

THE PROACTIVE AGING BLUEPRINT

A PLAN FOR
SLOWING THE
AGING PROCESS



AND PRESERVING YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE

AKA: How to Live Like a

PROACTIVE AGING BADASS

1st Edition © 2024 Rick Sherréll, NASM CPT, CES, SFS, GFS
Personal Trainer. Online Fitness Coach. Proactive Aging Coach.

What's Inside this BLUEPRINT

Introduction: Gettin' Old Ain't for Sissies.....	3
What is Proactive Aging?.....	3
What You'll Learn in This Blueprint.....	5
Chapter 1: You Got To Get Your Mind Right!.....	7
I Identify as BADASS!	7
A Plan for Taking Action	8
Chapter 2: Let's Fix What's Broken First.....	11
Corrective Exercise: The Foundation of Proactive Aging.....	11
When the Problem is Osteoarthritis.....	12
Chapter 3: Strength Training and Flex Appeal	14
Why Muscle Matters.....	14
What Are Functional Exercises?.....	15
Chapter 4: Don't Skip a Beat With Cardio	18
Why Cardio Matters as You Age.....	18
Your Cardio Options.....	18
Chapter 5: Help, I've Fallen.....	20
Age and Balance Decline:	20
Balance Tests: How Do You Stack Up?.....	21
Chapter 6: Stress Ain't Never Solved a Damn Thing!.....	23
Stress: The Silent Assassin.....	23
DIY Stress-busting.....	24
Chapter 7: Sleep Tight But Don't Sleep on Recovery.....	26
How Sleep Requirements Change as You Age.....	27
Active Recovery Days.....	27
Chapter 8: Give me Five Sets of "Stop Eating Crap!"	29
Why Diets Fail (and What to do Instead).....	29
Diet and Nutrition Changes as You Age.....	31
Chapter 9: Go Outside and Play.....	33
Why Play Matters.....	33
Mindset Shift: Fun vs. Duty.....	34
Chapter 10: That's My Plan and I'm Sticking To It!.....	35
The 12-Week Proactive Aging DIY Blueprint.....	35
Time to Get Off Your Butt.....	36
Conclusion: So Now What?.....	38



Introduction: Gettin' Old Ain't for Sissies

Let's cut the B.S. Aging isn't easy and it's not for the faint at heart. To live a quality life, you'll want to thrive, - not just survive. These pages are not going to give you a soft approach where we accept that getting older means falling apart, falling down and not being able to get up. Instead, I want to show you how to grab the wheel and do the work to steer yourself toward strength, vitality, and badassery.

With this Blueprint I intend to empower and inspire you to live your best life. It is an accessible, practical and actionable roadmap to proactive aging. All you have to do is follow along and do your part by ditching the excuses, fixing what's broken, and working smarter (not harder) to keep your body and mind sharp. No magic pills, no tricks, no shortcuts—just actionable steps that anyone from 40 to 90 can use.

What is Proactive Aging?

When defining Proactive Aging, I like to start with the definition of **Reactive Aging** which is surrendering to the aging process and allowing your body to deteriorate. By contrast, **Proactive Aging** is taking deliberate action to slow the aging process and preserve your quality of life. This blueprint is designed to give you a plan to age like a badass, maintain your independence and so you don't end up old and miserable.

The Power of Taking Deliberate Action: Why 'Do the Work' is Your New Mantra

Here's the deal: waiting for someone else to fix you—be it a doctor, a pill, or a miracle—is a losing game. Sure, the medical world has its place, but the best medicine is the kind you administer yourself. Taking deliberate action is the ultimate power move.

When you *do the work*, you're putting yourself in the driver's seat. You're developing the habits that make your body stronger, your mind sharper, and your quality of life downright enviable. This isn't about gimmicks or shortcuts—it's about building real, lasting change.

Why deliberate action works:

1. **It builds momentum.** Small wins add up. Stretch today, lift tomorrow, move with

purpose every day, and you'll wake up one day realizing you've transformed.

2. **It's empowering.** Taking charge of your health isn't just freeing; it's downright badass. You're proving you can handle life without depending on a lineup of specialists and skyrocketing bills.
3. **It creates independence.** When you take responsibility for your condition, you reclaim your freedom. No more sitting on the sidelines of life waiting for someone to fix what you could've prevented.

This isn't magic. It's work—consistent, intentional, grit-filled work. But here's the good news: once you commit to the process, the results will feel like magic. Take the time to master the fundamentals, and they'll take care of you for decades to come. Bottom line? **Do the work.** Your future self will thank you.

Sitting on Your Ass: The Fast Track to Nowhere

Let's get real—passivity is the silent assassin of your health, happiness, and independence. You think "doing nothing" is harmless? Spoiler alert: it's not. It's a slow, sneaky spiral that turns "I'll get to it later" into "Why can't I get out of this chair?"

Here's how passivity plays you like a punk:

- **Your body adapts... to being useless.** Don't move? Your muscles don't care—they'll peace out faster than your neighbor at HOA meetings.
- **You give away control.** Passivity is the VIP pass to dependence. You're basically telling the universe, "Nah, I don't want to run my own life. Can someone else make my decisions? Oh, and pass me the remote."
- **Excuses pile up.** "I'm too busy." "I don't know where to start." "The weather isn't perfect." Sound familiar? Passivity isn't just unproductive—it's annoyingly creative when it comes to finding reasons (uh, make that, excuses) to sit still.

You know what's scarier than taking action? Waking up one day realizing you've *wasted years* waiting for motivation to magically appear. Guess what? Motivation is overrated—commitment and dedication is what matters. You don't need to move a mountain. Just stand up, push your chair in, get started and don't stop.

Because here's the hard truth: life rewards those who move, not those who snooze – or as I like to say, "Don't complain about the results you didn't get from the work you didn't do." So, quit playing defense with your own damn life and take a step—any step. Hell, shuffle if you have to. Just don't sit there and let passivity steal all the happiness from the remainder of your life.

What You'll Learn in This Blueprint

- **How to build strength and mobility to stay independent.** You'll discover the exercises, routines, and techniques that keep your muscles strong and your joints moving like they should. Whether it's getting up from a low chair, lifting your grandkids, or dominating your next pickleball match, this blueprint equips you with the tools to stay capable and confident. Independence isn't just about surviving—it's about thriving.
- **How to prevent aches, pains, and injuries with simple, effective corrective exercises.** We're diving into easy-to-follow routines that tackle the common culprits behind discomfort and injury. Say goodbye to expensive physical therapy sessions and hello to smarter movement. You'll learn how to strengthen weak spots, release tension, and improve alignment so you can move pain-free and stay in the game—whatever your game may be.
- **How to use stress management, play, and smart nutrition to slow the aging clock.** Aging isn't something you can stop, but you *can* slam the brakes on how fast it shows up. This blueprint combines stress-busting techniques, the joy of playful movement, and nutrition strategies that support longevity. From managing cortisol to eating like your body deserves better than junk, you'll master how to fuel your mind and body for a vibrant, youthful life.

Why Me as Your Guide?

You're probably wondering what makes me the right guy to guide you on this journey. Fair question—so let's lay it all out.

Credentials That Mean Business. I'm not just another trainer with a whistle and a stopwatch. I've been at this game for years and have stacked up certifications to back up my expertise:

- **National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) Certified Personal Trainer (CPT):** Over a decade of experience helping people crush their fitness goals.
- **NASM Corrective Exercise Specialist (CES):** I specialize in identifying movement issues and creating targeted solutions to keep you moving pain-free.
- **NASM Senior Fitness Specialist (SFS):** I understand the unique needs of aging bodies and how to train them for strength, resilience, and longevity.
- **NASM Golf Fitness Specialist (GFS):** Because there's no reason your drive can't improve with age.
- **The Boxing Fitness Academy Certified Boxing Fitness Trainer:** Yep, I can teach you how to punch smarter while getting leaner.

