

CONIFER PHYSICAL THERAPY

CONNECTION

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How Fast You Walk Might Show How Fast You're Aging

Middle-aged folks who worry about healthy aging would do well to keep an eye on their walking speed.

Turns out that the walking speed of 45-year-olds is a pretty solid marker of how their brains and bodies are aging, a new study suggests.

Slow walkers appear to be aging more rapidly, said senior researcher Terrie Moffitt, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Duke University. They've lost more brain volume in middle-age than folks with a quicker walking pace, and also perform worse on physical and mental tests, she said.

"For those people who were slow walkers for their age group, they already had many of the signs of failing health that are regularly tested in a geriatric clinic," Moffitt said.

In the study, middle-aged people who walked slower than 3.6-feet per second ranked in the lowest fifth when it comes to walking speed, and those are the individuals already showing signs of rapid aging, said Dr. Stephanie Studenski, a geriatrician with the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

"It takes many body systems to have you walk well," Studenski said. "It takes a good heart, good lungs, good nervous system, good strength, good musculoskeletal system and a variety of other things. Gait speed summarizes the health of all of your body's systems."

Gait speed tests are a standard part of geriatric care, and are regularly given to people 65 and

older, Moffitt said.

"The slower a person walks, that is a good predictor of impending mortality," Moffitt said. "The slower they walk, the more likely they will pass away."

Moffitt and her colleagues suspected that gait tests might be valuable given at an earlier age, figuring that walking speed could serve as an early indicator of how well middle-aged people are aging.

To test this notion, the researchers turned to a long-term study of nearly 1,000 people born in a single year in Dunedin, New Zealand. These people have

been tested regularly since their birth in 1972-1973 regarding a wide variety of medical concerns.

This group of study participants recently turned 45, and as they did, the research team tested their walking speed by asking each to repeatedly amble down a 25-foot-long electronic pad, Moffitt said.

Each person walked down the pad at their normal rate, and then again as fast as they could. They also were asked to walk as fast as possible while reciting the alphabet backward, Moffitt said.

All of the participants then were subjected to a battery of aging tests normally used in geriatric clinics.

In addition, they underwent an MRI brain scan to test the volume of their brains, since a shrinking brain has been linked to dementia and Alzheimer's disease.



How Fast You Walk Might Show How Fast You're Aging (cont part 2)

The participants also were given a variety of mental and physical tests. The physical tests involved things like balancing on one foot, standing up out of a chair as fast as they could, or gripping a monitor as tightly as they could to test hand strength.

"All these things are very subtle," Moffitt said. "They're not anything that would knock you over with a feather. You have to test them in order to find them."

The findings showed that people who were in the lowest fifth for walking speed had signs of premature and rapid aging.

Studenski said, "It's the bottom 20% that's by far in bigger trouble than the others."

The slower walkers also looked older to a panel of eight screeners asked to guess each participant's age

from a facial photograph.

The findings were published online Oct. 11 in JAMA Network Open.

A gait test could be an easy and low-cost way for primary care doctors to test how well middle-aged patients are aging, said Studenski, who wrote an editorial accompanying the new study.

Doctors could place sensors at the beginning and end of a hallway, and test patients' walking speed as they head down to the examination room, she added.

However, doctors would need to be taught how to interpret gait speed for middle-aged patients, the same way that geriatricians already are trained to interpret walking speed in seniors.

Middle-aged people with a slower gait could try to



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Holiday Show & Gift Shop

Avoid the malls this holiday season and shop local at the Evergreen Center for the Arts Nov 15 - Dec 24. This show will feature unique, handmade gift and holiday items from over 50 artists. Admission is free and hours are Mon-Sat 10am - 5pm.

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Festival of Trees

Ring in the holidays with the Festival of Trees Nov 23rd from 4-7:30pm. There will be trees, wreaths and unique holiday gifts available for silent auction, all to support the Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce. Conifer PT is even sponsoring a tree. For tickets, visit www.goconifer.com/holiday-wine-tasting.

Ingredients

- 3 (8oz) packages cream cheese
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 2 (8oz) cans crescent rolls
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds

Sopapilla Cheesecake:

This fan favorite recipe is a hit at potlucks and holiday parties. Even better? It's amazingly simple to make.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Beat the cream cheese with 1 1/2 cups sugar and the vanilla extract in a bowl until smooth. Unroll the cans of crescent roll dough and use a rolling pin to shape each one into 9x13 in rectangles. Press one piece into the bottom of a 9x13 in baking dish. Evenly spread the cream cheese mixture into the baking dish, then cover with the remaining piece of crescent dough.

