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Holist Nurs Pract, 2006 Jul-Aug; 20(4):161-6; quiz 167-8

ROSENBLOOM C , et al.**What can we learn about diet and physical activity from master athletes?**

Language: [eng]

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Only 13% of those 65 years and older engage in vigorous physical activity 3 or more days a week and obesity rates are increasing by 45% in adults over the age of 60. Physical activity helps prevent chronic disease and improves quality of life, yet few adults of any age are active. One exception is master athletes who participate in competitive sports during the middle and later years. The aerobic fitness of master athletes, as measured by maximal oxygen consumption, shows some decline, but not nearly as much as in sedentary controls. Master athletes have lipid profiles similar to those of young adults, which decreases their risk of heart disease. Master athletes also have better glucose tolerance and lower waist-to-hip ratios than sedentary adults, decreasing their risk for metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes. In the few dietary studies that have been conducted, master athletes consume more food energy while maintaining lower body weights than sedentary adults. Learning what motivates master athletes to stay highly active may help health professionals develop strategies to encourage exercise in the sedentary population of older adults.

PMID: 16825917

MeSH terms: Aged, Aging, Attitude to Health, Body Composition, Diet, Exercise, Humans, Obesity, Oxygen Consumption, Physical Endurance, Physical Fitness, Sports

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