A Lifetime of Movement. My passion for fitness didn't start in a gym. Growing up in the 60s and 70s, my mom's simple mantra of "go outside and play" became my first workout plan. Whether it was climbing trees, biking around the neighborhood, or playing pickup games with friends, I stayed active because it was fun—and that mindset stuck.

Fast forward to today, and I've made that philosophy my own. From pickleball and golf to hiking and outdoor training sessions, I've built a life around movement that keeps me feeling young and capable. My workouts aren't chores; they're fuel for living fully.

Trainer, Coach, Advocate. For over a decade, I've been working with clients ranging from their 30s to their 80s. My approach isn't about quick fixes or trendy workouts—it's about crafting sustainable habits that serve you for life. My clients don't just lose weight or build muscle; they learn how to move better, feel better, and take charge of their health in ways they never thought possible.

Here's how I'm different:

- I don't believe in coddling. You're here to do the work, and I'm here to guide you with a mix of tough love, smart-ass humor, and unrelenting support.
- I focus on proactive aging, helping my clients stay ahead of the curve instead of playing catch-up with aches, pains, and setbacks.
- I live what I teach. Whether it's my training philosophy, my outdoor adventures, or my no-nonsense attitude about nutrition, everything I share with you is something I've tested in my own life.

If you want someone who practices what they preach, knows the science, and can make you laugh while pushing you to be your best—you've found him. Now, let's get to work!

Dedication

This blueprint is dedicated to two of my greatest fitness role models: James Otis Sherréll III, my stepdad, who exemplified strength, discipline, and resilience, and Jack LaLanne, the iconic fitness guru, who showed a young, impressionable me and the world that age is no barrier to vitality. Let's honor their legacy—and yours—by committing to a lifestyle that ensures every year is your best year yet.



Chapter 1: You Got To Get Your Mind Right!

In the immortal words of Strother Martin the movie in *Cool Hand Luke*, “You got to get your mind right.” He wasn’t wrong. If you don’t get your head in the game, the rest is going to fall apart faster than a cheap lawn chair under a well-fed linebacker.

First, let’s address the elephant in the room: **motivation**. Everyone loves to talk about it like it’s some magical elixir. Spoiler alert—it’s not. Motivation is about as reliable as a car with three wheels, a cup of oil and a teaspoon of gas. It’ll fire you up for a minute, maybe two, but it’s fleeting, like fireworks on the Fourth of July—big, loud, and gone in a flash. You can’t depend on motivation to carry you. It will leave you sitting by the side of the road every single time.

What you *can* depend on is **commitment** and **dedication**. Let’s break those down:

- **Commitment** is making a decision and sticking to it, no matter how you feel in the moment. It’s the promise you make to yourself that you won’t quit.
- **Dedication** is the action that follows commitment. It’s showing up, day after day, doing the work even when it’s hard, inconvenient, or unglamorous.

Together, these two are the bedrock of forming lifelong, sustainable habits—the kind that don’t require you to summon a pep talk every time life throws a wrench in your plans.

It Won’t Be Easy—But It Will Be Worth It.

Let’s be real: this isn’t going to be a cakewalk. But then again, what have you ever accomplished in life that was valuable and easy? A great career? Raising a family? Mastering a skill? All of it took effort, grit, and perseverance. Building the habits that will keep you strong, mobile, and independent for decades to come is no different.

If you want to live life like a badass, you need to *believe in yourself*. That’s not some fluffy self-help nonsense; it’s a cornerstone of success. Confidence is what allows you to get up when you fall, try again when you fail, and keep pushing even when the odds seem stacked against you.

I Identify as BADASS!

I really don't like the word SENIOR. Although I'm closing in on seven decades of life and I'm feeling older... I'm definitely not feeling old. When I hear the word SENIOR, I think... blue hair, walkers, orthopedic shoes, chair yoga and those grabby thingies that help you get shit you can't reach or bend over to pick up. That is SO not me. I do not identify as senior. **I IDENTIFY AS BADASS!**

It's the way I've lived my life and the way I'm going to die! One of my guiding lights has always been the poem **Thinking by Walter D. Winkle**. I memorized it back in the 8th grade, and it's stuck with me ever since. The words are pure truth and yes, they're partially responsible for my lifelong "badass" attitude.

*If you think you are beaten, you are,
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win, but think you can't,
It's almost a cinch you won't.*

*If you think you'll lose, you're lost.
For out of this world you'll find,
Success begins with a fellows will,
It's all in the state of mind,*

*If you think you're outclassed, you are.
You've got to think high to rise.
You've got to be sure of yourself,
Before you can ever win a prize.*

*Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But soon or late, the man who wins
Is the man who thinks he can.*

That poem taught me that my mindset is everything. Belief in yourself is the first step to taking on any challenge, and without it, you're already halfway to failure.

Final Thought: Badass Mindset 101

Here's the deal: If you want to achieve anything worth doing, you've got to get your mind right. Stop chasing motivation. It's commitment, dedication, and belief in yourself that will take you where you want to go. So buckle up, because the road to badassery isn't paved with excuses—it's built with grit, determination, and the unshakable belief that you can.

A Plan for Taking Action

This is it—the point where dreaming turns into doing. The Proactive Aging Blueprint isn't a “someday” project you keep in the back of your mind like that vacation you swear you'll take someday. This is your *NOW* project. It's time to take deliberate action and make this commitment to yourself, because the clock is ticking, and every day you wait is another day you can't get back.

Step 1: Commit to Deliberate Action.

Making a decision isn't enough—you have to back it up with action. This is where you say, “I'm in,” not just with words, but with effort. Remember, this journey isn't about perfection; it's about progress. You don't have to do everything perfectly from day one, but you do have to start. Stop thinking about it, stop talking about it, and start *doing* it.

Your mantra from here on out: Do the work. No excuses, no half-measures. Show up for yourself every single day, because no one else is going to do it for you. This is your life, your body, and your responsibility.

Step 2: Track Your Starting Point.

Before we get into the fun stuff, let's get real about where you're starting. This isn't about judgment or comparison—it's about knowing your baseline so you can measure your progress and celebrate your wins. Think of it like marking a trailhead before a hike. You need to know where you are before you can figure out where you're going.

Here's what you'll track:

- **Measurements:** Take note of your weight, body fat percentage, waist circumference, and other key areas. This isn't about vanity; it's about understanding how your body changes as you build strength and mobility.
- **Strength Benchmarks:** Test yourself with simple movements like squats, push-ups, or a basic plank. Write down how many reps you can do or how long you can hold the position. These benchmarks will be your proof of progress later.
- **Mobility Tests:** Assess your range of motion in key joints like your shoulders, hips, knees and ankles. Can you touch your toes? Squat comfortably? Rotate your shoulders without pain? Let's figure it out.

Why This Matters.

Tracking your starting point does two powerful things:

1. **It keeps you accountable.** When you've got real data to compare against, it's harder to kid yourself about whether you're making progress.

2. **It gives you motivation.** Watching those numbers shift—seeing yourself get stronger, more mobile, and more resilient—is incredibly empowering. It's the proof that the work you're putting in is paying off.

Your Next Move.

Grab a notebook, a fitness app, or whatever tool works for you, and start documenting where you are today. This isn't just a box to check off; it's the foundation for everything you're about to build. Take ownership of your progress, and get ready to crush it.

