

Six Tips to Change the Way You Age Now

By Bradley Ann Morgan, MS, PCC
Walks Beside Coaching & Consulting

Now that winter is upon us, it's tempting to wait until warmer weather before trying to make lifestyle changes such as losing weight, eating healthfully, or exercising regularly. But "the best time to make such changes is right now," says Colin Milner, CEO of the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA).

"Until recently, aging has been viewed solely as a burden—with increasing years came increasing illnesses, costs and functional problems. But, when we take responsibility for own health and wellness, we transform aging into a time of opportunities, during which we can continue to lead productive lives. Let's not wait to take those steps."

Here's what you can do to start changing the way you *age* right now:

1. **Start** or declare to continue healthy lifestyle behaviors—regular physical activity, appropriate diet--that permit you to stay as active as possible.
2. **Ignore** ageist stereotypes—the fact that you've reached a certain age does not mean you are doomed to decline mentally and/or physically.
3. **Socialize** with others--people who engage with others are less likely to feel depressed and isolated and more likely to feel happy and optimistic about their lives.
4. **Expand** your knowledge and skills—lifelong learning can help you find greater meaning in your life.
5. **Avoid** quick fixes—if something sounds too good to be true, it is. According to Colin, "Companies that sell so-called 'anti-aging' products are simply graywashing. That means they're exploiting the fear of aging by positioning their products as 'cures' or 'fixes.' Know that aging is a natural process, not a disease, and an older person isn't a 'broken' version of a younger one."
6. **Join** ICAA's Changing the Way We Age® Campaign (<http://www.changingthewayweage.com>) today to help change society's perceptions of aging. Apply to become an ICAA champion—a role model, educator and ambassador for change—or a campaign partner.

"A key message of ICAA's Changing the Way We Age® Campaign is that everyone—in fact, every living creature—is aging from the day we're born. Colin says, "There is no magic age at which everyone suddenly goes from being a younger person to an older person. Similarly, there is no rationale for defining 'older' as a state of decay and decline. Through this campaign, ICAA is conveying positive and realistic messages about aging to the burgeoning 50+ population, not with pills and potions, but with an evidence-based approach to healthy, active aging."