

Aging Well — Workbook

This workbook transforms the four pillars of healthy aging — movement, cognitive engagement, social connection, and nutrition — into concrete personal actions. Work through each section after completing the corresponding module, completing exercises honestly and in detail. Your finished workbook is your Healthy Aging Blueprint: a living document you return to, update, and refine across the coming months.

Muscle, Movement, and the Resistance-Training Imperative

Assess your current movement baseline, design your first 12-week training plan, and identify practical strategies for embedding daily activity into your existing routine.

Exercise: Physical Baseline Assessment

Complete the three baseline tests below and record your results. You will retest at Week 4, Week 8, and Week 12 to track progress. You need a stopwatch and a sturdy chair.

- **30-Second Chair Stand Test:** Complete as many full sit-to-stand repetitions as possible in 30 seconds without using your arms. Record your count. Compare to age-group norms (ages 60-69: men 14-16, women 12-14). Where do you land relative to the norm for your age and sex?

- **Timed Up-and-Go (TUG) Test:** Start seated in a chair, stand up, walk 3 metres to a marker, turn around, walk back, and sit down. Record the time in seconds. Under 12 seconds = low fall risk; 12-20 seconds = medium risk; over 20 seconds = high risk. What does your result suggest about your fall risk?

- **Dominant-hand grip strength:** If you have a dynamometer, record 3 trials and note the best. If not, describe the last time you struggled with a grip task (e.g., opening a jar) and rate your perceived grip strength 1-10.

- **Based on all three tests, write 2-3 sentences summarising your current movement strengths and the one area that most needs improvement.**

Worksheet: My 12-Week Resistance-Training Plan

Using the Big-Five movement patterns from the lesson, fill in your personalised 12-week plan. Choose the exercise variation appropriate to your current level for each pattern.

Training days per week (circle: 2 / 3)

Preferred training time (morning / midday / evening)

Squat variation (Phase 1 weeks 1-4)

Hinge variation (Phase 1 weeks 1-4)

Push variation (Phase 1 weeks 1-4)

Pull variation (Phase 1 weeks 1-4)

Carry variation (Phase 1 weeks 1-4)

Sets x Reps target (Phase 1)

Planned RPE target (Phase 1: aim 5-6)

Phase 2 progression change (weeks 5-8)

Phase 3 progression change (weeks 9-12)

Equipment I have access to

Biggest anticipated barrier to consistency

My specific plan to overcome that barrier

Checklist: Weekly Movement Habit Tracker — First Month

- Completed resistance training session 1 this week (log date and exercises)
- Completed resistance training session 2 this week (log date and exercises)
- Averaged 7,000+ steps on at least 4 days this week
- Broke up prolonged sitting with 2-3 min of movement at least 4 times on work days
- Practised balance exercises (single-leg stance, tandem stance) for 5+ min
- Slept 7-9 hours on at least 5 nights this week
- Recorded perceived exertion (RPE) during strength training
- Noted any joint discomfort or unusual fatigue to monitor or discuss with a healthcare provider

Sharpening the Aging Mind

Audit your current cognitive engagement habits, design a weekly brain-stimulation schedule, and build practices that protect sleep quality and manage chronic stress.

Exercise: Cognitive Reserve Audit

Answer each question honestly. There are no correct answers — this is a personal baseline, not a test. Review your answers at the end and identify 1-2 patterns you want to change.

- List every mentally stimulating activity you engaged in during the past 7 days (include reading, conversations, puzzles, creative work, learning). Estimate the total hours. Is this enough to build meaningful cognitive reserve, given the lesson's recommendation of 30+ minutes of structured new learning per day?

- Have you learned any genuinely new skill (not just refining an existing one) in the past 12 months? If yes, describe it. If no, name one skill you have always wanted to develop that you could start this month.

- Rate your current sleep quality 1-10 (1 = terrible, 10 = excellent). List the two biggest factors you believe are hurting your sleep, and write one concrete change you will make this week based on the glymphatic research.

- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current chronic stress level? Name the primary stressor, and

describe which of the four stress-reduction strategies from the lesson (breathing, MBSR, cold exposure, nature walks) you are most willing to try first.