Because here's the truth: every badass journey starts with one deliberate step. This is yours. Let's get moving.



Chapter 2: Let's Fix What's Broken First

Let's get one thing straight: aches and pains aren't just random punishments handed out by the universe. They're your body's way of waving a red flag and shouting, "Fix me before this gets worse!" Ignoring them is like driving with your check engine light on and hoping it magically disappears. Spoiler alert: it won't.

Here's the deal: most of the discomfort you feel—whether it's a stiff neck, creaky knees, or a sore lower back—has nothing to do with your age and everything to do with neglect. That's where **mobility work** and **corrective exercise** come in. These are the tools that tune up your body and make it feel like a well-oiled machine again. They address the root of the problem rather than just slapping on a metaphorical Band-Aid.

Pain = Neglect, Not Destiny.

Let me drop a truth bomb: most chronic pain isn't the inevitable curse of aging; it's the result of years of bad habits. Sitting too much, slouching, moving too little, or moving wrong—all these things add up to tightness, weakness, and imbalances in your muscles and joints. Left unchecked, those little issues grow into big, nagging pains that feel like they'll last forever.

But here's the good news: they don't have to. Pain isn't your destiny. It's just a signal telling you it's time to pay attention and take action. Corrective exercise targets those weak links, retrains your body to move the way it's supposed to, and, over time, eliminates the pain altogether.

Corrective Exercise: The Foundation of Proactive Aging

Let's break this down. **Corrective exercise** is like physical therapy's cooler, more proactive cousin. It's a structured, science-backed approach to improving how your body moves by addressing imbalances, weaknesses, and dysfunctions. In plain English, it's the stuff that makes your body stop hurting and start performing like it's supposed to.

A Layperson's Definition:

Corrective exercise is a method of identifying what's not working right in your body (e.g., weak glutes, tight hamstrings, poor shoulder mobility) and fixing it with targeted movements. Think

of it as the body mechanic's toolbox: foam rolling, stretching, activation exercises, and functional movement training are all part of the mix.

When It's Applicable:

Corrective exercise is for anyone dealing with:

- Chronic aches and pains (think low back pain or stiff shoulders).
- Old injuries that never quite healed right.
- Postural issues from sitting too long or staring at a screen all day.
- Muscle imbalances or weaknesses from repetitive activities like running, lifting, or playing sports.
- Even seemingly random "ouch" moments like your knee flaring up after climbing stairs.

How It Works:

Corrective exercise starts by assessing your body for weak spots or movement issues. Once you know what's wrong, the plan involves a combination of:

- **Foam Rolling:** Think of it as your DIY massage to release tight spots and improve circulation.
- **Stretching:** Loosening up the overworked muscles that are pulling your body out of alignment.
- **Activation Exercises:** Waking up the lazy muscles that aren't pulling their weight.
- **Functional Strengthening:** Building strength where you need it most to restore balance and prevent injuries.

When the Problem is Osteoarthritis

Can Corrective Exercise Help with Osteoarthritis? You bet your stiff, achy joints it can! While corrective exercise won't magically reverse osteoarthritis (OA)—it's not a time machine—it *can* slow its progression, reduce pain, and improve your quality of life. OA is often the result of poor movement patterns, weak supporting muscles, and tightness around the joints. Corrective exercise targets these issues by strengthening the muscles that support and stabilize your joints, improving alignment, and enhancing mobility.

Here's the deal: when your joints are better supported and your movement is more efficient, there's less wear and tear on the cartilage. Translation? Fewer flare-ups, less pain, and more freedom to do what you love—whether that's playing pickleball, walking the dog, or just getting up without groaning like a rusty gate.

The key is consistency. Corrective exercises, like targeted stretches, foam rolling, and controlled strengthening movements, keep your joints moving better and your pain in check. Think of it as putting your body into “maintenance mode” so it works *with* you, not against you.

So no, corrective exercise isn't a cure—but it's one hell of a tool to manage OA and keep you moving like the badass you are. Do the work, stay strong, and show that arthritis who's boss.

My Philosophy: Fix What's Broken Before You Start Banging On It

Here's the straight talk: you can't build a skyscraper on a crumbling foundation. Before you dive into heavy workouts or hardcore training, you need to fix what's broken. That old shoulder injury from your 30s? That nagging ankle pain? Those things aren't going to disappear just because you power through them.

Corrective exercise is the foundation of Proactive Aging because it addresses the aches and pains that creep in over time, whether they started in your 20s or came knocking in your 60s. When your body moves the way it's supposed to, every other part of your fitness—strength, endurance, agility—gets better. Plus, it keeps you out of the doctor's office, off the surgeon's table, and far away from that pharmacy aisle full of overpriced pain relievers.

If you're ready to reclaim your body, correct the root issues, and finally move pain-free, it's time to embrace the philosophy of fixing what's broken before you start banging on it. Because once you do, you'll be unstoppable.

BONUS RESOURCES:

1. [**Introduction to Foam Rolling**](#) (e-book, PDF download)
2. [**DIY Corrective Exercise Programs**](#) – (click the link to see online program descriptions)
 - a) [**Knees**](#): Reclaim every step, squat, and jump.
 - b) [**Hips**](#): Crush stiffness, regain mobility, and move like you mean it.
 - c) [**Low Back**](#): No more wincing every time you pick up your socks.
 - d) [**Shoulders & Rotator Cuff**](#): Lift, carry, and stretch without pain.
 - e) [**Feet & Ankles**](#): Because it's hard to be a badass on crutches.
 - f) [**Neck & Upper Back**](#): Improve your thoracic mobility and breathing.
 - g) [**Elbows, Wrists, & Hands**](#): Ignore little aches, they'll turn into big problems.
 - h) [**Plantar Fasciitis**](#): Strong arches are the foundation for strong walking.
 - i) [**Sciatica**](#): Target a sneaky culprit making your life miserable.



Chapter 3: Strength Training and Flex Appeal

Here's a truth bomb for you: **muscle isn't just about looking good in a T-shirt or a tank top.** It's your body's powerhouse, your engine, your "Get Stuff Done" factory. Lose it, and everything else—from your metabolism to your independence—takes a nosedive. But keep it, and you'll stay strong, capable, and confident at every stage of life.

Why Muscle Matters

- 1. Muscle Loss is Real, and It's Coming for You.** If you're not actively working to build or maintain muscle, you're losing it—plain and simple. This sneaky thief has a name: **sarcopenia**, the age-related loss of muscle mass. It can start as early as your 30s and snowballs with age. By the time you hit 50, you could be losing 1-2% of your muscle mass per year if you're not strength training. Think about that for a second—by 70, you could be down 20-30% of your muscle mass. That's not just numbers; that's the difference between living independently or needing help with basic tasks.
- 2. Muscle = Metabolism Boost.** Muscle is metabolically active tissue, which is a fancy way of saying it burns calories just by existing. More muscle means a higher resting metabolic rate, which means you can eat more without packing on the pounds. It's like giving your metabolism a turbocharge. So, if you're looking to lose weight or keep it off, building muscle isn't optional—it's essential.
- 3. Muscle Protects Your Joints.** Your joints take a beating every day, whether you're walking, playing pickleball, or hauling groceries. Strong muscles act as shock absorbers, supporting and stabilizing your joints to prevent injuries and wear-and-tear conditions like arthritis. Weak muscles, on the other hand, leave your joints vulnerable to strain and damage.
- 4. Independence is Built on Muscle.** Want to keep climbing stairs, carrying groceries, or getting up from the floor without help? Muscle is the answer. Strength equals independence, and independence equals freedom. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.
- 5. Strong Muscles = Strong Bones.** Resistance training doesn't just build muscle—it also strengthens your bones. Every time you lift, press, or pull, your bones respond to the stress by

becoming denser and stronger. This is especially critical for women, who are at higher risk for osteoporosis as they age. Lifting weights is one of the best ways to fight bone loss and reduce the risk of fractures.

