

NAN'S TOP 10 TIPS TO AGING POWERFULLY



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AGE POWERFULLY WITH NAN

Certified Integrative Nutrition Health Coach
Plant-Based Nutritional certification from eCornell University
Specializing in Lifestyle as Medicine

Nan Simonsen has worked with patients for years as a certified health coach with Lifestyle Medical, a general practice, in Riverside, CA. She specializes in lifestyle as medicine and, having earned a Plant-based Nutrition certification from eCornell University, conducts cooking classes. She counsels clients on building delicious meals from whole plant foods.

At 70, Nan's greatest wish is to see her baby boomer generation rise up in a movement to fight the devastation that the current health crisis is having on our population. Join her and AGE POWERFULLY as you enjoy vibrant health, serene balance, and true joy into your later years. Nan and her husband, Tim, live in Riverside, California, with their white cat, Grace.



#1 - Read *Aging Powerfully*.

Hello and thank you for subscribing to my newsletter! Below I will describe my top tips for *Aging Powerfully*, however, to get the full picture of what it means to age with power you will want to read *Aging Powerfully*, and to use parts 3 and 4 as an ongoing reference. Reading my story which includes lessons learned, as well as the rationale and details for the lifestyle enhancements that I outline, will put you on the path to a long vibrant life with enhanced health, balance, and joy.

You can purchase my book on [Amazon](#).



#2 - Stay hydrated.

Begin each morning with a tall glass of warm, or room temperature water. A squeeze of lemon juice will add a boost to digestion and help prevent constipation. Continue to drink water throughout the day.

Water helps us regulate our internal temperature, transports nutrients throughout the body, flushes waste, forms saliva, lubricates joints and serves as a protective shock absorber for vital organs. Staying hydrated helps to keep our skin plump, and our waistline trim.

How much water should we drink a day? Age old advice is eight eight-ounce glasses; 64 ounces. However, the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine determined that an adequate daily intake is: About 15.5 (3.7 liters) of fluid a day for men, and about 11.5 cups (2.7 liters) of fluids a day for women. These recommendations cover fluids from water, other beverages and food. About 20% of daily fluid intake usually comes from food and the rest from drinks. Other factors like exercise and environmental temperature come in to play, as well as the general makeup of the food eaten. Whole plant-based like fruits, vegetables, soups and stews are primarily water. Whole cooked beans and grains less so. Most processed food, very little.

The guideline reads that your fluid intake is probably adequate if:

- You rarely feel thirsty
- Your urine is colorless or light yellow

To prevent dehydration and make sure your body has the fluids it needs, make water the beverage of choice.

- It's a good idea to drink a glass of water upon awakening
- With each meal and between meals
- If you feel thirsty



#3 - Increase your daily intake of fresh vegetables and fruits especially leafy greens.

Within the nine families of vegetables and fruits, there are hundreds of different plant compounds that are beneficial to our health. The more variety that we eat, the better the complex mix of enzymes as well as phytonutrients and phytochemicals, will nourish our bodies and feed our microbiome. This cannot be replicated by supplements. Set out every day to eat the colors of the rainbow. The richer and darker the colors, and the greater the variety, the more phytonutrients and antioxidants are flooding our bodies. The benefits will be apparent in the way that we feel and look. In time, your skin will glow.

The greater the quantity of delicious vegetables and fruits that we eat, the more we neuro-adapt to the clean, rich, complex flavors of these whole foods. In turn, the less we crave processed and fast foods that are loaded with salt, fat and sugar, and have had vital nutrients removed and replaced by artificial ingredients. Our bodies do not thrive on manmade foods. In fact, many of them negatively affect our digestion, blood sugar regulation, microbiome, and weight.

A diet rich in vegetables and fruits can lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, prevent most types of cancer, lower the risk of eye and digestive problems, and have a positive effect upon blood sugar, which can help keep appetite in check and even promote weight loss.



#4 - Reduce, or eliminate, animal-based products – meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, and all dairy products. Also move away from processed foods.

In the Standard American Diet (SAD), protein is king. We are encouraged to eat far more protein (approximately 35% of total calories), especially animal protein, than we physically require. Protein is treated like a wonder food. In all of the Blue Zone communities, those with the longest-lived healthy populations in the world, the main protein sources are legumes (beans, peas, lentils), grains, nuts and seeds. Protein makes up approximately 10-15% of total calories.

Dr. T. Colin Campbell presented evidence in *The China Study*, that the communities in China that ate the most animal products, with the resulting high levels of protein, had the highest rates of cancer. And that areas that ate a more plant-based diet, had the lowest incidences of cancer.

