

SeniorHOTLINE

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Senior Series

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



The Last Lecture

active aging



In his extremely popular book and speech *The Last Lecture*, Carnegie Mellon University Professor Randy Pausch reveals his humanity and enthusiasm for life through sharing his childhood

dreams with students, faculty, and friends. As we see old black and white photographs of a happy young boy growing up in a working-class family in the 1960s, we imagine he's not much different from other boys his age who spend vacations on the beach, play cowboy with the dog in the yard, and watch the first man land on the moon. Soon we learn his dreams of playing in the NFL, being in zero gravity, authoring an article in the *World Book Encyclopedia*, being Captain Kirk from *Star Trek*, winning big stuffed animals at amusement parks, and becoming an Imagineer for Disney.

Obviously Randy didn't become Captain Kirk on *Star Trek*, but he did meet William Shatner who played the character. He also won several stuffed animals at amusement parks. In his professional life, Randy obtained an undergraduate degree in Computer Science and a Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon. He co-founded the Entertainment Technology Center and eventually became an Imagineer for Disney as a part-time consultant.

As Randy shared stories of his boyhood dreams, he often reflected on how the experience of trying to achieve them was more important than actually accomplishing them. Although he never played for the NFL, he gave credit to his experience of playing football for teaching him lessons on how to be successful in life – especially the importance of mastering fundamentals before the “fancy stuff.” Randy learned through criticism from his football coach that “critics are people who tell us the truth because they love and care for us.”

Randy's experience teaches us to live a richer life: to never give up hope or to lose our childlike wonder. Although he had a terminal illness, Randy made a decision to live each day to its fullest. When Randy told someone he was going to do his talk, the person suggested he tell the audience about having fun. Randy's reply was, “I can do that, but it's kind of like a fish talking about the importance of water. I mean I don't know how to not have fun. I'm dying and I'm having fun. And I'm going to keep having fun every day I have left. Because there's no other way to play it.”

Submitted by Jennifer Even, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Hamilton County.

Source: R. Pausch, The Last Lecture.

Diet and Arthritis



Many factors can place an individual with arthritis at risk for nutrient deficiencies.

- Morning stiffness can decrease appetite.
 - Joint problems can make it difficult to shop, prepare, and eat foods.
 - Chewing foods may be difficult.
- Drugs taken for arthritis can cause nausea or interfere with the way the body digests and uses the nutrients in food.

Even though there are no specific studies that recommend any special diets for arthritis, studies have shown that eating a healthy diet can help reduce the pain, swelling, and stiffness associated with arthritis. It is best to take control of your overall health by following a diet that has less fat and sodium and more fiber; increasing physical activity; and controlling weight. Stay away from any fad diets, which restrict certain food groups – groups of foods should never be eliminated from the diet.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid.gov are the best guides for a healthy lifestyle. Think about variety, balance, and moderation when choosing foods. There are no magic pills or quick fixes. Eating healthy has to do with the food choices that we make every day.

If your arthritis keeps you from preparing fresh foods, try pre-packaged foods such as bags of frozen pre-cut vegetables or single serving canned fruit. These items are easier to prepare and have a longer shelf life. This is also important on days when it is difficult to leave the house.

Making changes in the type of cooking utensils used can also help individuals with hand and joint pain. The weight and shape of kitchen utensils can help those with arthritis work in the kitchen and prepare their own food. Purchase lightweight dishes, long-handled kitchen tools, and electric appliances. These items are easier to handle and cut down the time spent preparing foods.

Don't forget the importance of participating in physical activity. Thirty minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity is recommended for most days of the week. Walking and stretching are good ways to get 30 minutes of movement every day.

By Linnette Mizer Goard, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Lorain County.

Source: Arthritis Center and the Department of Nutrition Sciences, University of Alabama at Birmingham. The Essential Arthritis Cookbook. (2002).

MyPyramid.gov



"The New Face of Aging"

by Mike Magee and
Michael D'Antonio

The demographics of our society are clear – people are living longer. Life expectancy increased by more than 25 years in the last century, and the number of people reaching age 100 doubled in the decade between 1990 and 2000.

The New Face of Aging looks at how science, nature, and attitude come together to create a new, healthier reality for our aging population. The book profiles twenty-four diverse Senior Olympians ranging in age from 55 to 80 plus. Through the athletes' stories, the book shows how making wise choices in diet and exercise, nurturing strong relationships, and having a passion can add quality to the quantity of years lived. *The New Face of Aging* will inspire others to do just that.

Reviewed by Deanna Clifford, Interim Chief, Communications Unit, Ohio Department of Aging.

Eileen the Farmer



Eileen and I became friends several years ago. She's approximately 80 years old, but won't say exactly, and has a few health problems. For many years, she was a much-loved elementary school science teacher, known for her fun and innovative teaching techniques. Since retirement, she has purchased one of her family's farms and become a full-time farmer.