Strength Training and Burning Fat

Building muscle is your secret weapon for fat loss. Why? Because muscle is metabolically active—it burns more calories at rest than fat. That means the more muscle you have, the more energy your body uses, even when you're binge-watching your favorite show. Add to that the calorie burn you get from strength training sessions themselves, and you've got a one-two punch for fat loss and weight control.

Find the Strength Training That Works for You

There's more than one way to get stronger, and the best approach is the one you'll stick with. Here's a breakdown of the tools you can use to build muscle:

1. **Bodyweight Training:** Push-ups, squats, lunges, and planks. No equipment, no excuses. Great for beginners or for sneaking in a quick workout anywhere.
2. **Resistance Bands:** Portable and versatile, these are perfect for home workouts and targeting smaller muscle groups.
3. **Machines:** Gym equipment like leg presses and cable machines provide controlled, stable environments, especially for beginners.
4. **Free Weights:** Dumbbells and barbells allow for a full range of motion and functional movement patterns. Plus, they work your stabilizing muscles.
5. **Kettlebells:** Excellent for dynamic movements that build strength, power, and coordination.
6. **Medicine Balls:** Great for explosive, full-body exercises like slams and throws.
7. **Sandbags:** Add an element of instability to challenge your muscles in new ways.
8. **Suspension Trainers** (e.g., TRX): Engage your core and build strength with bodyweight exercises that use gravity and your body position for resistance.

What Are Functional Exercises?

Functional exercises are movements that mimic everyday activities and train your muscles to work together effectively. Instead of isolating a single muscle group, these exercises focus on compound, multi-joint movements that improve balance, strength, flexibility, and coordination. Think squats for sitting and standing, step-ups for climbing stairs, or carrying heavy objects to simulate grocery bags.

Unlike machine-based exercises, functional movements involve stabilizing muscles and require your core to engage, making them highly practical for real-life activities.

Why Are Functional Exercises Important for the Aging Body?

1. **Maintain Independence.** As we age, it's easy to lose strength, balance, and mobility, which can make simple tasks—like getting out of a chair or picking up something from the floor—more difficult. Functional exercises help maintain these abilities, keeping you self-sufficient for longer.
2. **Prevent Falls and Injuries.** Falls are one of the leading causes of injury in older adults. Functional training improves balance, proprioception (your body's awareness in space), and core stability, all of which reduce the risk of falls.
3. **Enhance Joint Health and Mobility.** Functional exercises encourage a full range of motion, promoting joint flexibility and reducing stiffness. Movements like lunges and hip hinges strengthen stabilizing muscles around the joints, helping to prevent wear and tear or overuse injuries.
4. **Boost Everyday Energy and Performance.** Tasks like bending, lifting, or twisting become easier when your muscles are trained for those specific motions. This can make daily life less physically taxing and help you feel more energetic overall.
5. **Build Core Strength and Posture.** Functional exercises almost always engage the core, improving posture and reducing lower back pain—a common issue as we age. Strong core muscles are critical for balance, stability, and virtually every movement you make.
6. **Adaptability for All Fitness Levels.** These exercises can be modified to fit any fitness level. Whether you're just starting out or are an advanced athlete, functional training meets you where you are and progresses with you.

Examples of Functional Exercises

- **Squats:** Mimic sitting and standing; strengthen legs and hips.
- **Deadlifts:** Build strength for lifting heavy objects.
- **Step-Ups:** Improve balance and mimic climbing stairs.
- **Push-Ups:** Build upper-body strength for pushing motions.
- **Planks:** Engage the core and improve posture.
- **Farmer's Carries:** Simulate carrying groceries or heavy objects.

Functional exercises aren't just about looking good—they're about *living well*. For aging bodies, they provide the strength, mobility, and confidence to navigate daily life with ease and reduce

the risk of injuries. Incorporating functional movements into your fitness routine helps ensure that your workouts have real-world benefits, keeping you active, independent, and thriving well into your later years.

The Bottom Line on Strength Training

Muscle is the key to thriving as you age—not just surviving. It's what keeps you active, mobile, and independent. It's what protects your joints, strengthens your bones, and powers your metabolism. And let's be real: it's also what keeps you looking and feeling badass. Whether you're lifting a dumbbell, pulling a resistance band, or rocking out bodyweight squats in your living room, every rep is an investment in your strength, health, and quality of life. Do the work, build the muscle, and watch everything else in your life get stronger too.

The Foundation of a Strength Training Plan

- **Beginners:** Start with bodyweight or functional exercises (squats, pushups, planks).
- **Intermediate/Advanced:** Incorporate dumbbells, resistance bands, and kettlebells.
- **Outdoor Options:** Use resistance bands at the park or bodyweight moves like pull-ups and dips on playground equipment.

BONUS RESOURCES:

1. [10 Bodyweight Exercises and 3 Free Badass Workouts](#) (downloadable PDF)
2. [10 Functional Exercises and 3 Free Badass Workouts](#) (downloadable PDF)



Chapter 4: Don't Skip a Beat With Cardio

Cardio isn't punishment; it's a gift to your heart, lungs, and overall vitality. It's the maintenance plan for the most important muscle in your body—your heart. Without it, life gets a whole lot harder, and not just because you're winded climbing the stairs. Cardiovascular health isn't optional as you age; it's your ticket to a longer, more energetic life. The trick is finding something you enjoy so cardio feels more like play and less like a chore.

Why Cardio Matters as You Age

1. **Heart Health:** Regular cardiovascular exercise strengthens the heart muscle, improves circulation, and can help prevent heart disease—the leading cause of death worldwide. It lowers blood pressure, reduces cholesterol levels, and keeps your arteries flexible.
2. **Increased Endurance:** Cardio boosts your stamina and energy levels, making day-to-day tasks easier. Want to keep up with your grandkids or crush your pickleball league? Cardio is your wingman.
3. **Joint-Friendly Energy:** Low-impact cardio options like swimming, cycling, and brisk walking protect aging joints while keeping you active.
4. **Fat-Burning Power:** Intervals, particularly high-intensity interval training (HIIT) can supercharge fat loss by cranking up your metabolism even after the workout.

Your Cardio Options

1. **Steady-State Cardio.** This is the classic “put in the time and cruise” approach. A brisk walk, a bike ride at a moderate pace, or an easy swim are examples. Steady-state cardio is great for building endurance and is easier on your joints. Over time, it strengthens your heart's ability to pump blood efficiently and trains your body to use oxygen more effectively.
2. **Cardio Intervals.** Intervals alternate between bursts of high intensity and recovery periods. For example: 30 seconds of sprinting followed by 90 seconds of walking,

repeated for several cycles. Intervals are a powerhouse for heart health and fat burning because they push your heart rate into higher zones, improving your VO2 max (your body's ability to use oxygen). Plus, they're a time-efficient way to get in a killer workout.