Dr. Caldwell Esselstyne in *How to Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease*, showed that by eliminating animal protein and fat, he could reverse coronary artery disease, which then alleviated many other chronic diseases.

Kelly A. Turner, PHD, found that one of the lifestyle modifications adopted by all of the 1,000 patients whom she studied, that survived a terminal cancer diagnosis, was the adoption of a whole food plant-based diet. She wrote about her findings in *Radical Remission: Surviving Cancer Against All Odds*.

Whole (not processed, and as close to nature as possible) plant foods (fruits, vegetables and tubers, beans, grains, seeds, nuts, herbs and spices) nourish us like nothing else can. When we convert from meat heavy meals to the clean flavors, vibrant colors, and delicious variety of foods that make up a whole plant food diet, we revel in every meal.

If transitioning to a whole food plant-based (WFPB) diet seems daunting, leaving you wondering where to begin, watch cooking videos offered for free by some of the best in the field like Dr. Joel Fuhrman who will teach you how to make simple yet highly nutritious plant-based meals; or, Dr. John McDougal, who offers information on a starch-based meal plan guaranteed to satisfy; or, Tami of Tami's Nutmeg Notebook, who offers videos about her early days of becoming plant based, as well as videos on time saving ideas like "batch cooking" to help you conserve time. And then there is internationally known vegan Chef AJ, who has thousands of videos which include cooking demonstrations, as well as interviews with experts who will instruct you on the basics of living WFPB. You will find these knowledgeable online by typing in their name, followed by the word 'video', then choose the subjects that interest you.



#5 - Move more.

Our bodies were meant to move. Fast and slow, up and down, side to side, forward and backward. In other words, a full range of movement to engage the more than 600 skeletal muscles in the human body. These muscles:

- Enable movement of the body
- Provide structural support
- Maintain posture
- Generate heat, which maintains body temperature
- Act as a source of nutrients such as amino acids
- Serve as an energy source during starvation

When we move, we engage and tone as well as strengthen and build these muscles. When we sit or lie too long, they atrophy. Therefore, in order to maintain muscle coordination and prevent sarcopenia (muscle atrophy) as we age, we want to engage as many of them as possible, through a variety of movements.

Hippocrates stated simply **“Walking is man’s best medicine.”** That is a place to start. Per the Mayo Clinic, begin with at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity **every day**, bump it up to forty-five minutes or more when you can. Start with brisk walk, every day. We can break it down to at least 150 minutes of moderate activity a week, or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of the two.

Add strength training exercises, engaging all major muscle groups, at least two times a week. Do a single set of each exercise, using weights or resistance bands, enough to tire your muscles after 12-15 repetitions. You can Google ‘basic fitness routine’ for your age group to find a variety of routines, and methods to accomplish these basics.

What I just described may seem a bit regimented, but with those parameters in mind, let me simply say that the best exercise for you is the one that you will do. If you love to walk, then walk. Walk with a partner whom you enjoy spending time with, or listen to a podcast and enrich your knowledge and stay inspired. My healthiest patients make a game of counting their steps by using either their smart phone or a wearable device. How about a bike ride, or a swim, or gardening, or golfing, or dancing? In *Aging Powerfully* I have an informative chapter on exercise, and offer many suggestions. Find any and all excuses to move. You will come to love how it feels to move your body with ease, which happens when you do it often enough.

In all long-living societies, the people are active due to the nature of their lives. Especially due to the lack of mechanization, meaning they move regularly and often in their everyday lives. [What we don't use, we lose, especially our muscle mass, which can diminish by 1%-2% a year as we age.](#) Don't let that happen to you; it will shorten your years and make those years less enjoyable. Move every chance you get; the more you do it, the easier and more fun it is.

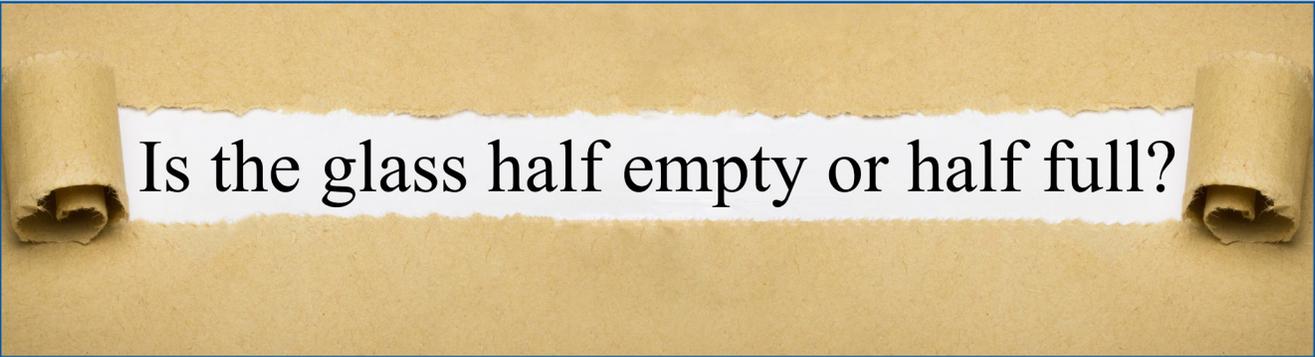


#6 - Cultivate close friendships and maintain social contacts. Avoid loneliness.