When she was growing up, her parents encouraged her brothers to farm, but since she was a "girl," she was supposed to be more feminine. Since she was such a tomboy, this always grated on her, particularly since none of her brothers even liked farming.

Now, on most days, Eileen can be found happily feeding her cows and chickens, plowing fields, cutting and baling hay, and tending her corn and vegetables. When she can't work outside, she enjoys a lot of family time, including babysitting her latest

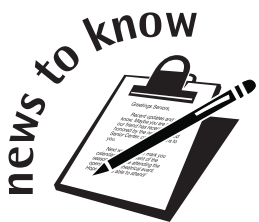
grandchild who is almost a year old. She also welcomes many church and community groups to her farm for wonderful weekend retreats and work parties.

Eileen lives her life with much joy and energy. She spreads laughter wherever she goes. She continues to contribute to her community and teaches others through her positive example.

Eileen is the perfect example of the kind of person I want to be when I grow up.

Submitted by Sharon Alexander, Ohio State University Extension, Portage County.

Public Benefits Can Help Older Ohioans with Home Expenses



Making ends meet in today's economy is tough. There are some programs that can help older Americans reduce their property taxes and get assistance with basic living costs.

Heating bills. The home energy assistance (HEAP) and home weatherization programs are designed to provide assistance to low income households in paying heating and cooling bills and accessing energy-related home repairs. Eligibility is based on income. For additional information, contact your local community action agency or call 1-800-282-0880.

Telephone bills. Assistance is available to help pay for the cost of basic local telephone services; eligibility is income-based. If you are already

receiving assistance through Medicaid, SSI, FHA/Section 8 programs, Food Stamps, TANF, or HEAP you are automatically eligible for telephone assistance as well. Contact your local phone company to apply for Lifeline or Link Up.

Property taxes. The Ohio Homestead Exemption enables eligible homeowners to shield \$25,000 worth of the market value of their home from property taxes. Homeowners who either are or will be 65 during the current tax year, or who are certified totally and permanently disabled regardless of age, are able to apply for this benefit. For more information, contact your county auditor's office or the Ohio Department of Taxation at 1-800-282-1780.

Submitted by Lynn Dobb, Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging.

Cook with the Kids in Your Life



One key to healthful living is sharing an interesting activity with people you enjoy. Cooking with friends and family, especially children, is a great way to do this. If your grandchildren live far away, become the "honorary grandparent" of a child in your neighborhood.

You don't have to be a great cook – kid-friendly foods are easy to make. There are many children's cookbooks available at book stores and libraries. And no one needs to know that you're using an easy cookbook for your own benefit!

Asking questions like, "This recipe calls for three-fourths of a cup of flour. How can we measure our flour with the cups we have?" makes fractions mean something to a child. Math is much more interesting when delicious cookies are the reward for correct measuring!

Cooking teaches planning, organizing, and following directions. Try taking a recipe step out of order or leaving an ingredient out to see what results.

Read your recipe together. Check to see if you have all of the ingredients and equipment needed. Make a shopping list and go to the store together. (Discuss "in-store behavior" and other expectations first!)

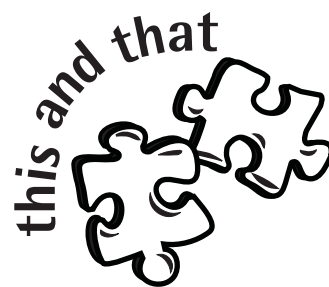
At the store, older youth can decide which products are the best buys by calculating the cost per serving. They can also pay the cashier and count the change afterward. Younger children can guess the number of apples in a pound or help you decide where to look for items in the store.

Back home, young children can (with supervision) take responsibility for washing fruits and vegetables, setting the table, or spreading the crumbly topping over the apples to make a crisp. Don't forget to teach the importance of cleaning up!

Use your cooking time to learn about other cultures together. Start with recipes from an ancestor's country of origin or take an imaginary trip around the world learning (cooking and tasting as you do) what children in other cultures eat. You might research and discuss other aspects of the cultures you study. Different cultures become less alien and fearsome once you've learned to enjoy their food.

Try cooking with the youth in your life. They will learn from you and you will learn just as much from them!

Submitted by Joyce J. Brown, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Athens and Meigs Counties.



Heartstrings

Have you ever been attached to an inanimate object from which you cannot separate yourself? Mine happens to be a beach towel. For a trip to Greece, I was told to pack a beach towel. When I considered the airline's new weight limitations on luggage, I knew the perfect one.

As I dug my college beach towel out, I was awash in a sea of memories: crossing the commons at Kent State University on May 4, 1970, minutes before the violent disruption that changed so many lives; the Vietnam War; my draft-age, newly married husband; the birth of two beautiful sons; the Gulf War; and Iraq.

Now the towel would travel to the other side of the world where philosophers and scholars set minds in motion. The towel with the bedraggled dove, the well-worn cannon, and the prophecy: Make Love, Not War!

Peace to you.

Submitted By Linda Vogel, Planning Associate, Area Agency on Aging 10B, Inc.

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