**It’s time to lace up those exercise shoes!**

There are so many frustrations about what’s happening in the world today, these unprecedented past three months have done so much harm to our health. So much, that we won’t even know the true and final impact it is going to have for many months and possible years to come.  
  
My thoughts this week are coming from a conversation that I had with my mom over the weekend about a friend of hers. After being on lock-down for three months, her gentleman friend aged up tremendously to the point where he’s lost strength, flexibility and balance. He’s not even the same man (physically) he was before all this happened.  
  
I know and I’m a believer (as is my mom) that we are all responsible for our own health and fitness and there’s no excuse for losing it, even during a lock-down. However, he is an example of what has been happening around the country these last three months. This active gentleman kept his activity levels up through golf, swimming, exercise classes, socializing and being involved in his community. Once, everything got locked down, so did all his activities. So did his life and his health.  
  
I am not blaming anyone. It’s our own responsibility. I just thought this was important to share, because I know that many of my long-time members and senior exercise class participants are probably experiencing this same problem and I am very worried that so many of you are losing strength, flexibility and balance. We will also find that it has not only physically impacted our health but also mentally and emotionally.  
  
It’s time to get back at it, if you haven’t already. Some things, like classes and senior facilities, are still locked down or limited, but so many other places are open and are carefully following rules to keep you protected. We now know that this virus does not survive in the sunshine, in fresh air or on surfaces that are being disinfected regularly, so it’s time to get outside and exercise, play golf, tennis, hike, bike, etc. It’s time to start participating again.  
  
With this being said, from an article out of HealthDay News dated June 5, 2020; “Exercise habits key to gauging seniors’ longevity,” a Mount Sinai Health System, news release.  
  
A new study assessed 2,300 patients between the ages of 65 – 84, who had scans to see if their coronary arteries had blockages. While they were being screened, they asked the participants a simple question “how much do you exercise?”  
  
“Our study showed that simply asking patients to rate their level of physical activity, while using a test to look at the plaque in their coronary arteries, markedly improved our ability to predict patients’ risk for dying over their next decade of life,” said Dr. Alan Rozanski, professor of cardiology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City  
  
. The ten-year follow-up researchers found links between condition of arteries, exercise, and risk of death. During that time 23% of the patients died at an average of 2.3% a year.  
  
The highest death rate was among people who exercised the least (2.9%). The lowest death rate was in those who exercised the most (1.7%).  
  
As expected, those who had little or no coronary artery disease, whether they exercised or not, were among the lowest percentage.  
  
For the patients with significant coronary artery disease, research found that the more they exercised the lower their odds of dying. Exercisers with the most severe clogged arteries were found to have the same risk as those non-exercisers with little clogged arteries.  
  
“Most notable, this valuable assessment of physical activity was easily obtained by asking patients just a single question about their physical activity,” Rozanski said. “This emphasizes the well-touted importance of being active. Based on our data, there is no reason why this type of assessment should not become routine in clinical practice.”  
  
Ah, research proves the power of exercise once again. As I say every week and try to practice every day, consistent exercise will prevail over everything in your life, even lock downs. I truly hope that you have laced up your exercise shoes and have stepped back out into the real world. Your health, sanity and future depends on it.