- **A note about Tabatas:** This is my favorite type of HIIT consisting of 20 seconds of all-out effort followed by 10 seconds of rest, repeated for 8 rounds (that's a total of 4 minutes). These are intense but exercise research has revealed that Tabatas are the most effective interval for burning fat, building/preserving muscle mass and increasing cardiovascular fitness. That's the big 3 and it doesn't get any better than that!
3. **Low-Impact Cardio for Aging Joints.** Joint health becomes a priority as you age. Low-impact activities like swimming, elliptical training, rowing, or even walking provide the cardiovascular benefits without the pounding on your knees, hips, and ankles. These options allow you to move with less pain while still reaping the rewards of cardio exercise.
 4. **Play Cardio.** Cardio doesn't have to mean a treadmill death march (I am SO not a fan of the treadmill!). Find a sport, game or activity that you like and be consistent with it. Over the past 5 decades I've been into cycling, tennis, pick-up basketball, swimming, hiking, golf, flag football, racquetball, volleyball, badminton, and anything I can do out in the back yard with family and friends and a ball or Frisbee. Even chasing the dog around the yard counts. My current obsessions are pickleball, golf, rucking and cycling. If you enjoy it, you'll stick with it—and consistency is the real secret to success.

Wrapping It Up

Cardio is a cornerstone of the Proactive Aging Blueprint because it keeps your engine running smoothly. Whether you're cruising in steady-state, revving the engine with intervals, or chasing pickleballs across the court, your heart, lungs, and muscles will thank you. Do the work, have fun with it, and keep your ticker ticking for the long haul.

BONUS RESOURCES:

1. [**10 Low-Impact Cardio Exercises and 3 Free Badass Workouts**](#) (downloadable PDF)
2. [**Heart Rate Intensity Zones**](#) (downloadable PDF)



Chapter 5: Help, I've Fallen...

Balance. It's one of those things you don't think about—until you're grabbing for a railing or testing your reflexes mid-stumble. If you've ever rolled your eyes at those infamous “Help, I've fallen, and I can't get up” commercials, consider this your wake-up call: without good balance, that could be you. And trust me, you do *not* want to deliver that line in real life.

Age and Balance Decline:

Your ability to balance starts to diminish in your 40s and takes a nosedive in your 60s if you're not actively working on it. Muscle loss, slower reflexes, and reduced coordination all play a part. Here are some facts on the stark reality of falls:

- 1 in 4 adults over 65 falls each year in the U.S.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths in people 65 and older.
- After a serious fall, an older adult's life expectancy can drop significantly, with many losing independence or requiring long-term care.

Balance isn't just about avoiding spills. It affects *everything*—walking, climbing stairs, bending down, and even sports. It's the silent hero behind almost every movement you make. Without it, daily activities get harder, and injuries become more likely.

Balance and Pickleball: A Match Made in Heaven (or Hell)

Pickleball is fast, dynamic, and loaded with quick directional changes—perfect for highlighting balance issues. If your balance is off, you're more likely to misstep, roll an ankle, or overreach and crash into the net. Don't let poor balance sideline you. It's one of the easiest areas to improve, and the payoff is massive—both on and off the court.

How Balance Practice Benefits You

1. **Daily Activities:** Tasks like carrying groceries, standing on one leg to put on pants, or reaching for something on a high shelf become effortless.
2. **Injury Prevention:** Stronger balance means fewer stumbles, slips, and falls.

3. **Athletic Performance:** Improved coordination and stability give you an edge in sports, whether it's pickleball, tennis, or hiking.
4. **Confidence:** Knowing you can rely on your body reduces hesitation and increases your ability to move freely and independently.

Balance Tests: How Do You Stack Up?

1. One-Leg Stand:

- Stand on one foot with your arms at your sides.
- Aim to hold for at least 10-20 seconds without wobbling or needing support.
- Test both legs—one is always sneakier than the other.

2. Tandem Stance (Heel-to-Toe):

- Stand with one foot directly in front of the other, heel touching the toe.
- Hold for 10 seconds without swaying.

3. Reach Test:

- Stand with your feet together and reach as far forward as you can without losing balance.
- Measure the distance from your starting point to where your hand ends up.

Simple Exercises to Improve Balance

1. Heel-to-Toe Walk:

- Walk in a straight line, placing the heel of one foot directly in front of the toes of the other.
- Try 20 steps forward and backward.

2. Single-Leg Stand with Movement:

- Stand on one leg and swing the other forward, backward, and side-to-side.
- To level up, close your eyes or try holding a light weight.

3. Balance Board or Stability Disc:

- Practice standing or doing light exercises on an unstable surface to challenge your core and stabilizer muscles.

4. Chair Squats with a Twist:

- Perform bodyweight squats while holding onto a sturdy chair for support. Add a slight twist at the top to activate your core.

5. **Tai Chi or Yoga:**

- Both practices are gold standards for improving balance, flexibility, and mental focus.

Your Balance Plan: Keep It Simple

- Dedicate 5-10 minutes a day to balance work.
- Incorporate balance drills into your strength or cardio routine.
- Test your progress weekly and challenge yourself by adding movement or removing visual cues (like closing your eyes).

Final Thought: Balance is Freedom

Good balance isn't just about avoiding falls—it's about moving through life with confidence, grace, and freedom. Don't let poor balance hold you back from living fully or knock you out of the game you love.

The best part? It's never too late to start improving your balance. So, get to work—because badasses don't just walk the line. They crush it.



Chapter 6: Stress Ain't Never Solved a Damn Thing!

Your brain is the CEO of your body. If it's running a well-oiled machine, you're golden. But when stress, anxiety, or overwhelm takes over, that CEO might as well be asleep at the wheel. And no matter how much you exercise or how clean your diet is, unmanaged stress will drag your health down faster than bad karaoke at a party.

Stress: The Silent Assassin

Stress in today's world isn't just a one-off fight with your spouse or a bad day at work. It's a 24/7 bombardment of emails, social media, deadlines, traffic jams, and that random guy cutting you off in the parking lot. Chronic stress raises cortisol levels, your body's "fight-or-flight" hormone. While cortisol is great for escaping a bear attack, it's a disaster when it's constantly elevated.

Here's how chronic stress can sabotage your body:

- **Muscle Tension:** Ever noticed tight shoulders or a stiff neck? That's stress setting up shop in your muscles. Chronic tension leads to pain and restricted movement.
- **Gut Issues:** Stress impacts digestion, leading to bloating, cramps, or worse. You're not "gutting it out" when stressed; your gut is just stressed out.
- **Weakened Immune System:** Chronic stress makes you more vulnerable to getting sick and slows your recovery.
- **Mental Fatigue:** When your brain is in overdrive, your focus and memory tank, making even small tasks feel monumental.
- **Sleep Disruption:** Stress messes with your ability to fall and stay asleep, creating a vicious cycle of exhaustion.

If you want a body that performs like a well-tuned machine, you've got to get your mind right. Here's how:

DIY Stress-busting

1. Meditation

Why it Works: Meditation slows down your overactive brain, lowers cortisol, and reduces anxiety. It's like giving your mind a much-needed reset button. Regular practice strengthens the prefrontal cortex—the area responsible for focus and decision-making—while reducing the size of the amygdala, the brain's stress alarm.

How to Get Started:

- Download guided meditation apps like **Calm**, **Headspace**, or **Insight Timer** (my favorite).
- Start small: Just 5-10 minutes a day. Sit quietly, close your eyes, and focus on your breath.
- Pro tip: If your mind wanders, that's normal. Gently bring it back to your breath or the guided voice.

When and How Often: Morning meditation sets a calm tone for your day. Alternatively, a session before bed can ease you into sleep. Aim for 5-10 minutes daily, and build up to longer sessions if it feels right.

2. Breathing Exercises

Why it Works: Stress often shortens your breath, sending your nervous system into panic mode. Controlled breathing techniques, like **box breathing**, engage your parasympathetic nervous system, your body's "rest-and-digest" response. This slows your heart rate, lowers blood pressure, and calms the mind.