Worksheet: My Weekly Brain-Engagement Schedule

Build your personalised weekly schedule covering all four cognitive dimensions: Learning, Skill Acquisition, Creative Expression, and Reflective Practice. Be specific about activities, not just categories.

Monday learning activity (name + time slot + duration in minutes)

Monday reflective practice (journaling prompt or review method)

Tuesday skill acquisition session (activity + duration)

Wednesday creative expression activity (activity + duration)

Wednesday learning activity

Thursday skill acquisition session

Friday cognitive leisure activity (game, puzzle, discussion)

Friday reflective practice

Saturday extended project or craft (activity + duration)

Sunday spaced-repetition review method (Anki / paper notes / other)

One new skill I will begin learning this month

One social/shared learning activity I will join (class, club, group)

Checklist: Brain Health Weekly Habits

- Completed 20+ minutes of structured new learning on at least 5 days
- Practised a skill (instrument, craft, language) for 30+ minutes on at least 3 days
- Engaged in a creative expression activity at least twice
- Journalled or reflected in writing at least 5 days
- Maintained a consistent bedtime within 30 minutes of the same time each night
- Avoided alcohol within 3 hours of sleep on at least 5 nights
- Spent 30+ minutes in a natural outdoor setting at least twice
- Practised a formal stress-reduction technique (breathing, mindfulness, other) at least 3 times

Social Connection as a Health Intervention

Map your social convoy, diagnose gaps in support types, and design rituals that build and maintain the relationships most protective for your health.

Exercise: Social Convoy Mapping Exercise

Draw or describe your three-circle social convoy on paper before answering the prompts. Be honest — this is a private tool, not a social media profile. The goal is clarity, not flattery.

- Inner circle (1-5 people): List each person by first name or initials. When did you last have a substantive (non-logistical, emotionally meaningful) conversation with each? Are any of these relationships one-directional (mostly you giving or receiving)?

- Middle circle (5-15 people): List as many as you can. Are there people here who feel like they should be in your inner circle but the relationship has drifted? What has drifted it, and is it worth rebuilding?

- Assess the three support types: Write the name of at least one person for each — (a) someone you call in emotional distress, (b) someone who gives you reliable practical advice, (c) someone who could help you in a physical emergency. If any category is blank, name it as a gap to address.

- Name one relationship that has faded in the past 2 years that you genuinely miss. Write 2 sentences about a concrete first step to re-engage it this week.

Worksheet: My Social Connection Rituals Plan

Design specific, scheduled rituals for each level of your social network. Rituals that go in the calendar survive; intentions that do not get scheduled do not.

Weekly anchor call: name(s), day of week, time, duration

Monthly small-group meal: format (host rotation / restaurant), target date for next occurrence, names of invitees

Volunteer commitment: organisation or cause, hours per week, start date

Interest-based group or club: name of group, meeting frequency, first attendance date

Intergenerational connection plan: who and how often

Proactive outreach practice: how many people per week, what kind of message (specific memory / article / question)

New social context I will enter to meet people (class / sport / event)

Social network threat I am currently facing (retirement / bereavement / relocation) and my mitigation plan

Checklist: Monthly Social Health Check

- Had at least one substantive (non-logistical) conversation with each inner-circle person
- Attended or hosted a social gathering with 3+ people
- Completed my volunteer commitment for the month
- Attended my interest-based group or club at least twice

- [] Made proactive personalised outreach to at least 8 people (2 per week)
- [] Spent meaningful face-to-face time (not just text) with at least 3 people
- [] Tried one new social context or met at least one new person
- [] Reflected on my loneliness level and noted whether it has changed from last month

Nutrition for Longevity

Audit your current protein intake and eating pattern, identify specific gaps in longevity-protective foods, and build a personalised weekly meal template.

Exercise: Protein and Diet Pattern Audit

Recall everything you ate over the past 3 days as accurately as possible. Use food labels, restaurant memories, or portion estimates. Then answer the prompts to evaluate your nutrition baseline.

