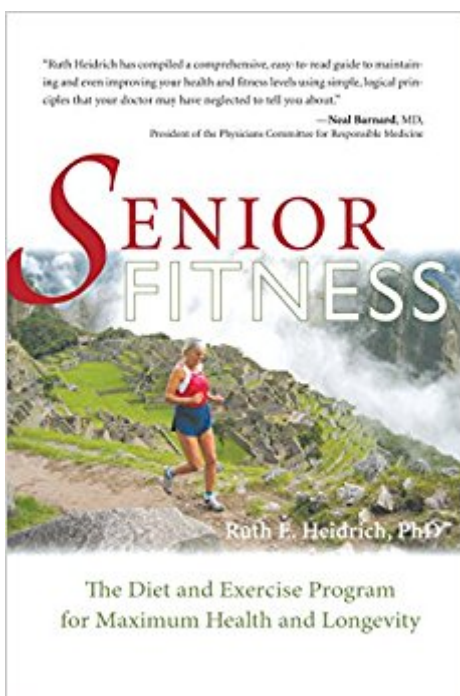


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# Senior Fitness: The Diet And Exercise Program For Maximum Health And Longevity



## Synopsis

The senior years don't have to be filled with aches and pains. At age seventy, Ruth Heidrich has the bone mass density of a woman in her early thirties and a resting heart rate of forty-four. Since being diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of forty-seven, she has won more than nine hundred athletic trophies and medals and has been cancer-free for more than twenty years. In *Senior Fitness*, the "other" Dr. Ruth shows how to maintain and even increase physical and sexual fitness at any age—and dramatically reduce the risk of prostate cancer, varicose veins, osteoporosis, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, Alzheimer's, and a host of other ailments and diseases. Full of detailed medical information, this inspiring handbook is the ideal resource for all those seeking to make life after fifty full of fun and dynamism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When the fitness craze hit the youth-oriented '80s, many of the nation's elderly missed out on the action, and in the 21st century, seniors still find themselves surrounded by exercise books geared to a younger market. But finally, the tide has turned. Ruth Heidrich, a septuagenarian triathlete who has been running marathons for more than forty years, penned *Senior Fitness* in an effort to reach Baby Boomers wanting to take better care of themselves through diet and exercise. With a PhD in health education, Heidrich is a vegan and breast cancer survivor and knows all about keeping the body hale and hearty well into old age. In addition to fitness, her book touches on such subjects as cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and menopause. This living testament to wellness and longevity demonstrates firsthand that you can embrace sound health and fitness into your twilight

years. The gift of health from Lantern Books: Senior Fitness: The Diet and Exercise Program for Maximum Health and Longevity by Dr. Ruth Heidrich is an easy to read and inspiring book that recounts the personal journey of its author from facing life-threatening disease to becoming a vibrantly healthy athlete. The "other" Dr. Ruth demonstrates that the senior years don't have to be filled with aches and pains. Reviewed by reader Alex G. Dear Ruth, I saw a clip regarding your book Senior Fitness on the Vegsource webpage and fortunately for me I proceeded to get myself a copy. The book was an inspiration and after twenty years off I'm now running again on a daily basis for 45 minutes to an hour and I'm loving it. I haven't been inactive in the interim, I've cycled, climbed and lifted weights, but I'd lost touch with what a wonderful form of exercise running is. You've also inspired me to tighten up my "vegetarian with way too many exceptions" diet and I'm enjoying my vegan fare. I wish I could get this book into more people's hands, I think it has the capacity to have a great impact on people's lives. Thanks again.

61 and on the run  
Take Care, Alex G.

Reviewed by Eve Spencer  
Ruth Heidrich is an amazing woman; her PhD is in health management, and she is the author of A Race for Life and The Race for Life Cookbook. She is also a fitness trainer who holds world records for fitness for her age group and has won eight gold medals in the Senior Olympics. However, a woman of any age who wants to be fit and healthy can follow what Heidrich writes in this book. The author opens Senior Fitness with an account of the shock she had in 1982, at the age of 47, on being told she had breast cancer, especially as she had considered herself healthy and fit. This traumatic experience led her on a path of persistent research and innumerable scientific studies, ending with the cancer being successfully overcome and taking her to even further levels of fitness. She spent a couple of hours with John McDougall, MD (author of The McDougall Program for Women), and she changed to a vegan diet. Dr Heidrich's message is deceptively simple but perfectly logical, based on her in-depth research. It seemed to me that the more studies she undertook, the angrier she became that this information was not, and is still not, in the main-stream to help everybody. I feel the same way when media adverts appear, extolling the benefits of dairy foods, red meat, fish and eggs. How dare they mislead people about the food we eat, and the damage caused to the health of the population? This book shows seniors how to attain fitness and maintain good health and a long life. As the author points out, the number one cause of death in the US is not "heart disease", but ignorance. It may sound simplistic to recommend "right diet" and "right exercise" to achieve senior fitness, but even the author believed that she ate right – mostly vegetarian plus some fish, chicken and eggs. What she has come to realise is that the "right diet" is a wholefood vegan diet. And by right exercise she means