The Box Breathing Method:

1. Inhale deeply through your nose for 4 counts.
2. Hold your breath for 4 counts.
3. Exhale slowly through your mouth for 4 counts.
4. Hold for 4 counts, then repeat for 3-5 minutes.

When and How Often: Anytime you feel stressed, overwhelmed, or need to refocus. It's also great as a pre-sleep routine or even during a work break.

3. Journaling

Why it Works: Writing things down declutters your brain and helps you process emotions. Focusing on gratitude rewires your brain to notice the positive, reducing stress and increasing

happiness over time.

How to Get Started:

- Every day, jot down one thing you're grateful for—big or small. It could be as simple as "My morning coffee was awesome."
- If stress is weighing you down, write a "brain dump." Pour out your worries onto the page. No need for grammar or structure—this is just for you.
- Reflect on patterns or recurring themes in your journaling. Awareness is the first step toward managing stress.

When and How Often: Journaling works best at the end of the day when you can reflect on what went well or process lingering stress. Dedicate 5-10 minutes daily.

Make It a Daily Practice

The key to mental health isn't perfection; it's consistency. Meditation, breathing exercises, and journaling are small, manageable habits that can deliver massive benefits over time. Start with just one practice, commit to it for 30 days, and build from there.

Stress will always show up in your life, but with these tools, it doesn't have to run the show. You're the boss of your body and mind—so take the reins, keep your head in the game, and keep moving forward like the badass you are.

BONUS RESOURCES:

1. Breathing Apps

- a) **Prana Breath** ([Android](#)) My personal Favorite. Not available for iPhone)
- b) **Breathe2Relax** ([Android](#)) ([iPhone](#))

2. Meditation Apps

- a) **Insight Timer** ([Android](#)) ([iPhone](#))
- b) **Calm** ([Android](#)) ([iPhone](#))
- c) **Headspace** ([Android](#)) ([iPhone](#))



Chapter 7: Sleep Tight But Don't Sleep on Recovery

You can't outwork bad recovery. Burnout, injuries, and plateaus aren't badges of honor—they're signs you're ignoring the most important part of fitness: recovery. Think of it like this: Workouts break your muscles down; recovery is when they rebuild, stronger than before. If you skip recovery, you're robbing yourself of gains and setting yourself up for failure.

Why Sleep is Non-Negotiable:

When you sleep, your body goes into full-on repair mode. Muscle tissues damaged during exercise are rebuilt, and your energy stores (glycogen) are replenished. Growth hormone—your body's natural anabolic steroid—is released primarily during deep sleep, helping you recover faster, build muscle, and burn fat. Poor sleep, on the other hand, increases cortisol, slows recovery, weakens your immune system, and even disrupts hunger hormones, making it harder to stick to your diet.

Tips for Better Sleep:

- **Set a Schedule:** Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Consistency keeps your circadian rhythm in check.
- **Ditch the Screens:** Blue light from phones and TVs messes with your melatonin levels, making it harder to fall asleep. Shut down screens at least an hour before bed.
- **Create a Sleep Sanctuary:** Dark, cool, and quiet—these are your sleep MVPs. Invest in blackout curtains, white noise machines, or a fan if needed.
- **Wind Down:** Develop a pre-sleep routine like reading, meditation, or gentle stretching. Your body needs cues that it's time to relax.

What About Naps?

Naps are the underrated recovery weapon in your arsenal. A 20-30 minute power nap can reduce fatigue, improve mental clarity, and boost recovery. Just don't nap too late in the day, or you'll mess with your nighttime sleep.

How Sleep Requirements Change as You Age

Sleep evolves with age, just like the rest of your body. While the recommended **7-9 hours per night** stays consistent for most adults, the way your body handles sleep—and what it needs from it—shifts over time.

- **In Your 20s and 30s:** Your body is resilient, and poor sleep habits may not show immediate consequences. But don't get cocky—this is when the foundation for long-term sleep health is built. Consistent rest helps solidify memory, regulate metabolism, and fuel physical recovery, especially if you're active.
- **In Your 40s and 50s:** Hormonal changes (hello, menopause for women and lower testosterone for men) can make quality sleep harder to achieve. You may find yourself waking more frequently or struggling to fall back asleep. This is also when your body starts to lose some of its repair efficiency, making high-quality sleep even more crucial for muscle recovery, cognitive function, and overall health.
- **60 and Beyond:** Sleep patterns can shift significantly. You might fall asleep earlier, wake up earlier, and spend less time in deep sleep—the phase where your body does the bulk of its healing and restoration. This doesn't mean you need less sleep; your body just becomes less efficient at getting it. Prioritizing sleep hygiene (dark, cool rooms, no screens before bed) becomes critical to ensuring you get enough restorative rest.

The Bottom Line: Sleep needs don't decrease as you age, but the quality often does. The solution? Create a sleep-friendly routine, pay attention to your body's cues, and make sleep as much of a priority as your workouts and nutrition. You'll age better, feel sharper, and recover faster.

Active Recovery Days

Active recovery is low-intensity movement that promotes blood flow, reduces muscle soreness, and keeps you mobile without adding stress to your body. It's not about pushing harder; it's about taking care of your body.

Best Activities for Active Recovery Days:

- **Foam Rolling:** Releases muscle tightness and improves circulation. Focus on major muscle groups, especially those worked during your last session.
- **Stretching/Yoga:** Enhances flexibility, reduces stiffness, and helps you relax.
- **Walking:** Gentle walking increases blood flow and clears your mind without overloading your system.
- **Light Swimming or Cycling:** Non-weight-bearing activities that are easy on the joints.

- **Tai Chi:** Combines movement and mindfulness for a recovery double whammy.

The Goal: Keep moving without stressing your muscles or joints. Active recovery helps you feel better faster and reduces the risk of injury.

Stop Overtraining

Overtraining happens when you push your body too hard without giving it enough time to recover. It's like revving an engine nonstop—it will eventually burn out. Signs of overtraining include chronic fatigue, irritability, poor sleep, decreased performance, and even injuries.

The Effects of Overtraining:

- **Physical Burnout:** Weakness, fatigue, and injuries become more common.
- **Mental Burnout:** Motivation plummets, and workouts feel like a chore instead of a reward.
- **Plateaus:** Your progress stalls, or worse, reverses, as your body struggles to keep up.

How to Avoid Overtraining:

- **Plan Rest Days:** Schedule at least one full rest day per week.
- **Listen to Your Body:** If you're exhausted or in pain, take an extra day off.
- **Mix Up Intensity:** Alternate between hard and light training days.

Are Extended Breaks Beneficial?

Yes! Especially as you age, periodic deload weeks (where you reduce training intensity or volume) are essential. These breaks let your body fully recover, prevent overuse injuries, and reinvigorate your mind for future training.

The Balance of Training and Recovery

Recovery isn't about doing less; it's about doing better. Without proper sleep, active recovery, and respect for your limits, you're spinning your wheels. Remember: **Muscle is broken down in the gym, but it's built in recovery.** Respect the process, and your body will reward you with strength, resilience, and the longevity to keep crushing life.

BONUS RESOURCES:

Sleep Apps

1. **Insight Timer** ([Android](#)) ([iPhone](#))
2. **Calm** ([Android](#)) ([iPhone](#))
3. **Headspace** ([Android](#)) ([iPhone](#))



Chapter 8: Give me Five Sets of “Stop Eating Crap!”

You’ve heard it before, and you’re going to hear it again: YOU CAN’T OUTTRAIN A BAD DIET. Period. End of story. You can lift, run, and stretch all day long, but if you’re fueling your body with garbage, you’ll never get the results you’re chasing. Nutrition is the foundation of a strong, capable, and badass body. Here’s how to build yours right.

