

The absolute best way to exercise to increase life span.

Ask any athlete which kind of exercise he/she dislikes doing the most and it usually comes down to high intensity interval training. Sprinters, competitive swimmers, Russian Kettlebell competitors all do it but find it very difficult because of the oxygen debt that results from doing it. High intensity intervals build great cardiovascular conditioning and greatly improve an athlete's performance but they also promote longevity, something not known until recently.

In 2009, Elizabeth Blackburn, Carol Greider and Jack Szostak won the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology for their breakthrough work in telomeres and telomerase. Telomeres are found at the ends of our chromosomes and act to keep them intact. They are strands of (junk DNA), i.e. DNA not involved with heredity. Each time a cell divides the telomeres shorten ever so slightly. After many divisions the telomeres become too short and the cell dies. As time passes you reach a point at which your body can't replace all the cells that die and physical decline sets in. This is how we age.

So what does high intensity exercise have to do with it? Well it turns out that you can slow down telomere shortening by doing a number of things. Some of these things include eating the right diet, taking the right supplements, reducing stress in your life and exercising in short intense bursts that depend on your fast twitch muscle fibers. That means not doing extreme long distance runs, triathlons or other ultra endurance events which deplete your body of neurotransmitters and minerals and damage muscle tissue including your heart muscle. Also important is not to exercise so much that you produce high levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Elizabeth Blackburn's research has proven that high levels of stress, as evidenced by increased levels of blood cortisol, causes faster cell aging and telomere shortening. This finding probably explains why people, who suffer from lots of stress, including extreme endurance athletes, don't live particularly long lives.

The other thing that short bursts of intense exercise does is to cause your pituitary gland to secrete human growth hormone (HGH) which rejuvenates your body by doing the following: Slowing muscle degeneration and restoring muscle mass, decreasing body fat, increasing energy and even sexual function, normalizing blood pressure, and according to the latest research completed in Italy, increasing telomere length. More than any other form of exercise, oxygen debt triggers HGH release. 20 to 30 minutes a day two to three times a week is all that is needed. The other days take it easy or go for a stroll, ride a bike, go for a leisurely swim.

The best high intensity exercises are running wind sprints, doing sprints on a road bike or in a spin class and exercising with Russian Kettlebells. So, why not defy aging and become a human dynamo by embracing these forms of exercise.