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Article :**‘You Can Start Exercising at Any Age,’ Says 90-year old Fitness Instructor Mika Takishima**

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

Images of incredibly fit athletes at the Tokyo Olympics have put the focus on physical fitness. On the other hand, the lack of physical exercise — aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic — seems to be a universal problem for the rest of us. The effect of this double whammy not only increases the variety of health risks we face, but also reduces our quality of life.

“How about moving around a bit yourself while watching the passionate battles of the athletes in the Olympic and Paralympic Games,” says Japan’s oldest fitness instructor, Mika Takishima, known as “Takimika,” says as she sends out her own “yell of encouragement”.

Going to the Gym at 65 years of Age

Moderate exercise is essential to living a long, healthy life. Elderly people seem to be more conscious of this and more enthusiastic about it than the younger generation.

According to a National Health and Nutrition Survey released by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in 2019, about 24 percent of men and 17 percent of women between the ages of 20 to 64 years do regular exercise of 30 minutes or more at least twice a week over a year’s period. On the other hand, among the 65 and over group, the number increases to about 42 percent for men, and about 34 percent for women.

Even so, this is far from the country’s target of 58 percent for men and 48 percent for women under the “Healthy Japan 21” program to improve the nation’s health. In recent years, there has been a polarization between people who exercise daily and those who don’t exercise at all. Also noteworthy is the fact that older women do not seem to have a habit of doing exercises regularly.

“It’s because of your age,” said Takimika, the fitness instructor, firmly pushing the back of a hesitant person. The instructor is Mika Takishima who, born in 1931, celebrated her 90th birthday this year.

Takishima, who was a full-time housewife, started exercising when she was 65, the year when one normally starts living on a pension. What triggered her was a comment from her family members that she was fat. “Lying around watching TV and eating senbei (rice crackers) I was 15 kg overweight. I couldn’t clean the bath properly because my bulging stomach got in the way, but I didn’t take much notice.”

Determined to do something, she started going to the gym, sweating out with weights and aerobics, and worked steadily over five years to get back to her original weight. Even after she reached her target, however, she did not stop going to the gym.

“It’s strange but I threw myself into it. I think that there was a part of me that liked doing exercise”.

Source: ‘You Can Start Exercising at Any Age,’ Says 90-year old Fitness Instructor Mika Takishima

<https://japan-forward.com/you-can-start-exercising-at-any-age-says-90-year-old-fitness-instructor-mika-takishima/>

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‘You Can Start Exercising at Any Age,’ Says 90-year old Fitness Instructor Mika Takishima

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

Looks She’s in her 20s from the Back

She persisted, without being pushed by anyone else and kept training steadily. She did yoga poses to improve her balance and strengthen her core, and included a kilometer of walking backwards in her morning routine to prevent bad posture. “I enjoy transforming my body,” she found.

One’s posture normally gives away one’s age, but seeing her seated, one cannot but admire her. Her back is straight, both knees and her ankles are firm. “This is the result of my training. I could be a woman in my twenties when you see me from the back, right?” she said laughing in a carefree manner.

One can also achieve other results from exercises: “Once I missed my footing on three levels of the steps at the station, but I managed to stop myself from falling with my toes. It’s not only muscular strength you need, but also flexibility.”

Based on her experience, she recommends that beginners start with ankle exercises to help prevent tripping. “You can do it while watching TV. Initially, just do it once or twice. If you continue, your ankle will become more flexible.”

Age doesn’t matter for the benefits of exercise. The muscles of Takishima’s entire body are proof of this. “You can start from any age. Start little by little, and it’s most important to continue and not give up.”

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2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. lack of ～の不足

Her only problem is a lack of confidence.

2. known as ～として知られる、またの名を

The lump in the neck known as the Adam's apple is the voice box that grows during puberty.

3. seem to ～ ～のように見える、～のようだ、～と思われる

She seems to take very good care of her garden.

4. even so たとえそうであっても、それにもかかわらず、それでも

Crashes are rare, but even so, there should be stricter safety regulations.

