



## [Guest Post: Fitness Challenges of Older People and How to Overcome Them](#)

By Gary Baker

Being an older fellow and trying to be physically fit can be a daunting combination. However, speaking as someone that started his journey at the age of 47, I feel I have some important experiences to share about the fitness challenges of older people and how to overcome them. It definitely was a struggle going from an average “dad” body with a beer belly to having the energy to exercise every single day for the past few years. Despite this immense battle to get in shape, I can say it was worth it not only for my physical well-being, but for the new joys I found in doing so as well as the relationships I strengthened through fitness.

Today, I am excited to share some of the challenges I faced in my personal journey. It is important to note, though, that my end goal for myself was not to be able to lift a specific weight or become absolutely shredded. I merely wanted to live a more active lifestyle and do the things I already enjoy such as hiking, swimming, or sports with the kids, without the trouble that typically comes with age.

### **Transitioning**

I will be the first to admit that the transition from my previous lifestyle,

one with hardly any exercise, to my new one was not pretty. Remember, I only started at 47 years of age, meaning I had decades of conditioning my body to be “average”. As an adult, I never seriously visited the gym to get stronger or burn calories. To be quite frank, for as long as I was alive at that point, I simply... existed. I ate what I want and exercised only if I wanted to, never really pushing myself toward any particular goals. Thankfully, living like that did not result in me becoming obese, which would have made the journey even more vigorous.

Even so, I remember wanting to give up within a week of trying out my new habits. One of the goals I set for myself was to cut the coffee and instead go for a morning jog to activate my body. Now, these jogs, at least at the start, were not supposed to be difficult at all. They were only supposed to span a few minutes so I can take in the environment while my system prepared for the rest of the day. Yet, only a few days in, I no longer felt the desire to step outside and put in that little effort.



Eventually, I was able to put it together. I considered the long journey to physical health, and my motivation came back. That motivation turned into discipline a few weeks in, and before I knew it, morning jogs were part of my daily routine. It felt different *not* to do a morning jog. The lesson here is to always go back to why you started doing it in the first place, and then understand that it is going to take more than a few days to get to where you want.

## Time

This challenge applies to virtually everyone wanting to get more fit, though it is more apparent in older adults, as jobs, families, and friends can all get in the way. Especially after years of having the same lifestyle and doing the same type of things everyday, I found it particularly hard to make time for fitness.

The way I overcame it was with some mental management. I made a conscious effort to look at my goals with a different perspective. Rather than considering only the end game, I really tried to look at the entire journey as part of my new life. Instead of thinking of my jogs and diets as chores I had to maintain, I tried to think of them as *part* of my life. Once you get into the habit of acknowledging these new activities as “normal” and just normal things you do, it becomes that much easier to make time for them.

## Pain of being old

Now, this obstacle is one that I feel is specific to older people and one that was one of my biggest concerns going in. Just being an older guy was a challenge in itself. Like I mentioned earlier, being old and working out is very hard. We get shortness of breath faster, our muscles are typically weaker, and bones and joints start to deteriorate.

I remember my first time hiking. The hike only lasted around an hour and a half, but the day after I was awfully sore. My knees and back were stiff, and both my upper and lower leg muscles felt weaker than the day prior.



Still, I did not give up. I did some research on how to get through the specific hurdles I faced and tried to keep going. I took joint pain relievers, started taking more vitamins, and tuned my diet to allow for more useful energy.

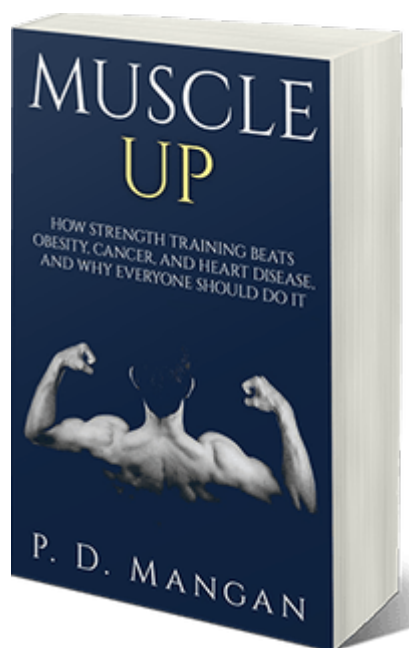
Being old definitely is a hardship if you are on your way to living more actively. However, it should not be an excuse not to start. I always try to encourage people similar to myself to get going, because like them, I nearly gave up from being so used to living how I did. It all didn't seem worth the effort. But I overcame those thoughts and now live happily. I spend a lot of time with family doing things they, in their physical primes, like to do. Before, I used to not even challenge myself to do fun things like that, but

now I am not only up to the task, but I feel this enhanced bond with the people I love.

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Author bio: Gary is a retiree and now blog manager of the active living and fitness site [ActiveAuthorities.com](http://ActiveAuthorities.com). On the site, he encourages people to form new habits, as it is never too late to begin. He also writes product analyses for hobbies he has, such as his [Callaway Supersoft golf ball review](#).

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