When I turned 40, I took a self-defense class for women, which led me to martial arts. After 10 years of training and competing (open forms and with weapons), I passed my black belt test in Moo Duk Kwan, a combination of taekwondo and Japanese karate. Practicing martial arts gives me the physical and mental health (through meditation) that I need to maintain my positive well-being. My favorite motivational affirmation is “the older I get, the stronger I become.”

Irene Struever, Imaging Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center

How does one age “well”? Taking care of your skin and your body are important and will show on the surface. However, there are other important factors to think about, even if they aren’t as easily visible—such as the health of your heart and your brain. Read on for tips about aging well:

**Boost Your Brain**

Puzzles and games haven’t been proven to help aging brains stay sharp (though they aren’t likely to hurt). So what is more likely to give your brain—or, your memory, mental health and affect—a boost? Scientists point to varying one’s activities, socializing and hobbies, whether reading, gardening or learning a new skill. Maybe now is the time to learn to play the guitar or become conversational in Spanish!

**Be Heart Smart**

What’s the number one cause of death in the U.S.? Heart disease. On the one hand, some may think “we all have to go in some way.” On the other hand, heart disease can cut life short—but it is preventable. Monitor your blood pressure and do not put off checkups because you feel fine. Heart disease doesn’t always have symptoms you can feel.

**Put It All Together**

Don’t forget the basics! Quality eating habits, good sleep patterns and a regular physical activity routine make up the foundation of healthy aging. **It is never too late to start.** In the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging, men in their 60s and 70s that took up swimming or running were less likely to experience a coronary event than those who were more sedentary. Don’t delay: try a new activity today! (Speak with your health care provider before beginning a new physical activity routine or if you have questions about changing your eating habits.)

You can’t help getting older, but you don’t have to get old.

- George Burns

Visit the Healthy at Hopkins portal (via my.jh.edu and select the Healthy at Hopkins logo).

Click here for more resources from the Office of Well-being webpage.

Join Us This Week

**Ask the Expert**

Every Thursday, noon–12:30 p.m. Join a 30-minute Ask the Expert session with Alicia I. Arbaje, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D., associate professor of medicine and director of Transitional Care Research, for a discussion about healthy aging.

http://bit.ly/38hILo7

Meeting ID: 967 7374 9211 // Meeting passcode: 785092

Join by Phone: (301) 715-8592

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