



## Stretching and Flexibility as We Age



Muscle flexibility provides a variety of benefits as we age. It helps improve posture, helps combat the harmful effects of stress, and delays or prevents the tendency to stiffen with age.

Joint and muscle tissues are elastic. As we grow older, the tissues around our joints tend to thicken, growing tighter and restricting movement. Stretching can reduce this effect.

Stretching should not be hard. Relax and enjoy! Your muscle should feel comfortably stretched but not distressed. Never stretch to the point of pain. Pain means "stop!" Allow the muscle to feel just slightly uncomfortable. With practice and patience, flexibility will increase.

To preserve your current level of flexibility, perform your stretch routine three times per week. To increase flexibility, stretch four or five days per week. Do not target any one set of muscles, as a stretch and exercise program aimed at limbering the entire body will be most beneficial.

Gentleness while stretching is a must for older adults with back problems, arthritis, osteoporosis, or any condition likely to decrease the natural range of motion. Physical limitations must be respected. The use of towels or other assistive devices during your program will help increase your range of motion.

Let's look at some rules to follow for safe and successful stretching:

- Remember to talk with your health care professional before starting any new exercise program. He or she can help you find the stretching regimen that is right for you.
- Before stretching, warm up thoroughly. A 10- to 15-minute warm up is good. No cool-down period is required after stretching.
- Gently ease into each stretch and hold it for 15 to 30 seconds. Perform each stretch three times, taking a moment to rest between repetitions.
- If any stretch hurts or feels abnormal to you, omit it from your regimen.
- Never bounce during any stretch. Ease into the position and hold it in a relaxed manner.
- Do not force your joint to stretch beyond its natural range of motion.
- Breathe naturally; never hold your breath!
- Perform at least one stretch for each body section.

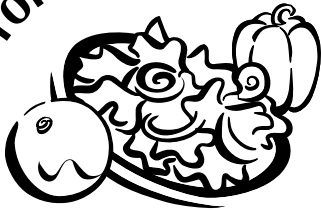
Beautiful, relaxing music encourages a sense of quiet harmony while stretching. Choose music that creates an atmosphere of tranquility and peacefulness. Never hurry ... simply slow down and enjoy the moment. Stretch smoothly and breathe deeply. Relax and feel proud of yourself for taking care of your body, for you are a true miracle!

*By: Lisa Marie Gibson, Ohio State University Extension, Franklin County*

*Reference: "Stretching and Flexibility as We Age." Senior Series Fact Sheet, SS-171-00, <http://ohioline.osu.edu/ss-fact/pdf/0171.pdf>*

# Dieting on the Rise— Tips for Success

food for thought



The weight-loss business is booming! Over 1,200 books on diets are available; most (about 88%) were published in the last five years. Every year, Americans spend an estimated \$30 billion on all types of diet foods, drinks, programs, and products. Nearly 50 million Americans will go on diets this year alone, yet only 5% will manage to keep their weight off! This low success rate means too many people look for quick and easy solutions. The truth is that an effortless weight-loss method does not exist!

One of the diets getting a lot of press recently is the "low carb" diet. The many versions of this fad diet recommend eliminating or drastically lowering the amount of carbohydrates—breads, rice, and pasta—you eat. However, according to the USDA's Food Guide Pyramid for Americans, whole grain foods, in properly sized portions, should form the base of our diets for long-term health benefits.

If you want to lose weight, the best way to do it is to work diligently each day on lowering the number of calories you eat while increasing your level of physical activity. Many experts recommend that you don't lose more than one pound a week. One pound of fat is equal to 3,500 calories. Strive to strike a balance—between reducing the number of calories you eat and increasing the number of calories you burn through exercise each day—to average one pound per week of weight loss.

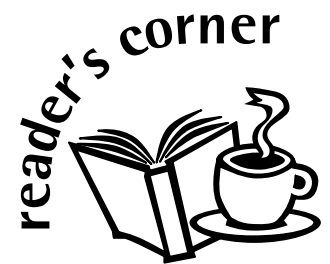
So don't get caught up in the quick-fix claims like "Eat All You Want and Still Lose Weight!" or "Melt Fat Away While You Sleep!" These are simply absurd. Years of experience tell us that the only truly successful weight loss diets include the following:

- Eating a variety of foods from the Food Guide Pyramid—don't eliminate any of the food groups
- Choosing foods that are low in fat and calories
- Choosing foods high in fiber—whole grains, fruits, and vegetables
- Eating adequate, but smaller sized portions
- Getting regular exercise most days
- Eating a good breakfast
- Monitoring and motivating yourself regularly

Remember, in order to lose weight and keep it off, you must make long-term changes in your daily eating and exercise habits. Before making any changes, it is always a wise idea to check with your physician.

