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THE FIT FACTOR

LIFESTYLE CHANGE

Use exercise as a springboard into longevity. Give yourself the best chance of living in good health for longer by adding a sensible exercise routine into your life – no matter what age you are.

FITNESS TIP

It's important to warm up at any age, especially as you get older. For an average gym session, 10 minutes to raise your heart rate and mobilise the joints would be recommended.

Don't miss David's tips every Saturday in your Journal

THE over-40s, once deemed over the hill, are now filling gyms, runs and completing triathlons. Sport England report the strongest increase in sports participation in the past 10 years is 45 to 55-year-olds, a rise of 794,000 people - an increase of 41%. Also 3.4m over-55s are taking part in sport once a week. Here are some really positive statistics:

■ Running is up a massive 97% among the 55 and over age group, in the past decade

■ Cycling is up 59%

■ Nuffield health gyms have announced their 70 to 75-year-old clients make an average of eight trips to the gym a month, beating those aged 25-39 who manage only six.

Forget the occasional easy run or

pilates class, many of these over-40s are taking their exercise very seriously and often to the next level:

■ 32.6% of those taking part in this year's London Triathlon were over 40

■ 2,393 more over-40s completed the London Marathon this year

■ Ironman challenges (2.4-mile swim, 112-mile cycle and then running a marathon) have more than tripled in popularity with British men and women over the past five years.

So what are the motivating factors behind the middle-age-and-beyond exercise boost?

Here are a few of my thoughts:

■ Age and the ageing process, for the first time, suddenly becomes an

issue and you want to feel and do things you could do years ago.

■ Weight, for many, is a constant issue and the middle age spread starts to bother you.

■ Health, issues with yourself, family or friends can have a huge impact on you and your life. You now realise it's time to look after yourself.

■ As you get older you feel more vulnerable as your general range of movement and reactions slow down. Exercise can help hugely.

■ The past decade has seen a huge boost in a cross section of different challenges. They are becoming more and more popular with people travelling all over the world to compete and enjoy new and unique experiences.

■ Education - I still have many of the same clients who started with me 20 years ago because they were told the importance of exercise and how it will change their life for the better. Maybe the message is finally getting to the masses!

■ Specialised advice - the disposable income of the over-40s often means they can seek personal and professional help towards their



health and well-being. This gives them the knowledge and confidence to train safely and specifically towards different challenges. For

many the fifth decade of life is a chance to re-start your fitness, not finish it! It's all about having self belief and the correct mindset.

We don't stop exercising because we grow old, we grow old because we stop exercising

Motivational quote of the day