Loneliness will shorten your life, and make the life you have an unhappy one. We are social and tribal beings. We thrive on being a part of a group. Our families, friends, and social connections feed and nourish us in ways that food cannot. We have to exert ourselves to nourish our bodies, and, in kind, we have to put forth an effort to keep the connectivity with others a central part of our lives.

The word “cultivate” is a key concept here. Relationships, whether with family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, or other affiliations, have to be nurtured. At times we have to put ourselves out there. Before going any further with this, however, I will repeat a directive from Dan Buettner from his book *The Blue Zones*, “Be likable. Likable old people are more likely to have a social network, frequent visitors, and de facto caregivers. I have yet to meet a grumpy centenarian.” Joining groups, clubs, and organizations, as a means of expanding our social circle, allows us to also become involved, as well as to contribute. Volunteer work is another way to connect with others for the social aspect, as well as to fulfill a desire to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. [Volunteermatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org) can help you find meaningful projects in your area.

It can take effort to stay in touch with others, to maintain friendships when circumstances make connecting with others a challenge. Situations such as the Covid-19 Pandemic are an example, as is geographic distance, and lack of transportation; however, engaging in, finding, or creating a tribe is perhaps one of the most powerful things you can do to change your lifestyle for the better. I have a plethora of recommendations in *Aging Powerfully* to help you build a social network that you enrich your life.



Is the glass half empty or half full?

#7 - Be of good cheer.

Begin and end every day thanking God and/or the Universe for the blessings in your life. It is entirely too easy to fall into the habit of focusing on hard times and bad luck, and to carry that dark cloud like a shroud. Good and bad moods, as well as good and bad attitudes, are malleable, as well as habitual. We become what we think about, and we think about things from a frame of mind that we can reconfigure.

In *Aging Powerfully* I explain the physiological effects of both gratitude and positive thinking, as well as from thoughts of negativity, fear and doubt. Major systems in our bodies are actually modified by our thoughts. Therefore, it is crucial that we monitor them, and choose whenever possible, to find the silver lining in all that we can. Centenarians in Nir Barzilai's longevity study at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine have "an outgoing, easy-going, optimistic personality—traits that keep them engaged with the world."

If you were not born with a cup-half-full personality, you can develop these traits by being mindful of your thoughts, which become most evident by evaluating your feelings. Whenever possible, catch thoughts, and the feelings that they bring about, and reframe the situation in your mind's eye. Let me give you a quirky example: I was removing the pit of an avocado when it jumped out of my hand and rolled across my freshly mopped floor. My immediate thought was to be upset about the messy trail that it left, but instead, I chose to reframe the incident in this way—I had never seen so perfectly round an avocado pit, nor experience one roll 15 feet across the floor. It was not only surprising, but hilarious, and actually entertaining!

Making a conscious effort to bring joy, happiness, fun, playfulness, and energetic enthusiasm into your life will add years to your life, and life to your years. Keep in mind that you bring about what you think about. We form our experiences by how and what we think. In *Aging Powerfully* I have a list of things that we can do to train ourselves to see the glass as half full, rather than half empty. As it relates to being of good cheer, choosing to laugh daily is a must. Go out of your way to make this happen, it will be worth it.

WHAT IS YOUR WHY?



#8 - Have a purpose.

A strong sense of purpose – your WHY – can drive you forward and add many good, exciting and rewarding years to your life. I explain in *Aging Powerfully* that just months before turning seventy, I realized that there was no denying that at seventy, I was OLD. The problem with viewing it that way is that there was nowhere to go but downhill. After all, looking around, aren't most seventy-year old Americans on multiple medications and having regular medical procedures due to failing health? In other words, for some, their purpose becomes to simply hold on as long as they can. That's not living; I didn't want that. Instead, I stomped my foot and decided to look at seventy as the beginning of my third act—perhaps I had another twenty to thirty years ahead of me. This got me excited about how I was going to fill them. This led to finding my purpose: I adopted a mission to show and tell people that with amended lifestyle choices, there is no reason that we can't all live into our 90s and beyond, and do it in vibrant health. What an exciting prospect—twenty to thirty more years, and a mission to make a difference in the lives of others. That's exciting! It's a reason to wake up every day and get to work with the project of aging powerfully.

