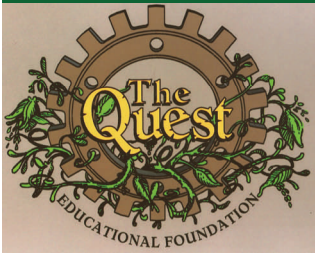
"Most of us roll into our mid-twenties in pretty good shape – we have that reservoir of fitness from childhood and adolescence when we ran around and played," he says. "But then we slip into a modern lifestyle, that keeps the major movement muscle groups quiet and has our eyes and fingers doing most of the roaming. If people can just keep up the habit of moving in their 20s and 30s, and find activities they love enough to do regularly, that's likely to carry them through life and get them past many of those *e-vices*."

What people do at different ages usually changes, of course, and creative adaptation is key. Playing racquetball three times a week may work for a 30-year-old but not for a 60-year-old with creaky knees. The 70-year-old with a lifelong, ingrained exercise habit, though, can easily ride a bike, walk, swim laps, golf, do yoga even kite surf – and benefit enormously.

"I explain to students, 'Yes, it's fine not to work out as hard as you adjust to your body's adaptations,'" Eady says. "I also tell them, 'But don't feel like you can take more days off.'"

The paradox of lifespan

That adage "youth is wasted on the young" is well-captured in the demands of many of today's life-ways and practices. Our bodies weren't built for chairs or Reccaro race car seats or even the most comfortable recliner sofa-chairs. Our bodies were made to move. When in repast, our most healthful position is to be closer to the ground. Eyeball how "grounded" a four year old is; see how *often* they want to plop in a chair. No surprise -- they typically take to a such a contraption only when directed.



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O-2-B-4-Again: The *Essence* of Lifetime Exercise in Every Decade

In your 20s & 30s

Build your aerobic capacity – this is prime time. Women, especially, need to be doing weight-bearing activities that put stress on their bones. Make exercise a priority, even though life is getting busier now. Start strength training, if you haven't already, to maintain bone and muscle mass.

In your 40s

People start noticing that "middle-aged" spread in these years – women, in particular, may need to do more now to keep from gaining weight. Have your bone-density tested by your mid-40s, at the latest.

In your 50s

Keep going! And see an exercise physiologist to have your **balance and agility** assessed and develop an exercise plan to maintain or improve these critical aspects of fitness.

In your 60s

No, you're not old, and it is not a time to slow down. Your exercise routine may be less vigorous than when you were younger, but you should not be taking sustained time off. Have your posture assessed, both sitting and standing, and do corrective exercises if needed. Also, be sure to maintain flexibility and balance.

In your 70s: "*Learn to Walk Smarter to Live Longer*"

Do something physical every single day. Strength-thwarting habits that directly effect core muscles start to have a large impact on posture, balance and stride. As more people mature, the mid-seventies *is* being recognized as a watershed time of *nouveau adolescence*. It is at this time where the body is rapidly changing and social context and activity can be critical for on-going good health. Even if it's just balance drills and a 30-minute walk, be religious about it. Staying active is vital. As Eady remarks about the benefit of his **Eas-i-Chi** balance program, "it simply hones balance and rhythm to keep my students on the dance floor of life."

80s and above

Keep working on good balance, and get an exercise physiologist or physical therapist to assess your gait and the strength of key muscle groups – very mild, consistent training can make a huge difference in your quality of life.

At every age, it helps to remember the words of Dr. Robert Butler, noted gerontologist, author and Founder and Chairman of the International Longevity Center, testifying before the U.S. Senate Committee on Aging: **"If we could put exercise into a pill, we'd have discovered the first true anti-aging medication."**

Randy Eady, M.Ed. NCC is a therapeutic counselor and behavioral scientist that **specializes in inter-generational movement classes** with cool titles such as *Eas-i-Chi* and **Toes Knows**. He often has youngsters (4-8 year olds) dancing together with "*vintage adventurers*" as he terms them.

Randy Eady, M.Ed, a former professor and counselor in Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the USAF Academy, CO, is a big proponent of the wellness benefits of leisure recreation and integrative exercise. He's an intergenerational balance and coordination specialist who conducts Balance Bookends movement classes for the young (between the age of 4-9) and those "young at heart" hovering around 60. He's designed a curriculum pack (The Glider Rider Flight Plan) and booklet (Tommy and Grandpa Learn to Ride) to supplement his Glider Rider Series of Youth and Mature Adult Balance and Coordination Learning and Refinement Bikes.

*He has consulted with the Consortium of Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers of the Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (GRECC-VA), the National Council on Aging and the American Society on Aging. His work assists health care professionals implement socially facilitated, multi-generational wellness programs directed at leg muscle strength as the #1 factor in physical health for older populations. You can find out more about his classes at *Generations United* (www.gu.org).*