daily, vigorous and sweaty exercise. The author emphasises whole food. Most pantries hold a multitude of cans, jars, packets and plastic-wrapped packages, with hardly any foods resembling their natural state. She points out that there is more confusion about diet than almost any other subject. There are heaps of diet books on any bestseller list – just look at how the CSIRO Diet book took off, despite its lack of science. Sometimes we read that a particular food is “good for you”, and the next day that it should be avoided. The author details phytonutrients, fats including trans fats that are to be avoided at all costs, cravings, supplements, vitamins, eating out, and so on. There are chapters on reversing cardiovascular disease, stopping cancer in its tracks, getting off insulin, dealing with varicose veins, menopause, and incontinence, as well as chapters on Alzheimer’s, mental fitness, dental care, keeping your senses such as sight, hearing and balance and much else. Importantly, the author writes on how to motivate yourself and be your own coach. This book could be just the impetus readers need to inspire them on their way to a wonderfully long, healthy and happy life. Dr Heidrich points out that work is required, and she doesn’t pretend otherwise, but what she offers is a choice. It is a diet and exercise program for maximum health and longevity. The science is sound, and the benefits rewarding. Neal Barnard, MD (author of Eat Right, Live Longer and Foods that Fight Pain) states: “Ruth Heidrich has compiled a comprehensive, easy-to-read guide to maintaining and even improving your health and fitness levels using simple, logical principles that your doctor may have neglected to tell you about. Highly recommended. The senior years don’t have to be filled with aches and pains. At age seventy, Ruth Heidrich has the bone mass density of a woman in her early thirties and a resting heart rate of forty-four. Since being diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of forty-seven, she has won more than nine hundred athletic trophies and medals and has been cancer-free for more than twenty years. In Senior Fitness, the “other” Dr. Ruth shows how to maintain and even increase physical and sexual fitness at any age and dramatically reduce the risk of prostate cancer, varicose veins, osteoporosis, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, Alzheimer’s, and a host of other ailments and diseases. Full of detailed medical information, this inspiring handbook is the ideal resource for all those seeking to make life after fifty full of fun and dynamism. Ruth Heidrich received her Ph.D. in Health Management in 1993 and is the author of A Race For Life (Lantern Books, 2000) and The Race For Life Cookbook. She is a certified fitness trainer and holds three world records for fitness for her age group at the renowned Cooper Clinic in Dallas, Texas. She still actively competes in marathons and triathlons, having won more than 900 trophies and medals since her diagnosis of breast cancer in 1982 at the age of 47. With Terry Shintani, M.D., she

co-hosts the radio show "Nutrition & You" on KWAI-AM in Hawaii. She is the founding member and past president of the Vegetarian Society of Hawaii and past president of the Mid-Pacific Road Runners Club. She has won eight gold medals in the Senior Olympics in Hawaii, Arizona, and Nevada. The proverb "You can't judge a book by its cover" may not be apropos when it comes to evaluating Senior Fitness with a cover that displays a picture of an elderly woman jogging at Machu Pichu. Where most people huff and puff and have considerable difficulty even walking at this altitude of nearly 8,000 feet above sea level, Ruth Heidrich, pictured on the cover, casually adds this activity to her many other running and ironman feats. Heidrich, who has spent almost 40 years of her life in marathon running and ironman events that involve running, cycling, and swimming, has written this volume to motivate seniors to become physically fit and healthy. Her formula is rather simple and involves two components: diet and exercise. She places this information into the following equation:  $RD + RE = SF$  Right Diet + Right Exercise = Senior Fitness "By eating a low-fat vegan diet and getting daily vigorous exercise, you will realize that you have control over your health, and that should provide all the motivation you need," says Heidrich. "You will never again want to compromise your health." In the introduction to the book, Heidrich tells the story of her battle with breast cancer. At the age of 47 a tumor the size of a golf ball was detected in her breast. She was dumbfounded that this could happen to her because she paid attention to her health. She faithfully did her own monthly breast examinations and had mammograms regularly. Her personal fitness program had included running daily and not eating red meat. Her diet featured chicken and fish and skim milk "for my bones." None of these tactics was enough to ward off cancer. Heidrich had a double mastectomy to remove the cancer in her breasts. Following the surgery, visits to five oncologists did not yield satisfactory answers to her number one question: how could she strengthen her immune system to fight cancer? She refused chemotherapy and radiation because her own research revealed no evidence that either would extend her life, but both treatments could cause permanent damage to her immune system. Heidrich's persistent research led her to Dr. John McDougall who told her, "If you want to save your life, change your diet." By this time a bone scan revealed the cancer had spread to her bones and one lung. Her cholesterol was so high she was in danger of a heart attack or stroke. The next day she started her vegan diet and has been cancer-free for over 22 years. She revealed much of this information in her first book, A Race for Life. Two years after her cancer diagnosis this remarkable woman completed her first Ironman Triathlon. In her sixties she was named among the Top Ten Fittest Women in North America by Living Fit magazine. The other nine honorees were under 35 years old. Her blood pressure now averages 90/60 while her bone density exceeds that of a thirty-year-old woman at peak bone