So, I will ask you, what is your mission? It may take a bit of time and determination to create a mindset that lights your fire. Articulating a personal mission statement can be a good start. Begin by answering this simple but overriding question, "Why do I get up in the morning?" If it is hard to come up with a compelling answer, then consider what you are passionate about, and how you can use your talents toward what is truly important to you. It has been shown that we maintain good brain function by continuing to stimulate our minds, and challenging ourselves. What better way to do this than with a passion pushing you forward. If you find this crucial question a challenge, give it your time and attention. When you find your purpose, you will find that it will kick your life into a higher gear. It will energize you and make you excited to see the sun rise every day.



#9 - Sleep and relax.

One of the longest chapters in *Aging Powerfully* is this one – the necessity of sleep and relaxation. The longest chapter is about food and the importance of the choices we make regarding our nourishment. From a young age we have all been told that we have to get enough sleep. What is enough? Why? In *Aging Powerfully* I let the medical experts answer both of those questions. The guidance of two medical doctors weighs heavily in this chapter. Both board certified neurologists, married to each other, Drs. Dean and Ayesha Sherzai. As they point out, we can do everything right—eat well, enjoy a rich social life, exercise daily—but still suffer from poor digestion, anxiety, blood sugar dysregulation, and cardiovascular dysregulation, and most strikingly from early Alzheimer’s disease, if we neglect this area of our life. Their recommendation is to regularly get a minimum of six hours of sleep, better yet, seven to eight hours nightly. Look up ‘sleep hygiene’ on the internet, and you will find many articles offering recommendations for getting a good night’s sleep. I also cover this in *Aging Powerfully*.

In elementary terms, during sleep, our body goes through processes that enable a regeneration of sorts for our major systems, including a clean-up, of our digestive system (a reason to limit food within two to three hours of sleep), and of our brain. Without proper sleep, all systems suffer, and our thinking becomes impaired. Sleep deprivation can literally make you ill, and can make life hard to manage in many ways.

Similarly, we must have a daily period during which we de-stress. A period that allows us to downshift from driving forward at top speed, to cruising, chilling, and relaxing. We have an autonomic nervous system that controls important bodily functions, two branches of which are the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems. In general, the parasympathetic nervous system is responsible for the stimulation of the “rest-and-digest” or feed and breed” activities that occur when the body is at rest. The sympathetic nervous system’s primary

process is to stimulate the body's fight or flight response. One or the other of these systems is dominant at any given time; they are mutually exclusive. When in fight or flight, the body goes into hyperdrive, downregulating systems like digestion, and urinary output, while up-regulating systems like the adrenal and cardiovascular systems. This is necessary and very handy when we are in an emergency situation and have to be able to handle untold dangerous situations; however, if this system is overused, as in daily unrelenting stress, it will burn out our regulating systems.

In order to de-stress, we need to take time every day to rest and relax. Mindfulness, meditation, some forms of yoga. Deep breathing. Sitting outdoors in nature. Enjoying a good book. Watching clouds go by. I could go on and on. Make a list of what you enjoy doing that leaves you refreshed. Check off something from that list each day.

BE KIND to yourself

#10 - Honor YOU!

Be true to yourself. Honor who you are. Many of us spend a lifetime in pursuit of some kind of personal evolution that will finally give us peace, and allow us to at last feel whole. My advice is that wherever you are on your road to self-actualization, be kind to yourself for all that you have accomplished to this point. From this moment going forward, invest more attention and energy into catching yourself doing something right, rather than ticking off a long list of the ways that you feel you have not measured up.

Aging powerfully means that as you move through these next decades of life, you will do it with purpose, joy, intention, sass, assuredness, style, and vigor. You will walk tall and strong, speak with clarity and meaning, embrace your true self at every turn. And most importantly, embrace these lifestyle choices that have been proven to give you the strongest mind, body, and spirit. Celebrate that by giving yourself the care that you deserve, you will have a long and joyous life ahead of you. As poet Robert Browning wrote, *"Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be!"*



THANK YOU!

Thank you for downloading my e-book. Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be. There is no denying that whatever path we take, age will have a say on our life; let's seek the joy and not be afraid.

Join me in celebrating this third and final act of my life. There is so much more to say about this mission of ours to age powerfully. Visit my website, join my newsletter, and reach out to me on Facebook and Instagram. Let's form a community of people committed to showing what AGING P.O.W.E.R.F.U.L.L.Y. looks like!

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