*By Cindy Oliveri, East District Family and Consumer Sciences Specialist, Ohio State University Extension*

*References: USDA Food Guide Pyramid and USDA Dietary Guidelines; U.S. Food and Drug Administration, "The Facts about Weight Loss Products and Programs," <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/wgtloss.html>*



## Hanging Out the Wash and Other Ways to Find More in Less

by Adair Lara (2002 by Conari  
Press: York Beacy, ME)

This is a delightful book to read and ponder. Best selling author and California columnist, Adair Lara, asked her readers how to step back from all of the endless, absurd hurrying. Essentially how do they stop doing and start being?

For some of us, slowing down means doing things by hand, or sitting down to write a letter instead of an e-mail, or making a meal from scratch instead of picking up take-out food—thereby enjoying the process as much as the destination.

For others, slowing down means not just looking, but truly seeing by taking time to notice the vibrant colors of spring or enjoying the sight of the moon every evening.

For still others, slowing down may mean moments of stillness—like taking time to sit quietly in the park to watch young children play in the outdoor sunshine or taking lunch to read, meditate, or relax instead of running dozens of errands.

Adair does a beautiful job of sharing ways to slow down in our hectic world. She isn't talking about finding ways to save time to do more; instead, she encourages us to look for ways to truly spend our time well.

*By: Lynn Dobb, Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging*

# Meet Arlene Kaiser



My former 4-H advisor and champion of successful aging, Arlene Kaiser, is now 88 years

young. Mrs. Kaiser has lived and worked in Erie County her entire life and has made countless positive contributions throughout it.

Mrs. Kaiser was born at home in Berlin Township, Ohio. After graduating from a one-room schoolhouse, she went on to obtain a certification in elementary education from Bowling Green State University. She thoroughly enjoyed

the time she spent teaching third grade.

In 1935, at the age of 19, Mrs. Kaiser married her husband, Herb. She met him when his family bought a neighboring farm. Together they had, and successfully raised, four children—2 sons and 2 daughters. She proudly shares she has 12 grandchildren and another dozen great-grandchildren.

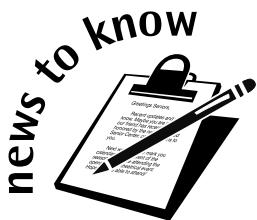
Having many fond memories of her experiences in 4-H as a youngster, it was Mrs. Kaiser's sister-in-law, a former extension agent in South Dakota, who encouraged her to become involved with 4-H as an adult volunteer.

Humbly, Mrs. Kaiser shares that she was asked to be on the state-wide 4-H advisory council, served as state chairperson and took her 4-H groups to state fair events in Columbus and multiple National 4-H Congresses in Washington, D.C.

Most recently, Mrs. Kaiser has been knitting and donating sweaters for newborns. This project is just one way she continues to remain actively involved. The beautiful, soft green sweater she knitted for my own son is a constant reminder for me of Arlene Kaiser's active, kind, and giving spirit.

*By: Jenny Justi, Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging*

## What Is ... ?



### Ohio State University Extension

What is OSU Extension? OSU Extension is a dynamic educational entity that partners with individuals, families, communities, business and

industry, and organizations to strengthen the lives of Ohioans. As Extension educators, we:

- Focus on critical economic, environmental, leadership, and youth and family issues.
- Engage people in lifelong learning.
- Apply knowledge and practical research to the diverse needs and interests of Ohioans in rural, suburban, and urban communities.
- Extend resources of The Ohio State University.
- Recruit and develop volunteers to multiply Extension's efforts while developing their leadership potential.
- Enhance teamwork through networking and connectedness.
- Link youth, family, and community needs to scholars in Ohio and nationwide.

- Teach with cutting-edge strategies using new technologies and approaches.