density. The program outlined by Heidrich is not designed to turn seniors into ironmen but to make those golden years enjoyable by helping them avoid many degenerative diseases resulting from poor diet and lack of exercise. Throughout the book she places a heavy emphasis on exercise. Her definition of effective exercise is summed up in the acronym FIT that includes Frequency, Intensity, and Time. "First, your exercise routine has to be intensive enough to raise your heart rate, make you breathe hard, and make you sweat," she advises. "Then, it has to be long enough in duration to get the body into the fat-burning mode. There's a lot of leeway here, but estimates range from twenty minutes three times a week to an hour a day." In the chapter Why Diet Matters, Heidrich guides seniors through the nutrition maze with discussions of topics like proteins, calcium, carbohydrates, fats, phytonutrients, and cholesterol. The bottom line she emphasizes is that plant foods are good for you and animal foods are not. Individual chapters are devoted to preventing and reversing chronic health conditions such as heart disease, strokes, hypertension, DVT's (deep vein thrombosis), arthritis, cancer, and diabetes. In *Sexy Seniors* she becomes "the other Dr. Ruth" by offering a frank discussion devoted to advice on menopause, prostate problems, Viagra, hormone replacement therapy, overactive bladder, and incontinence. Heidrich says, "Exercise is important for every part of the body, and the genitalia are no exception." Heidrich points out that the drug firms have allied themselves with bone-density measuring companies to convince people there is an osteoporosis crisis. These two groups have also been joined by the medical profession and the dairy industry. Because of this unholy alliance, more and more people are convinced they need drugs and dairy products to avoid bone fractures. "Aging doesn't mean automatic bone loss," says Heidrich. "The evidence suggests we don't have to lose bone mass as we age. With a whole-food, high-leafy-green vegan diet and lots of effective exercise, we can maintain or even increase bone density." Her bone density at age 50 was an impressive 447 mg/cm<sup>2</sup>. At age 60 it increased to an amazing 466. The average female reaches her peak bone mass of 411 at age 30. Early in the book Ruth Heidrich admits that she is neither a doctor nor a nutritionist and that her doctorate is in health education, but "I have lived my experiment." Now in her seventies, she has survived accidents and illness that would have crippled or killed others, and yet like the Energizer bunny she keeps going and going. As the average age of the population of this country continues to rise and more and more baby boomers become senior citizens, the information in *Senior Fitness* will become must reading for an aging population. In chapter after chapter Ruth Heidrich outlines a lifestyle that will reduce the risk that seniors will face disabling degenerative diseases. The book is packed with nutritional and health information that is supported by voluminous research noted with extensive references. Ruth Heidrich is truly an inspiration to all seniors, and a role model for young people as well. Her strength

and resolve is evident through this narrative. Her readers may not choose to emulate her impressive regimen, but even if they follow her formula combining a vegan diet with vigorous exercise, they will reap the benefits in their senior years. She is living proof that her program works.

Ruth Heidrich received her Ph.D. in Health Management in 1993 and is the author of *A Race For Life*, *The Race For Life Cookbook*, and *Senior Fitness*. She is a certified fitness trainer and holds three world records for fitness for her age group at the renowned Cooper Clinic in Dallas, Texas. She still actively competes in marathons and triathlons, having won more than 900 trophies and medals since her diagnosis of breast cancer in 1982 at the age of 47. With Terry Shintani, M.D., she co-hosts the radio show "Nutrition & You" on KWAJ-AM in Hawaii. She is the founding member and past president of the Vegetarian Society of Hawaii and past president of the Mid-Pacific Road Runners Club. She has won eight gold medals in the Senior Olympics in Hawaii, Arizona, and Nevada.

