



A Quick Guide
To Strength, Stamina & Sturdiness

*By
Brian Braudis*

Introduction

The one thing that could keep all of us from flyfishing with vigor into our 90s is aging. It could, it might, maybe; if we act now, *it won't*.

I am here to help you grow the most important kind of wealth. The kind you'll rely on every day. Not to make you fit but to ensure you know all that is needed to keep yourself fit—flyfishing with vigor into your 90s.

Aging is a natural biological process but it is shaped and driven by society, mass culture. So, the feel and emotion around aging is skewed. The stories, jokes and sayings we hear are not “normal” or “natural aging.” We can't rely on fiction. The script we follow and convert to action must be serious, accurate and based on reality.

Facts

- Put social influence in its place. Nature runs the program.
- Inactivity collides with aging [causing unnatural disease](#), decay and accelerated aging.
- The aging process is slow and weaker than the power of exercise.

The one thing required of you to flyfish with vigor into your 90s is effort. Skill or athleticism are not necessary. This isn't gym class. Sweat alone will get you there.

Lack of activity destroys the good condition of every human being while movement and methodical physical exercise saves and preserves it. Plato

Natural Aging

Biological aging is forgiving, nonthreatening in the beginning because it's programmed to be slow. You remain vibrant because physical decline usually begins to rear its head around age 65. Then the decline speeds up progressively with each decade.

The naturally slow, weak signal to age gives us a grace period to plan, adjust and redefine priorities.

Override Aging

With enough activity, your exercise efforts can dominate over the aging process. Some things are immutable—gray hair, wrinkles, reduced maximum heart rate and metabolism slows down. But you can maintain (and even increase) your strength, aerobic capacity and overall physical capacity with exercise. **We have power *and* latitude over aging.**

Exercise

Developing aerobic capacity, will make your heart stronger and increase your endurance. You will build the stamina to wade and flyfish with vigor—not just for longer days but for a lifetime. Once you have a solid foundation of aerobic capacity along with strength and coordination established, you can tune-up your fine motor skills with balance and stability exercises. Your body will transform into a strong, sturdy and enviable frame.

Exercising in specific ways, will “turn on” pathways of growth. Long and slow aerobic exercise uses your type-1 muscles, makes your heart stronger and increases circulation. You burn fat and invigorate your immune system. It is a health-building effort that enables healing; and gives you stamina. Numerous [studies have reported](#) that when heart health goes up, biological aging goes down. This foundational endurance training is essential for every Olympic hopeful and Tour de France athlete. It’s also a necessity for fly fishers who wade in cold, slippery streams. You are in good company.

Jog, walk, row, run, bike at a moderate 60-65% of maximum heart rate (MHR). That is 220 minus your age. For a 50-year-old: $MHR=170 \times .65=110$ beats per minute is 65%. Use a heart-rate-monitor or use the “talk test”—you can converse but in short sentences because you have to breathe. You huff a bit as you walk and talk.

The ideal is to get your heart-rate up to 60-65% of maximum and keep it there for 45 minutes. In the beginning, do what you can. If you can only do 15 minutes, do that. If your heart-rate spikes, quit. Do it again the next day. Build on it. Next week do twenty minutes. If 15 minutes is your maximum, do that for the rest of your life. Do what you can every day and feel your body and your flyfishing transform.

Consistent aerobic exercise for months and years will dramatically improve your circulatory system. You’ll grow new capillaries and influence the daily expression of your DNA. Remember, when heart health goes up, biological aging goes down. [You could become functionally younger!](#)

I recommend a trainer for resistance, strength or weight training because it is more specialized. You have to know a little bit of what you’re doing. Unlike aerobic training where you recover overnight, resistance training needs a 48-hour repair-rebuild cycle. Two days per week is adequate for resistance training, maximum is three. Also, you have to know how to break-down your muscles in a good way by exhausting them without damaging them by overloading them.

If you work different muscles—chest, shoulders, triceps one day, the next day *you could* do legs, back and biceps. But you need to know what you are doing. Start out with just body-weight and hire a trainer until you get comfortable with resistance training. A trainer will get you up to speed quickly with technique, form and a routine. It won’t cost as much as a good fly rod and they’ll love getting a call from a fly fisher saying, “I want to get in condition to flyfish into my 90s, can you help me with resistance training?” They’ll answer *all* your fitness questions, better than any app.

Work large muscles to maximize release of growth hormone and engage the growth pathways: Chest, pushups (bench-press), Back, deadlift, row, Quads (front leg muscles), squat, leg press. Use only body weight until you develop form and a baseline of strength.

Resistance training has extensive benefits. It is where the hidden benefit of increased coordination increases along with strength. Also, conditioned muscle is metabolically active and it confers these adaptations on non-muscle tissues. You may not know all the benefits but you’ll feel them!

Manage Chronic Illness

Chronic illness is a reality for most of us. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), nearly half of adults in the U.S. are living with at least one chronic illness. **Having one or more chronic conditions is not a reason to avoid exercise it's a reason to lean in to exercise.** The [research is undeniable](#). Don't allow chronic illness to sideline you from exercise—the most potent cure. Get a physician's approval and exercise like your life depends on it, because it does.

The human immune system is far more powerful than any medication we have devised.
Immunologist, Daniel Davis

[A 2019 Sports Medicine and Health Science Report](#) stated, “the implementation of daily physical activity and exercise prevention interventions support an **80% reduction** in cardiovascular risk, **90% reduction** in type 2 diabetes risk, **33% reduction** in cancer risk, and in some cases reductions in all-cause mortality.” The implied message here is exercise maximizes the immune system.

You simply cannot get this kind of life-giving, potent medicine anywhere except from exercise. It's empowering to know you are in control of the most powerful health-giving care available. **Flip the typical retiree life on its head. Bring fitness to the forefront and marginalize disease.**

You can [begin to exercise at any age](#). In fact, many people come to it later. Results come at any age. **The last decades of your life could be the most significant.** You have amassed the wisdom, skill and patience to mentor, influence and provide the most value helping perpetuate the legacy of flyfishing. If you can show up in the best health possible, free of anxiety, dread and pain, engaged, caring and involved, you will be a compelling model for the rest of us. As Ghani declared, “my life is my message.”

Use the graphic below as a visual guide. Make the base of your effort building aerobic capacity and endurance. Do aerobic exercises 4-days each week. From there build strength and coordination with resistance training (3-days per week max). Physical fitness doesn't mean much without emotional and cognitive health so get involved, be a joiner. Stability and balance training will refine your motor skills, reconnect and enhance muscle connections with your nervous system and body. Finally, eat a little less for [overall health](#). We burn less calories as we age so it's a good habit to eat until about 80% full.

Be patient, give yourself time to adjust. Unfold the new you slowly. Stretch those muscles day as part of your daily conditioning. You can find numerous exercises online if you want to take any part of your effort further. You are in control. Remember, effort is the only requirement, progress not perfection!

You will grow. Nothing can guarantee more days to your life, but *more life to your days* is a certainty. More life to your flyfishing days!



©2024 Brian Braudis All Rights Reserved www.flyfisherfitness.com

Thank you for downloading this guide. Please let me know what you think.

Brian Braudis is a fly fisher, biologist and Certified Fitness Trainer for Older Adults with boots-on-the-ground expertise. For more information, visit www.flyfisherfitness.com Direct: 609-742-9929