Why Diets Fail (and What to do Instead)

Any diet *technically* works—as long as you stick to it. But let’s be real: most diets are restrictive, joyless, and impossible to maintain. The second you fall off the wagon, the weight piles back on (and then some). The trick isn’t the latest fad or miracle meal plan; it’s about creating a sustainable way of eating that fuels your life, satisfies your taste buds, and keeps you on track.

What Does “Eating Clean” Mean?

Eating clean isn’t about being perfect—it’s about cutting out the crap that slows you down. Here’s the short version:

- **Yes to:** Whole foods like lean proteins, veggies, fruits, nuts, seeds, and whole grains.
- **No to:** Processed junk, added sugars, and foods with ingredient lists that read like a science experiment.
- **It’s Not About Elimination:** Clean eating isn’t restrictive; it’s balanced. You can still enjoy your favorite treats in moderation.

What Low-Carb Really Means

Low-carb doesn’t mean you’re swearing off carbs like they’re the devil. It means being smart about the ones you eat.

- **Good Carbs:** Vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains that give you energy and nutrients.
- **Bad Carbs:** Sugary drinks, white bread, pastries, and anything that makes you crash an

hour later.

- **Why It Matters:** Excess carbs, especially refined ones, spike your blood sugar and cause inflammation—two things you don't need more of as you age.

Prioritize Protein: Your Body's Building Block

Protein is the MVP of aging well. As you get older, you naturally lose muscle (thanks, sarcopenia), and protein is your best defense.

- **How Much?** Aim for at least 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight daily. If you weigh 150 pounds, shoot for 150 grams of protein.
- **Why It's Crucial:** Protein helps build and repair muscle, keeps you fuller longer, and supports healthy skin, hair, and nails.
- **Easy Protein Sources:** Lean meats, eggs, Greek yogurt, tofu, tempeh, protein powder, and legumes.

Hydrate or Die-drate

Water is life—literally. Your body is 60% water, and every system depends on it to function.

- **Not a Fan of Plain Water?** Add lemon, cucumber, or a splash of 100% juice to jazz it up. Herbal teas and black coffee (in moderation) count too.
- **Tips for Staying Hydrated:**
 - Carry a reusable water bottle everywhere.
 - Set reminders on your phone.
 - Drink a glass of water before every meal.

Sometimes, Eating More is Better

Cutting calories too aggressively can backfire. Your body goes into starvation mode, slowing your metabolism and holding onto fat. Instead of eating less, eat *better*. Prioritize nutrient-dense foods that fill you up and fuel your energy.

Supplements Are Just That: Supplements

You can't fix a trash diet with pills and powders. Supplements should fill gaps in your nutrition, not replace real food. Protein powder is great if you're short on time, and a quality multivitamin can cover your bases, but they won't work if your daily diet consists of fast food and soda.

The Longevity Kitchen isn't about dieting—it's about fueling your life. Eat clean, stay hydrated, and make choices that keep you strong, lean, and ready to crush whatever life throws your

way. You're not eating for six-pack abs; you're eating to feel like a badass at 60, 70, and beyond.

Diet and Nutrition Changes as You Age

Here's a breakdown of dietary changes you should consider as you get older.

In Your 40s:

1. **Increase Protein Intake:** Helps maintain muscle mass and supports metabolism.
2. **Boost Fiber Consumption:** Helps with digestion and can lower cholesterol.
3. **Focus on Calcium and Vitamin D:** Supports bone health, reducing the risk of osteoporosis.
4. **Antioxidant-Rich Foods:** Include more fruits and vegetables to combat oxidative stress.
5. **Healthy Fats:** Incorporate sources of omega-3 fatty acids like fish, flaxseeds, and walnuts to support heart health.

In Your 50s:

1. **Monitor Portion Sizes:** Metabolism slows down, making it easier to gain weight.
2. **Reduce Sodium Intake:** Helps manage blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease.
3. **Increase Intake of Phytoestrogens:** Foods like soy, flaxseeds, and legumes can help balance hormones, especially in women.
4. **Ensure Adequate Hydration:** Helps with digestion and maintaining energy levels.
5. **Magnesium-Rich Foods:** Support muscle function and heart health (e.g., nuts, seeds, and leafy greens).

In Your 60s:

1. **Prioritize Lean Protein:** Continue to maintain muscle mass and support overall health (e.g., lean meats, fish, legumes).
2. **Focus on Gut Health:** Include probiotics and prebiotics in your diet (e.g., yogurt, kefir, bananas, onions).
3. **Vitamin B12:** Ensure adequate intake to support brain function and energy levels (e.g., fortified cereals, lean meats).
4. **Calcium and Vitamin D:** Continued focus on bone health (e.g., dairy, fortified plant-

based milks, supplements if needed).

5. **Limit Sugar and Refined Carbs:** Helps manage blood sugar levels and reduces the risk of diabetes.

In Your 70s and Beyond:

1. **Nutrient-Dense Foods:** Focus on quality over quantity to get the most nutrition out of smaller meals.
2. **Soft and Easy-to-Digest Foods:** Consider foods that are easier to chew and digest (e.g., cooked vegetables, stews, smoothies).
3. **Vitamin D and Calcium:** Continue to support bone health, especially as the risk of fractures increases.
4. **Hydration:** Older adults are at higher risk for dehydration, so prioritize drinking water regularly.
5. **Fiber:** Maintain digestive health and prevent constipation (e.g., whole grains, fruits, vegetables).

These dietary changes are designed to address the evolving nutritional needs and health concerns that come with aging, helping you maintain overall health and well-being at each stage of life.

BONUS RESOURCES:

1. [15 Healthier Salad Dressings You Can Make Yourself](#) (downloadable PDF)
2. [Is a Low-Carb Nutrition Plan Right For You?](#) (downloadable PDF)
3. [Eating For Mobility](#) (downloadable PDF)
4. [High-Protein Grocery List](#) (downloadable PDF)
5. [High-Volume Foods For Weight Control](#) (downloadable PDF)
6. [Superfoods List](#) (downloadable PDF)
7. [Protein Supplement Comparison](#) (downloadable PDF)



Chapter 9: Go Outside and Play

Fitness doesn't have to feel like boot camp. In fact, it *shouldn't*. Your workouts—and your healthy lifestyle—aren't about punishment. They're a celebration of what your body can still do. This philosophy is the beating heart of the Blueprint: **Fitness should be fun, not a chore.**

Why Play Matters

- **Stress Reduction:** Play lowers cortisol, your body's stress hormone, so you can tackle life with a clearer mind and lighter heart.
- **Mood Booster:** Ever notice how good you feel after a game of pickleball or a walk in the park? That's endorphins doing their thing.
- **Sustainability:** When you enjoy what you're doing, you're more likely to keep doing it—and that's the key to lifelong fitness.

Growing up, we didn't have video games or binge on TV shows. If we wanted entertainment, we had to create it. Mom had a no-excuses rule: "Turn off the TV and go outside and play." With a bike and a ball (at best), we got moving—running, climbing, riding, and inventing games that kept us active. Fast forward a few decades, and I've cycled, played basketball, volleyball, tennis, flag football, badminton, Frisbee, hiked, swam, zipped through the air on ziplines, climbed walls, and now? I'm obsessed with pickleball—7 tournaments in a year and counting!

Ideas to Get You Moving

1. **Pickleball, Golf, or Frisbee:** Sports with a fun, social element keep you engaged and connect you with others. Pickleball is my go-to because it's competitive, social, and just the right mix of exercise and laughter.
2. **Hike a New Trail Every Month:** Reconnect with nature, clear your head, and challenge your body. Hiking also gives you a reason to explore and appreciate the beauty around you.
3. **Turn Chores Into Games:** Yard work or house cleaning? Crank up some music and treat

it like a workout. You'll burn calories and knock out your to-do list.

