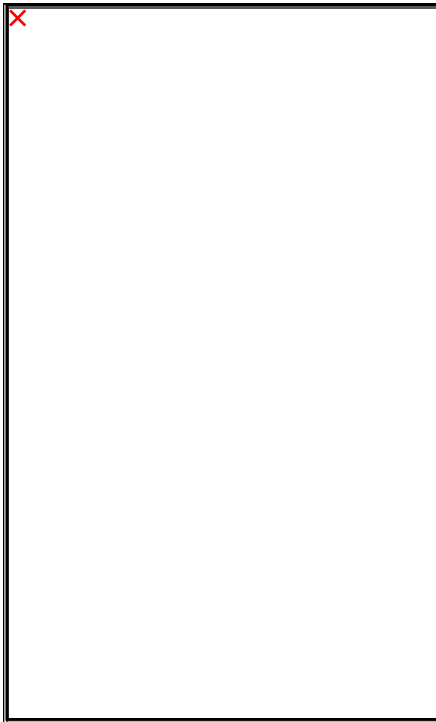


APFRI fitness symposium: health after 40

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Dr. Vonda Wright, an orthopedic surgeon at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, speaks to students and spouses during an APFRI fitness symposium on health and fitness after 40 on Oct. 4.

While 40 is technically middle aged, it doesn't mean you have to give up being active. With the right diet and exercise it is possible to be physically active and competitive well into your eighties and nineties.

This was the message Army Physical Research Institute health symposium held on Oct. 4 in Bliss Hall. The theme of the symposium was that Carlisle Barracks students and spouses could remain active for the majority of their lives as long as they continue to exercise on a regular basis and eat healthy.

“Right now one-third of senior citizens have at least one age-related disability due to a sedentary lifestyle,” said Dr. Vonda Wright, an orthopedic surgeon at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, who spoke at the symposium. “This is a huge cost, both emotionally and financially to not only those people and their families but to the country. The increasingly sedentary lifestyle of Americans is the number one cause for many diseases. Regular exercise can decrease the possibility of dying from a chronic disease such as heart disease or pancreatic cancer by 30 percent,” said Wright.

“However, while we all grow older, aging is a state of mind. One of the best ways to convince your mind that you are younger than your chronological age is by exercise,” said Wright. “Sixty-four percent of baby boomers who exercised regularly felt on average, eleven years younger than they actually were,” she said.

“One of the concerns about growing older is that you won't be as competitive physically as you used to be. This is a myth,” Wright said. “Forty years old is the ‘physical sweet spot’”, said Wright. “You still

have the physical strength but you also have the experience, savvy and maturity that many younger athletes don't have.

While the benefits of exercise were discussed, the penalties of not exercising were also mentioned. A forty-year old that does not exercise is not only more likely to die from a chronic disease but they will lose eight percent of their muscle mass by the time they are fifty," said Wright.

"This means that a non-exercising 50 year old will have difficulty lifting a suitcase into the overhead compartment of a plane."

Along with exercise, the importance of a good diet was also stressed. "Right now about two-thirds of all Americans are overweight or obese," said Dr. Miriam Nelson, director of the John Hancock Research Center on Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention.

In October 2008 the U.S. government launched the physical activity guidelines for Americans which states that children and adolescents should be getting at least one hour of moderate and vigorous physical activity a day while adults should be getting about two and a half hours a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. According to the American Journal of Preventive Medicine only about five percent of American adults are doing some type of physical activity a day.

The best way to get you and your family exercising and eating right is to make it fun and do it as a family. "It is ok, to occasionally have a cookie," said Nelson.

As part of the symposium, APFRI is offering Executive Health and Fitness assessments to the spouses of this year's resident student class. The assessments are designed to give the individual a comprehensive picture of their overall health and fitness levels, and how and where they can improve.

APFRI was designed in 1982 as part of an overall philosophy that Soldiers and leaders must be committed to improving individual lifestyles through physical fitness. APFRI is currently located at the U.S. Army War College, Command & General Staff College and the United States Army Sergeants Major's Academy.

To view the lectures please go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/usarmywarcollege#p/a/u/1/SeI2mW0NRLA>