

Summary of the book “Younger Next Year” - 3 Steps to a Fitter, Slimmer, Younger You By Amy Gallo

Most of us assume aging is as inevitable as a Bachelor breakup. But get this: “What we think of as growing old is just decay at a cellular level. It’s the molecular dry rot of our modern lifestyles. And it’s optional!” says Henry S. Lodge, M.D., associate clinical professor of medicine at Columbia University and a SELF contributing expert. The science: Your cells constantly regenerate. Taste bud cells turn over every few hours; muscle cells refresh every 90 days. On average, you renew about 1 percent of the cells in your body daily, Dr. Lodge explains. Those cells come in either stronger (read: younger!) or weaker (older) than their predecessors did, based on the chemical signals they receive. Work out and your body hears, Let’s get a little bit younger. Sit on your butt and the message is, Gray hair and wrinkles, activate! And it’s not only your body that benefits. With regular activity, new tissue grows in the cognitive and emotional areas of your brain, keeping you on top of your mental game. Exercise is the fountain of youth. Don’t simply toss in a coin and wish for a younger, fitter body. Try our three-step plan guaranteed to put time on your side.

Step 1: Move

First things first: You need to move. If that means running a marathon, great. If it’s walking your dog at a brisk pace, that works, too. Your cells don’t know the difference. As long as you’re doing aerobic activity, they receive the signal to come back stronger. To that end, Dr. Lodge urges cardio for 5 percent of waking hours. (Quick math: That’s about six hours a week, not including essential warm-up minutes.) It’s totally doable when you consider that getting your Beyoncé moves on at a wedding counts! You can earn minutes for most heart-pumping activities: If you add a daily commute (on foot) to a Spin class and a 5-mile power walk, you’re halfway there.

Step 2: Tone

Next up: Couple your calorie zapping with two weight training sessions each week. Building lean muscle boosts metabolism, zaps calories and creates definition. Not only will you be empowered to hurl your own suitcase into the overhead compartment and lug heavy boxes without getting can-I-help-you-ma’am’d, but you’ll also enjoy serious health bennies. Strength training improves bone density, helping you avoid fractures; it also lowers blood sugar levels and cholesterol, reducing your risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Regular hoisting builds up your body’s energy reserve, which helps fight fatigue and makes doing any daily activity feel easier. Try our Dr. Lodge–approved age-busting routine and you’ll look and feel hot, healthy and decades younger.

Step 3: Renew

Your body needs a break from pavement pounding and iron pumping, too. Permission to take it easy, granted! Dr. Lodge’s go-to trainer, Sara Dimmick, advocates 40 to 90 minutes of rejuvenation each week in the form of foam rolling, massage or hydrotherapy. Dr. Lodge emphasizes flexibility. “With age, muscles and tendons lose elasticity, so it’s more difficult to get around,” he says. “Improving flexibility so your body is supple keeps you dynamic.” And how you choose to do that is, ahem, flexible. So far, not enough research has been done to pinpoint the number-one flexibility enhancer, so do what works for you: yoga class on Saturday, stretching after your run. As long as you’re dedicating time to activities that keep you loose, you’ll get the most from your exercise, helping you defy your age.