4. **Play With Your Kids or Grandkids:** They don't care about your speed or form; they just want your energy and time. Bonus: You're modeling healthy habits for the next generation.

Mindset Shift: Fun vs. Duty

Here's the deal: **If you dread working out, you won't stick with it.** Exercise isn't a punishment for eating pizza or missing a workout last week. It's a way to honor and care for your body so you can keep living your life—on your terms. Not every workout will be a party, and not every meal will make you do a happy dance. But here's the hack:

- **Find What You Enjoy:** Love music? Dance. Like competition? Try tennis or pickleball. Love nature and the outdoors? Sounds like hiking or cycling might blow your hair back!
- **Make It Fun:** Workout with friends, join a league, or reward yourself after.
- **Enjoy the Results:** Even if you don't love the process, focus on how amazing you'll feel afterward—stronger, leaner, and more capable.

The Social Connection

One of the most underrated aspects of "playing" is how it connects you to others. Whether it's the camaraderie of a pickleball match or a hiking group's shared awe of a stunning view, movement builds community.

- **Mental Health Boost:** Play is a natural antidepressant, reducing feelings of isolation and boosting your sense of belonging.
- **Finding the Right People:** Surround yourself with folks who share your fitness goals and values. A good workout partner isn't just a cheerleader—they're a reason to show up.

It's not always easy to find these people, but they're worth the effort. And if you're looking for a fitness tribe, groups like mine are all about connecting with like-minded badasses.

Mom's "go outside and play" advice wasn't just about burning off kid energy—it was about building habits of movement, creativity, and connection. Those lessons stick with me to this day. Your version of play might look different, but the message is the same: Get out there, move your body, and enjoy it. Life's too short not to have fun.

BONUS RESOURCES:

- [Proactive Aging Badasses](#) (Facebook Group for aging like a badass)
- [Thomasville Dinkers](#) (Facebook Group for pickleball enthusiasts)



Chapter 10: That's My Plan and I'm Sticking To It!

Alright, you've made it this far. Congratulations—you're already ahead of most people because you've got the knowledge, tools, and mindset to turn aging into a badass adventure instead of a slow decline. Now, let's put it all together. Because talk is cheap, and badasses like you *do the work*.

This chapter isn't about theory—it's about action. No more waiting for the "right time" or searching for magic solutions. The time is now, and the magic is in the consistent, unsexy grind of showing up every day and doing the work. Let's make it happen.

The 12-Week Proactive Aging DIY Blueprint

Weeks 1-4: Build Your Foundation

These weeks are all about establishing habits and setting yourself up for success. Don't rush—think of this as building the base of a pyramid. Strong foundations lead to lasting results.

1. **Mobility First:** Spend 10-15 minutes daily on foam rolling and stretching. Use the corrective exercise resources in this document to start targeting your problem areas.
2. **Strength Basics:** Begin with 2-3 strength workouts per week. Focus on compound movements (like squats, push-ups, and rows) and prioritize proper form.
3. **Track Everything:** Use a journal or app to log workouts, food, and water intake. Awareness is key to accountability.
4. **Cardio: Easy Does It:** Add 20-30 minutes of low-impact steady-state cardio 2-3 times a week (like walking or biking). This builds endurance and primes your joints for future intensity.
5. **Hydration & Nutrition:** Start prioritizing protein, hydrating consistently, and swapping out processed foods for whole, nutrient-dense options.

Weeks 5-8: Ramp It Up & Start Playing

Once the basics feel solid, it's time to push the envelope—just a little. Here's where fitness becomes more dynamic and fun.

1. **Progress Strength:** Add more resistance or weight to your strength workouts. Try 3-4 workouts per week, alternating upper and lower body days. Include interval-style circuits to build cardiovascular strength.
2. **Interval Cardio:** Introduce interval training like Tabatas (20 seconds on, 10 seconds off for 8 rounds) or hill sprints 2-3 times per week. These torch fat, build muscle, and improve heart health.
3. **Incorporate Play:** Pick up a new sport, join a class, or recruit a friend for weekly pickleball matches, hikes, or group workouts.
4. **Celebrate Progress:** Measure improvements in strength, endurance, flexibility, and mood. Post about your wins in the **Proactive Aging Badasses** Facebook community and inspire others!

Weeks 9-12: Mastery & Momentum

By now, you've built strong habits, gained confidence, and probably started seeing significant results. The goal for this phase is to solidify these changes into a sustainable lifestyle.

1. **Gamify Your Goals:** Set new personal records (like lifting heavier, completing a 5K, or perfecting a yoga pose). Compete with yourself to stay motivated.
2. **Advanced Workouts:** Add complexity to your strength training (like supersets or functional training) and increase cardio intensity or duration.
3. **Community Connection:** Keep sharing wins, swapping tips, and encouraging others in your Facebook group and among friends. Fitness is more fun with a tribe.
4. **Reflect & Refocus:** Look back at your progress and recalibrate your goals. What's working? What isn't? Use this insight to plan your next 12 weeks.

Time to Get Off Your Butt

This isn't the time for excuses. You've got a game plan, so let's make moves:

1. **Dive Into Resources:** Go back through this blueprint, bookmark key sections, and create a weekly schedule based on the plan above.
2. **Explore My Programs:** Consider my corrective exercise plans, comprehensive coaching programs, and nutrition coaching for even more support. These tools were designed to meet you where you are and help you level up.

3. **Join the Tribe:** If you're not already in the Proactive Aging Badasses Facebook group, what are you waiting for? Find your people, recruit friends and family, and make this journey fun and social.
4. **Recruit Accountability Partners:** Whether it's a friend, spouse, or coworker, having someone to share the journey with makes all the difference.

The Takeaway

Aging is inevitable, but how you age is up to you. Are you going to sit on the sidelines, or are you going to take charge and live life like the badass you are? This action plan gives you the tools—now it's up to you to use them.

So stop reading, get up, and get to work. You've got this. Here's to a long , healthy, badass life!



Conclusion: So Now What?

Congratulations! By making it through the Proactive Aging Blueprint, you've already proven you're ready to take charge of your health, longevity, and quality of life. Now, it's time to put these principles into action—and I'm here to help.

This isn't just theory for me; it's *my life*. I'm not only the creator of this blueprint but also a walking, talking example of what it can do. I've spent years refining my methods, helping dozens of clients age more proactively, and empowering them to live stronger, healthier, and more vibrant lives. The same transformation is possible for you, whether you're ready to rebuild your foundation with corrective exercise or take it to the next level with my **FIT FOR LIFE AT ANY AGE** program.

How to Get Started

I've created programs designed to meet you wherever you are on your fitness journey:

1. **[DIY Corrective Exercise Programs](#)**. Perfect for addressing nagging aches, improving mobility, and rebuilding your body from the ground up. These programs are structured, easy to follow, and backed by my expertise.
2. **[FIT FOR LIFE AT Coaching Program](#)**. This is my premier offering – a comprehensive coaching experience – delivered online or in-person – tailored to your specific goals, challenges, and lifestyle. It's designed for those ready to commit to a proactive aging journey with personalized support and guidance.

Your Call to Action

Don't wait until "someday" to take the first step. Start *today*. Schedule a free, no-obligation 15-minute call with me to discuss your goals and find the right path for you. Click here to get started: **[Schedule Your Call](#)**.

You've got the tools, the knowledge, and the motivation. Let's work together to make sure you also have the results.