### Ohio's Aging Network

What is Ohio's Aging Network? It is a conglomeration of agencies that, all or in part, focuses on the elderly and their caregivers. The network consists of The Ohio Department of Aging, the 12 area agencies on aging, county offices on aging, senior centers, and a variety of service provider agencies.

Some have planning and administration as their basic function. Others do that and contract with service providers; still others deliver services directly either in the home or in the community. All serve as advocates for the elderly.

### Ohio's Senior Series Team

What is Ohio's Senior Series Team? It is a group of 12 individuals, 6 each from Ohio State University Extension and Ohio's Aging Network.

Its purpose is to develop and provide education, training, and resource materials related to aging and the aging population for both older Ohioans and professionals in the Extension and aging networks.

*Submitted by: L. Gibson and J. Hardy*

# Caring Connections with Younger Generations

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In *Aging Well*, a book written by George Vaillant, M.D., generativity is an important life task. Based on the 20-year Harvard study of adult development, generativity is considered an "underpinning of successful old age."

Okay you ask, just what is generativity and where do you get some? Generativity involves nurturing and guiding younger people and learning from them too. So it's not on a shelf with the supplements and tonics. Opportunities to practice generativity are found wherever there is bountiful interaction between generations and the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

A growing body of research shows that being highly generative is a sign of psychological health and maturity. People who score high on measures of generativity tend to report higher levels of happiness and well-being in life along with low levels of depression and anxiety when compared to people who have low levels of generativity.

To assess your generative nature, list the ten most important goals you are currently trying to achieve. Generative goals involve: (1) creating or generating new things; (2) passing on valued things (such as traditions) from the past; (3) caring for or assisting other people; or (4) establishing relationships with younger people or the next generation.

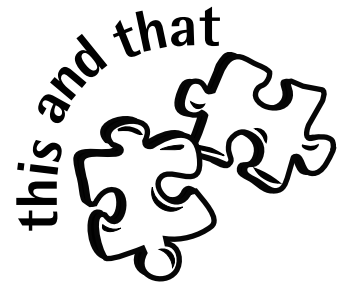
The following are some examples of random acts of generativity: reading a story to a child; teaching somebody a skill/hobby; participating in a neighborhood/community meeting; producing a piece of art or craft; or giving money to a charity. Through generative activities, young people become more aware of the caring and trust of older people and in turn model what they have observed in their relationship with the older adult. The result is a positive legacy given and received.

Social institutions such as schools, churches and government agencies depend on the generative efforts of adults. There is an African proverb that goes, "the world was not left to us by our parents ... it is lent to us by our children." What legacies are you leaving through your caring connections?

*By: Kathy Oliver, Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Hardin County*

*References: McAdams, D. (Fall 2001). Generativity: The new definition of success. Spirituality and Health, (4) 3, 26-33.*

*Vaillant, G. (2002). Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development. Lebanon, IN: Little, Brown and Company.*



## For the Birds

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Ground feeders are full,  
When I leave for the day.  
They'll be empty,  
When I return.

The moment I'm back,  
The sparrows appear.  
It's as if they know  
When I'm near.

When new seed's put down,  
The squirrels come round,  
And the grackles and doves,  
They abound.

And when they're all done  
In substance and sum  
Not a seed  
Has seemed  
To survive!

Then, last to arrive,  
Are the ducks.  
They thrive!  
The third helping  
Of seed for the day!!

Does anyone know  
Where I can go  
To get seed,  
In bulk,  
For the birds???

*By Judy Hardy, Ohio Department of Aging*

# SeniorHOTLINE

Volume 10, Issue 2

## Senior Series

A partnership between  
Ohio State University Extension and  
Ohio Aging Network professionals



### For More Information

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Address editorial comments to:  
Senior Hotline Newsletter  
151 Campbell Hall, 1787 Neil Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43210-1295  
e-mail: [hdfsext@hec.osu.edu](mailto:hdfsext@hec.osu.edu)

#### Issue Editors:

Christine A. Price, OSU Extension State Gerontology Specialist  
Kirk Bloir, OSU Extension Associate, Human Development and Family Science  
Joyce J. Brown, OSU Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent, Athens County  
Judy Hardy, Ohio Department of Aging

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