

Healthy Through the Ages

How Katy women stay fit and look great through their 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's and beyond

Written by Kelly Isenberger Photography by Marisa Hugonnett

Aging is inevitable for all of us, but there is good news. You can choose to face it, embrace it, and then throw a barbell at it. Some Katy women have chosen not to ignore the reality of the passing years, are fighting the battle, and are winning by increasing their fitness and taking better care of themselves. Women in different stages may share similar health goals, such as losing weight and diminishing their risk for diseases, but each age group experiences different physical changes and each age group has a different set of challenges. It is possible to stay healthy throughout your 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's, and beyond, all while enjoying a full, vibrant life.

Finding Time for You in Your 30's

In their 30's, many Katy women have either just begun a family or have small children. Many women find themselves wanting to rid themselves of extra baby weight, or they discover the sudden downturn of their metabolisms. Meanwhile, the pull of home and career can make focusing on health difficult. Laura Perkins, a stay at home mom of two, found that in her 30's she was no longer an athlete like in her younger years. Instead of playing a sport for competition, she was now chasing after toddlers.

Perkins found that the best way to get in her workouts was to include the little ones. "When we go to the playground, we are on the monkey bars too, and when they play outside, we are playing with them," she says. She also likes to run every day, and the kids will bike beside her or ride in a jogging stroller.

She makes sure to keep her family on a healthy diet, too. "We eat simple," she says. "We don't eat prepackaged foods, and we eat fresh veggies, fruits, and meat." She also reminds us, "We have all been given different bodies, and we have to do our best with what we've been given." Ryan Kobermann, owner of ESN Health and a certified personal fitness trainer, suggests women make time for exercise every day. "Women, no matter what age, should exercise for at least 30 minutes a day, four times a week," he says. "They should also do resistance training three times a week. Resistance training will give your body a greater chance of burning fat, because you raise your metabolism by building muscle tissue." He also points out that aging does not diminish the body's ability to build muscles. The only difference may be a decrease in the body's ability to recover.

Managing Stress in Your 40's

In their 40's, women may face the same struggle of balancing a career, family, and their own health. For some women, the stress may begin to take a toll on their bodies. Increasing the amount of sleep you get can ward off problems, advises Dr. Maria Sobarzo, a



When 30-something Laura Perkins can't get to the gym, she finds ways to incorporate activity into her family's lifestyle



Katy residents Laura Perkins, Becky Schumacher, Rita Black and Peggy Skaggs workout at Kingsland Baptist Church

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Peggy Skaggs is a cancer survivor who didn't start working out until age 40



Fitness professional
Ryan Kobermann

Katy gynecologist. "Get plenty of rest so you don't have the stress that breaks you down physically." Diseases and health issues can start to make an appearance during the 40s as a result of genetics, poor diet, high stress, or other contributing factors.

Get Moving

Peggy Skaggs, a Katy resident turned personal trainer, began to see the difference that exercising made in her mental attitude and in elevating her well being. At the age of 40, a friend talked her into working out, and Skaggs then realized it was something she could actually do. "As soon as I did it, I knew the time was now," she says. "I wanted to do it for me. I told myself this was important and that I can DO this." Skaggs has since faced thyroid cancer and credits her exercise to helping her overcome it. She points out, "Being in shape does not mean that you will never get cancer. No matter what ailment you have, don't stop moving. Getting the blood circulating is healing to our bodies." Dr. Sobarzo advises women to see a physician once a year to examine overall changes to their bodies. "Family history and body type are important factors in women's health, not necessarily just their age," she says. Kobermann advises every woman to receive a health assessment before beginning a new exercise program. "A woman should always be able to push herself to a perceived exertion, no matter how old you are."

Staying Strong in Your 50's

Some women in their 50's may mistakenly think that it's too late to begin to live a healthy lifestyle, but that's just not the case. Katy resident Becky Schumacher, 51, says it is never too late to improve your health. She has been a skier, tennis player, rock climber, and fitness training for years, thriving on achieving new goals. "One of the things that keeps me young is finding new, exciting challenges and then having to have the strength and stamina to do them," she says.

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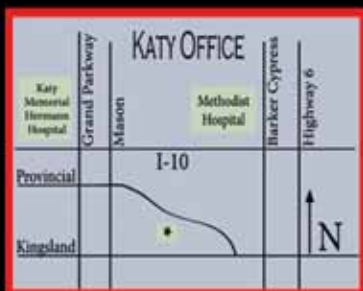


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Osteoporosis and Slow Metabolism

While you may not be ready to climb mountains, starting off small will begin to lead you down a healthier path. "You can't control everything, but the things that you can, at least work on those," Schumacher says. Some natural changes to women's bodies, such as menopause, a decrease in hormones, or a slowing metabolism cannot be avoided, but if you are prepared for them, you can make proper adjustments. Dr. Sobarzo advises that women who are postmenopausal adjust their calcium intakes and also have their bone density tested to determine if there are signs of osteopenia or osteoporosis. Paying attention to your health will pay off, though. "You do have to fight the battle," Schumacher says. "You definitely lose muscle mass and the harder it gets to be to lose weight. I have to be even more conscientious about what I eat."

Making Everyday Changes in Your 60's

Katy resident Rita Black is familiar with the battle to remain healthy throughout life. She is a 67-year-old grandmother of eight who values keeping up with her grandkids' activities. She goes to their many games and performances, and travels with them on family vacations. "My husband gets tired of all the running around, but I keep up with everybody," she says. Black also enjoys hiking and has taken many hiking trips around Texas, Arkansas, and the Smokey Mountains. She is a grandmother with much energy and staying healthy to enjoy a long life is important to her. "My father and mother lived a long life, and I figure that if I am going to live that long, I better be healthy," she says.

Begin moving toward a healthier lifestyle by focusing on improving small aspects of your daily routine. "Don't overwhelm yourself," Kobermann warns. "It takes three weeks to form a habit." Rita Black echoes his advice. "Take little steps," she says. "Drink a little more water than you are used to. Take a walk. Get rid of the fat and salt in your diet." The battle is worth it in the long run. It isn't just a diet or a passing hobby. This is a choice and a discipline. Whatever your motivation is, get healthy now. It is never too late to begin taking care of the body you've been given. **KM**

KELLY ISENBERGER is a Katy mom of two and strives to live a healthy, balanced lifestyle.



Becky Schumacher, age 51, challenges herself regularly to achieve new fitness goals



At age 67, Rita Black prioritizes fitness into her routine and watches her fat and salt intake

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In Your 40's

- Thyroid Test
- Blood Pressure
- Cholesterol
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- Diabetes (at 45)
- Digital Mammogram
- Clinical Breast Exam
- PAP Test

In Your 50's

- Thyroid Test
- Blood Pressure
- Lipid Profile
- Cholesterol
- Bone Density Screen
- Diabetes
- Digital Mammogram
- Clinical Breast Exam
- PAP Test
- Colonoscopy
- Lipid Profile

In Your 60's

- Thyroid Test
- Blood Pressure
- Lipid Profile
- Cholesterol
- Bone Density Screen
- Diabetes
- Digital Mammogram
- Clinical Breast Exam
- PAP Test
- Colonoscopy

Healthy Lifestyle Tips

- Eat a diet rich in vegetables and fruits
- Cardio exercise four times a week
- Resistance train three times a week
- Drink plenty of water
- Take a multi-vitamin daily
- Supplement your diet with calcium and omega 3
- See a physician once a year
- Cut down on your sugar intake
- Get plenty of rest every night



Laura Perkins, Becky Schumacher, and Peggy Skaggs enjoying an afternoon run in the park

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