5. based on ～ ～に基づいて、～を根拠として、～を基にしている

I like movies that are based on true stories.

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. How long has Miki Takeshima been working out?

2. What made her start going to the gym when she was 65?

3. How often do you exercise?

4. What can we do to stay healthy besides exercising regularly?

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日本語関連記事：

90歳のフィットネスインストラクター 瀧島未香さん「何歳からでも運動を」

世界的な問題になっている運動不足。新型コロナウイルスの感染拡大によりさらに深刻化する運動不足は、さまざまな健康リスクを高めるだけではなく、生活の質の低下も招く。「日本最高齢のフィットネスインストラクター」がエールを送る。

65歳からジムへ

健康寿命を延ばすために、適度な運動を続けることは欠かせない。そうした意識が働き、世代別で比べると高齢者は比較的、運動熱心な傾向がある。

厚生労働省が発表した令和元年の「国民健康・栄養調査」によると、日頃から運動習慣（1回30分以上を週2回以上、1年以上継続）がある人は、20～64歳だと男性は約24%、女性は約17%。一方、65歳以上では男性が約42%、女性は約34%と大きく上回る。

それでも、国が進める健康づくり運動「健康日本21」の目標値（男性58%、女性48%）には届かない。近年は、毎日運動する人と全くしない人とに二極化し、特に高齢女性の運動習慣がないのが目立つ。

「もう年だから」と、尻込みする人の背中を押す、フィットネスインストラクターがいる。昭和6年生まれで今年90歳を迎えた「タキミカ」こと、瀧島未香さんだ。

専業主婦だった瀧島さんが運動を始めたのは、一般的に年金受給が始まるとされる65歳から。きっかけは、家族からの「太ったね」の一言だった。「テレビを見てゴロゴロして、お煎餅食べて…。そんな生活で今より15キロも太っていたんです。確かに、おなかが悪魔してお風呂掃除もまともにできなかったけれど、自分では気づかなかった」と振り返る。

一念発起してフィットネスジムに通い、筋トレやエアロビクスで汗を流し、じつくりと5年ほどかけて元の体重に戻した。当初の目的を果たしたが、ジム通いはやめなかった。

「不思議とハマってしまったんですね。もともと私の中に『運動が好き』という気持ちがちよっぴりでもあったんだと思います」

後ろ姿は20代?!

誰に言われなくても自分で考え、コツコツとトレーニングする。ヨガのポーズでバランスを崩さないように体幹を鍛えたり、猫背を防ぐため、朝の日課に1キロの後ろ歩きを組み込んだり。「自分の体に変化していくのが楽しいから」

年齢は姿勢に出るものだが、座った姿はほれほれするほど。背筋がピンと伸び、左右の膝、くるぶしはぴったりくっついている。「これもトレーニングのたまもの。後ろ姿は20代、でしょ？」と屈託なく笑う。

運動にはこんな成果も。「駅の階段を3段残して踏み外しても、爪先でくつと止めましたよ。筋力だけじゃなくて柔軟性も身につけていたんですね」

そんな自身の経験から、運動初心者には、転倒防止に役立つ足首の体操から始めることをすすめる。「テレビを見ながら、最初は1、2回でもいいんです。続ければ、足首がスムーズに動くようになりますよ」

運動をするのに年齢は関係ない。瀧島さんの全身について筋肉が物語っている。「何歳からでもできます。少しずついいから、諦めないで続けることが一番大切です」

出典：90歳のフィットネスインストラクター 瀧島未香さん「何歳からでも運動を」

<https://japan-forward.com/japanese/%ef%bc%99%ef%bc%90%e6%ad%b3%e3%81%ae%e3%83%95%e3%82%a3%e3%83%83%88%e3%83%8d%e3%82%b9%e3%82%a4%e3%83%b3%e3%82%b9%e3%83%88%e3%83%a9%e3%82%af%e3%82%bf%e3%83%bc%e3%80%80%e7%80%a7%e5%b3%b6%e6%9c%aa/>