

WELLNESS, HEALTH & FITNESS

New Senior on the Block

By Joan Maiden

If you follow my articles, I'm sure you've recognized a recurring theme—strength. February, being my birthday month, seemed like a good time to share my journey. I'm not a kid—I know the challenges of aging.

This February I turn sixty-two. It's official; I'm now a senior citizen. Do I mind this milestone birthday? Not at all. I agree with Betty Friedan, "Aging

is not lost youth, but a new stage of opportunity and strength."

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But at forty, like a lot of people, I thought that disease and disability

were just a natural part of aging. I was overweight, out-of-shape and had difficulty climbing stairs. I thought it was all downhill—especially when menopause hit.

Life threw me some curve balls and I had to re-evaluate my life. I thought joining a gym might help. It turned out to be one of the best decisions I ever made. I learned the importance of building strength—and it not only changed my body, it changed my life.

At forty, when I joined the gym, I could do twelve girl's pushups. At sixty, I did sixty-five.

At forty, I could barely walk because of the arthritis in my knees. At sixty, I ran a half marathon.

At fifty, I became a personal trainer to help other people transform their lives.

At forty, I was working for retirement. Now, at sixty-two, retirement is the farthest thing from my mind.

I have started writing and speaking to spread the message of strength. I am

no longer working for retirement—I'm working for the next opportunity and adventure.

It's never too late to begin. No matter if you're forty, sixty or eighty, build-

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ing strength is the best way to take charge and change the way you age and improve the quality of your life.

Joan Maiden is a speaker, author and trainer who specializes in educating and training older adults on the importance of building strength.

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