

Second half

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"The possibility of a happy, meaningful second half of my life is one of the gifts given to me by the example of my mother's life and the lives of family and friends," says Lynn Campbell, 65, a retired high school vice-principal. "The keys are staying active and remaining positive. I am in charge of my own agenda and it is liberating.

"By stretching myself to try new things and making sure that my cautious approach to life doesn't limit me, the second half of life is filled with adventure."

The week Campbell spoke for this article, she "skied fast down a mountain, ran hard up some hills, practised French, read stories with some delightful four- and five-year-olds at Connaught Public School, held a new baby granddaughter and laughed with husband and friends."

She says her role models are people like Joy Henderson, an 87-year-old who ran the New York City Marathon for the 25th time in November; Olga Kotelko a 90-year-old track and field athlete; Ed Whitlock setting records in marathons in his 80s; and Val Kilpatrick,



Don't be afraid of the weight room: Personal trainer Gloria Schwartz, standing, works with client Susan Gold, who is training for a cycling trip in Holland.

a music teacher, organist and runner in her 70s "who continue to move forward, doing their best until the finish line."

Staying fit enables us to do a lot more. Personal trainer Gloria Schwartz, author of a new book *Personal Best: Train Your Brain and Transform Your Body for Life*, has many older adult clients. "One of the main areas I work on with clients over 50 is maintaining or improving functional fitness," says Schwartz. "You want to be able to bend down to tie your shoe, reach overhead to get something off a shelf, carry a bag of groceries, or get down on the floor (and then back up) to play with your grandchildren. Even if you were sedentary for many years, it's never too late to get fit."

She trains many active seniors who enjoy sports such as golf and cycling. Strength and agility help when swinging a club or peddling uphill. She also works with seniors who have mobility issues and pain, such as from hip and knee injuries or osteoarthritis.

Here is some of her advice for maintaining fitness into our later years:

- Don't let pain deter you from exercising. Find a trainer or group program suited to your physical abilities. When done properly, strength training can alleviate pain by strengthening the tendons and ligaments surrounding the joint. Exercise also releases neurochemicals that elevate your mood and reduce pain.

- Find your passion. Try different sports or types of exercises until you find what you enjoy. That way you'll look forward to participating. A health club or community centre has something for everyone and it's a great way to make new friends.

- Seek solutions. Age is just a number, but it can bring its own set of challenges. Instead of thinking that you can't, tell yourself that you can. Set some realistic goals and go for them.

- Don't be afraid of the weight room. It's not just for 20-somethings or men. Strength training improves bone density and reduces risks of falling. It's especially important for postmenopausal women. Strength training can improve muscle mass even in 90-year-olds.

- You can improve your quality of life at any age with regular exercise. Exercise reduces your risk for many diseases and can slow the progression of many existing conditions. Ensure you get some cardiovascular exercise most days of the week and work on building a strong body. Check with your medical doctor before starting a new exercise program.

- Remember to fuel your body with healthy food. "An occasional treat is fine; in fact, I recommend it. It's all about moderation, not total deprivation. Enjoy life and keep moving."

Get more tips from trainer Gloria and find out where to buy her book at www.personalbestthebook.com.