

Move Your Body

Bones aren't the only things that grow under stress or activity. Most of your body parts, in fact, become stronger when you use them. A glimpse at what you can and should do to make sure you're doing enough to prime your pumps:

Your Body	Use it	Or Lose It
Heart	Aerobic exercise increases blood flow and trains your heart under stress.	Those who don't do regular aerobic exercise are more prone to suffer from heart disease and heart attacks, and have less ability to fight stress.
Brain	Do crosswords, learn a new skill (or language), read (as opposed to mindlessly waiting for the next great Bud Light commercial). Or <i>create</i> the next great Bud Light commercial.	Without mental calisthenics, your brain loses power and memory as you age.
Sex organs, male	Healthy sexual function can be measured in frequent ejaculations (a good goal is about one hundred times a year).	Those who don't have frequent enjoyment of sex have been shown to have increased sexual dysfunction, so don't pass up the chance to have sex, even if you're by yourself. Those who pass it up in middle age may have a harder time trying to have sex in older age.
Sex organs, female	Healthy sexual function can be measured in regular and enjoyable sexual activity.	Postmenopausal women who don't have sex will experience accelerated thinning of vaginal walls and inability to enjoy intercourse later on.

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Hormones	Various hormones naturally produce chemicals you need for daily function.	If you replace your normal steroid hormonal function with pills or injectable or inhaled steroids (such as those to fight disease), you could be teaching your glands not to produce the hormones your body craves. For those who need and use steroidal medication, it's wise to take a hormonal holiday and/or take the medication every other day, under medical supervision.
Muscles	Resistance training helps maintain lean muscle mass, which decreases as you age.	Without building muscle, you're more likely to gain weight (because muscle helps speed metabolism), as well as be at increased risk for osteoporosis.
Joints	Walking and any other types of movement stimulate the formation of synovial fluid, which keeps your joints lubed.	A decrease or absence of movement decreases production of synovial fluid, which increases the chances of developing arthritis and other joint conditions.
Gut	In people with mild forms of lactose intolerance, having a little lactose can work to your advantage.	If you avoid lactose altogether, then lactose intolerance worsens because you'll lose production of the digestive enzymes needed to process those foods.

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