Drizzle the melted butter evenly over the top of the cheesecake. Stir the remaining 1/2 cup sugar with the cinnamon in a small bowl and sprinkle over the cheesecake with the almonds. Bake in a preheated oven until the dough has puffed and turned golden brown - about 45 minutes. Cool completely and serve.



How Fast You Walk Might Show How Fast You're Aging (cont part 3)

slow their aging by eating healthy, exercising, quitting smoking, and maintaining better control over risk factors like high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol, Studenski and Moffitt suggested.

An even better use of walking speed could be as an early test of drugs and therapies meant to counter dementia and other diseases of aging, Moffitt said.

These therapies usually are difficult to assess because researchers have to wait years for people to grow old and display the hoped-for benefits, she noted.

“They need something cheap and



effective they can do now to evaluate these treatments,” Moffitt said. “If they give it to people and it speeds up their walking, we’ve really got something there.”

Article courtesy of www.usnews.com



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EChO Annual Turkey Trot

Stomp out hunger and get ready for your holiday feast Thursday Nov 28th (Thanksgiving morning) at the annual turkey trot and fun run. For pricing and to register, visit <http://evergreenchristianoutreach.org>. Run starts at 9am.

29

Olde Fashioned Christmas at the Evergreen Red Barn

Visit the Evergreen Red Barn for a unique Christmas Experience Nov 29 - Dec 22. Christmas trees, local vendors, and kids activities will help make memories your family will never forget. Visit www.evergreenredbarnchristmas.com for more info.

Historians believe the Pilgrims served wild game and vegetables, instead of turkey, at the first Thanksgiving.

Approximately 46 million turkeys are eaten on Thanksgiving every year!

The Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade began in 1924 with only 400 employees.

Pilgrim means foreigner or traveler from afar!

The state of California consumes the most turkey!

3 Holiday Activities to Engage with Loved Ones

Any time can be the right time to enjoy memorable moments with family members, but the holidays present a special opportunity to have meaningful conversations and interactions with loved ones.

One of the best ways to generate memories is through activities that get the conversation started, whether it's remembering favorite moments from the past or simply sharing notes of appreciation. This holiday season, consider these activity ideas for your family get-together.

Gratitude Tree

Start a new tradition by creating a gratitude tree - a simple decoration you can use each year as a reminder of what you and your family are thankful for. Collect twigs or branches, dry them out and cut them to the desired lengths. Put the branches in a vase. Punch holes at the tops of fall-colored paper to be used as tags then instruct guests to write what they're grateful for on each tag.

Take turns reading the tags and tie them to the branches then keep the handwritten tags in a safe place until they

can be read again each holiday season. Over the years, as the tree fills up, you'll have a lifetime of memories to share.

Time Capsule

Making a holiday-inspired time capsule can help strengthen family bonds while preserving treasured memories.

Use a sealed container or plastic bag to protect items from moisture, then place the container in a box that can be decorated and stored with related holiday decorations. Mark on the container the date it was created, and pack it with items like family-favorite recipes; notes about significant events from that year like births, weddings, graduations and more.

Memories Tablecloth

As you gather around the table for holiday meals, ask each family member to jot down a favorite memory or something he or she is thankful for along with a signature and date. You can make it an annual event by using the same tablecloth each year and, before long, it will be filled with personal memories. Just use an appropriately sized, inexpensive white canvas drop cloth and fabric markers.



"Winter Wonderland" - The Ballet

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"Winter Wonderland" celebrates all that is great about Evergreen through the medium of ballet. Enjoy the show Sunday, Nov 24th from 3-4pm. This free performance is great for all ages. More info at www.evergreenballet.com.

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Fossil Fun at the Conifer Library

Potentially messy, definitely fun! Bring the kiddos Nov 25 from 3-4:30pm to learn about fossils, how they are formed and make one in the Library laboratory to take home. This event is great for ages 5-12 and is free.

Patient Success Story:

"Thank you, Ashley. I so appreciate your kind and passionate attitude, and I feel more confident because of the dedication you showed to improving my injury. Thank you!"

- Abigail P.

LAUGH OUT LOUD

Happy Thanksgiving to someone checking their phone in the bathroom to escape their family.



someecards