

NEVER TOO OLD

The over 40's, 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 45-55 year olds, a rise of 794,000 people, an increase of 41 percent. Also 3.4 million over 55's are taking part in sport once a week, up 28 percent.

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%.
- Gym's and Personal Trainers are finding those approaching retirement and beyond are their most consistent clients.
- Nuffield health gyms have announced their 70-75 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 40's are taking their exercise very seriously and often to the next level:

- 32.6% of those taking part in this years London Triathlon were over 40.
- 2,393 more over 40's completed the London marathon this year.
- Ironman challenges (2.4 mile swim, 112 mile cycle and then running a marathon) have over tripled in popularity with British men and women over the past five years.

What's 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 or bingo wings arms, as some people call them, start to bother you.



David Fairlamb

- **Health** - issues with yourself, family or friends can have a huge impact on you and your life. You now realise its time to look after yourself.
- **Mobility** - as you get older you feel more vulnerable as your general range of movement and reactions slow down. Exercise can help hugely.
- **Challenges** - 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 ever since I first spoke to them, 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 40's 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 restart your fitness not finish it. It's all about having self belief and the correct mindset.

DAVID'S SUMMING UP

Use exercise as a springboard into longevity of life. 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.