- Estimate your average daily protein intake over the past 3 days. Use rough benchmarks: 1 egg = 6g, 100g chicken breast = 31g, 100g Greek yogurt = 10g, 200g lentils cooked = 18g, 100g tofu = 8g. How does your estimate compare to the recommended 1.2-1.6 g/kg of your body weight?

- Review your protein distribution across breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Were you hitting 25-40g at each meal, or were you skewing heavily toward one meal? Write what a more evenly distributed protein day would look like for you specifically.

- Count how many of the 6 core Mediterranean diet foods you consumed at least once in the past 7 days: extra-virgin olive oil, oily fish, leafy greens, berries, legumes, nuts. Which ones are missing from your current diet, and what is the simplest way to add one this week?

- Count how many distinct plant foods you ate in the past 7 days (each vegetable, fruit, grain, nut, seed, herb, and spice counts separately). Did you reach 30? If not, name 5 easy additions that would not significantly change your cooking habits.

Worksheet: My Longevity Eating Blueprint — Weekly Template

Fill in your personalised weekly meal plan using the daily template structure from the lesson. Write specific real foods you will eat, not generic categories. Keep it practical for your actual lifestyle, budget, and cooking ability.

Daily protein target (body weight in kg \times 1.4 = ___ g)

Breakfast template (protein source + fruit/berry + grain)

Lunch template (protein source + salad base + olive oil + vegetable)

Dinner template (protein source + roasted vegetable + grain or legume)

Pre-sleep snack option if using (Greek yogurt / casein / other)

Daily fluid target (body weight in kg \times 33 ml = ___ ml)

Daily fermented food choice (yogurt / kefir / kimchi / other)

Weekly oily fish meals (days + fish type)

Weekly legume meals (days + legume type)

Weekly nut portion plan (type + amount + when)

Calcium-rich foods I will include daily

Vitamin D supplement plan (dose + brand if decided)

My current biggest nutrition gap and one specific change I will make this week

Checklist: Weekly Longevity Nutrition Tracker

- Hit protein target on at least 5 days (with roughly even distribution across meals)
- Included oily fish at least 2 times
- Included leafy greens at least 6 days
- Included berries at least 3 times
- Included legumes at least 3 times
- Used extra-virgin olive oil as primary cooking and dressing fat
- Ate at least 25 distinct plant foods across the week
- Included a fermented food daily (or on at least 5 days)
- Met fluid target on at least 5 days (urine pale straw colour as indicator)
- Avoided ultra-processed food as a main meal component on at least 6 days

Your Action Plan

1. This week: complete all three physical baseline tests (chair stand, TUG, grip) and record your results in the Movement worksheet — your Week 12 retest will show exactly how far you have come
2. This week: draw your social convoy map, identify one faded relationship you value, and send that person a specific, personal message today
3. This week: calculate your daily protein target (body weight in kg \times 1.4) and track your intake for 3 days using food labels and a rough log to establish a real baseline
4. Week 1-2: begin your resistance-training plan with Phase 1 (2 days/week, 2 sets \times 10 reps per movement pattern, RPE 5-6) — keep sessions to 30-40 minutes to build the habit
5. Week 1-2: pick one new cognitively engaging activity from your Brain-Engagement Schedule and do your first session — commit to at least 30 minutes, 3 times in the first week
6. Week 1-2: schedule at least one social ritual into your calendar — a weekly call, a monthly dinner, or a first attendance at an interest-based group — with a specific date and time
7. Month 1: build to 3 resistance-training sessions/week and add 5-10 minutes of balance training at the end of each session (single-leg stance, sit-to-stand, tandem stance)
8. Month 1: count your plant foods each week and aim to reach 30 distinct plants — use the Nutrition tracker checklist to identify gaps and add one or two new plant foods each week
9. Month 2: retest your physical baseline (chair stand, TUG) and compare to Week 0 — use the result to adjust your Phase 2 resistance-training progression
10. Month 3: consolidate all four pillars into your Healthy Aging Blueprint — a single written document describing your weekly movement, brain, social, and nutrition habits — and review it monthly