I really liked this book. She is amazing and she inspires me! Since reading her book my husband and I have cut processed foods (we already ate mostly plant based, whole foods) from our diet and try to eat more raw. What a difference it has made for us! We have more energy and recover from workouts with heavier weights. Anytime my husband eats red meat his knees and hands hurt him for about 3 days. We feel and look better eating a plant based diet.

I read about Ruth Heidrich years ago in a wonderful book by John Robbins called *Healthy at 100*. At age 47 she was diagnosed with breast cancer that had spread to her bones and her left lung. So what did she do? She trained for the Ironman in Hawaii, and she went on a vegan diet. And..... Checkups showed the regression of the cancer. At age 63 she was named one of the Ten Fittest Women in America. And her bone density increased during her 50s and 60s. Now, at 81, she is cancer free and going strong. This book is her story and her recommendations for a long, strong, vibrant and healthy life. A good and inspiring read.

Ruth is a rock star in the health and fitness world! Her books are well worth reading - more than once! This one is full of life-saving information! Easy to read and understand! Very comprehensive with good glossary and references! I highly recommend this book!

Yes she is extreme with diet and exercise, but so is the person extreme who gets stomach stapled

and blows up again and looks at a set of porch stairs as a challenge. High and low bars are set and while i have no desire to reach either this book is certainly inspiring to push harder !

This is a book that should be read by everyone. The word Senior should not have been used in the title because it might keep younger people from reading it and benefitting from its message. The sooner one starts on a fitness program the better it is for them. She ran 67 marathons in 67 years and won 6 Ironman Triathalons and has over 900 trophies. She applies principles advocated by Pritikin, Ornish, Esselstyn, McDougall, Cooper and others. She should be the poster person for anyone advocating better nutrition. Her bone density increased as she grew older. She is one of about 75 "Star McDougallers" who have improved their health. What an inspiring story. Buy two copies--one for yourself and one for your library so people can see what can be done to change the nutrition of this nation and learn about creating health rather than treating disease. Maybe if our young citizens were aware of these principles we wouldn't see high school and college athletes dying. America is 1st in degenerative disease and 26th in longevity. It's about time we improved our health and reduced the pain and cost of treating disease by preventing or delaying its onset. This book shows what individuals can do to improve their health.

I was searching for a book for a friend and ran across other books on running for seniors. Those reviews weren't very good, then I remembered this book that I read a couple of years ago. I realized that it was still timely, informative and the best info I've read on how to run safely until you're 100. I've followed the information in this book and it has allowed me to resume my running passion, place in races for my age group and just be content with finishing. For those who say it may be a little difficult to follow the eating suggestions, it is much more difficult to watch friends and family succumb to the diseases of affluence...routinely having their chest cracked open for heart disease, going blind from diabetes, and enduring chemo. Ruth's program really works, you feel so much better, and interestingly, is similar to how the Olympic Kenyans eat. Well-researched, she quotes the works of Dr. John McDougall and Dr. Neal Barnard. Their work and books ought to be worthy of Nobel Prizes, for all the hundreds of thousands of people those doctors have helped over the years!

• Dr. Neal Barnard's Program for Reversing Diabetes: The Scientifically Proven System for Reversing Diabetes Without Drugs  
• Turn Off the Fat Genes: The Revolutionary Guide to Taking Charge of the Genes That Control Your Weight  
• A Physician's Slimming Guide: For Permanent Weight Control  
• Breaking the Food Seduction: The Hidden Reasons Behind Food Cravings---And 7 Steps to End Them Naturally  
• Dr. McDougall's Digestive Tune-Up  
• McDougall Made Easy  
• The



Mcdougall Quick and Easy Cookbook: Over 300 Delicious Low-Fat Recipes You Can Prepare in Fifteen Minutes or Less  
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The McDougall Program for a Healthy Heart: A Life-Saving Approach to Preventing and Treating Heart Disease  
The New McDougall Cookbook: 300 Delicious Ultra-Low-Fat Recipes

Ruth Heidrich gives details of her health and physical training that can be very helpful for anyone who wants to be physically active over a long lifetime. She describes watching a surgeon remove her breast cancer, then gives details of her physical training regime over her subsequent long life as a gifted runner. She wrote in a style that could only be accomplished by an unusually intelligent and well-educated woman sincerely interested in improving the health of others. This book is one of the best available for seniors and also for the younger generation, and should be first place in every library.

This is an incredible book. I purchased it in June of 2006 and as of July 2006 I have already lost weight without any pain and frustration. It is easy to follow the advice and the facts are backed up by the research that was done. I am happy to say I have lost almost 12 lbs and the pounds are continuing to come off. This is an easy read book and it is working for me. I have even given my 20+ year old son a copy. You are never too young to start taking care of your body.

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