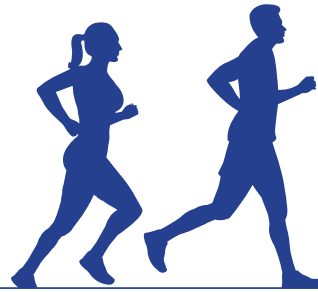


# Active Aging and Longevity

BY DAYNA STODDART



Active aging is a term used to describe the maintenance of positive subjective well-being, good physical, social and mental health and continued involvement in one's family, peer group and community throughout the aging process.

It is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age."

Modern medicine has increased life expectancy. **Over the past 100 years global life expectancy has more than doubled.** But this has not necessarily been accompanied by an equivalent increase in healthy life expectancy. People are living longer but many of those years are burdened with chronic diseases. This is why it's important to understand the difference between lifespan and health span.

**LIFESPAN**

total number of years we live

years we remain healthy & free from disease

**HEALTH SPAN**

Lifespan is the total number of years we live; health span is how many of those years we remain healthy and free from disease.

Twenty percent of how long we live is dictated by our genes, whereas the other eighty percent is dictated by our lifestyles. This means that we have considerable power and control over our health in preventing chronic diseases and increasing our longevity.

Active Aging Week is a predetermined week set by the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) and operates across multiple countries. Active Aging Week 2022 was October 3-7. Following are some highlights from the Active Aging seminars presented at Ballantrae.

## You are What You Eat

What we eat may be one of the most important lifestyle modifications any one of us can make to significantly increase our health span and to add quality years of enjoyable life as we age.

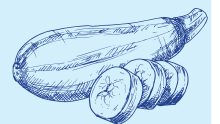
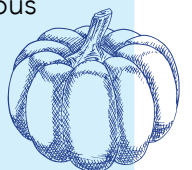
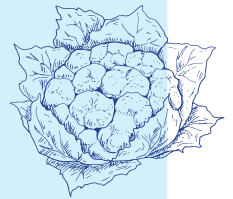
Four of the eleven Active Aging Week seminars focused on how food and supplements directly impact our health and longevity.

An Anti-inflammatory Diet Prescription for Optimum Health was an information-packed hour on how to combat inflammation and live a long and healthy life. Food is medicine and the presenter shared many delicious examples of how to create balanced meals for heart health, weight loss, longevity and optimum health.

Research has proven that there is a relationship between nutrition and mental health. How Food Affects Your Mood was a fascinating and informative seminar to help us understand the science and make smarter, healthier choices.

A virtual session on Fall Baking included how to make pumpkin donuts—a gluten-free, dairy free recipe that is a nutritious alternative to regular donuts.

Immune support is always front and centre, especially at this time of year. Tips and other holistic suggestions were discussed to keep us healthy this season.



## The Blue Zones

These are five demographically confirmed, geographically defined areas in the world with the highest percentage of centenarians – places where people reach the age of 100 at roughly 10 times greater rates than in the United States as a whole. Blue Zone locations include: Nicoya, Costa Rica; Sardinia, Italy; Ikaria, Greece; Okinawa, Japan; and Loma Linda, California. Interestingly, demographers and researchers found that these populations shared several key lifestyle habits, one of which was a remarkable similarity in their diets. Here are some dietary characteristics shared by Blue Zone populations:

- Greater than 90% eat a plant-based diet.
- A wide variety of seasonal vegetables, fruits and whole grains is emphasized.
- Daily consumption of legumes – including beans, chickpeas and lentils (black beans in Nicoya; lentils and white beans in the Mediterranean; soy beans in Okinawa).
- Meat is used only sparingly as a small side or for a special occasion.
- Avoidance of processed foods and refined sugars.
- Water is the beverage of choice, with small amounts of tea, coffee or red wine in moderation.



## Mental and Emotional Well-being

Knowledge is power! The presenters expanded on a variety of topics that delivered fascinating and practical information and strategies to improve our health and well being from physical, mental and emotional dimensions.

We learned about the most common types of dementia, the symptoms and how they present, and the ways to keep our brains healthy and lower our risk of developing the condition.

We explored some of the ways we manage different transitions through life, along with tips and techniques to reinvent ourselves as life circumstances change.

We learned of several acupressure points that can help treat and prevent headaches and migraines, whether these are stress or food-related.

Faith and wellness intersect. If our state of wellness is good, we are better able to cope with life's stressors, losses and traumatic events. We gained knowledge of the vocabulary and were empowered to feel more confident when speaking with doctors and care providers about mental health concerns.

Hearing is so important. Options available today in an ever changing industry were presented.

Leaving a legacy was a candid discussion on how to ensure that YOUR intentions are fulfilled YOUR way, tax efficiently.