

## Weight Training at Age 60 – Go Figure!

By Kathryn Harper

I'll never forget November 20, 2010. Apart from commemorating what would have been my dear mum's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, it was the day I began a new chapter in my life.

For the past eight years, I had been exchanging smiles, hellos and handshakes with a charming gentleman by the name of Vic Keller. Having read articles about him and his fitness program, I always admired him from a distance and thought how great it would be to have someone like Vic to help me improve my physical well-being.

It wasn't until October 2010 that I actually stopped to talk to him, commenting how admirable it was how he had been helping people add quality to their lives. I also read of his gentle approach to everything, backed by a sincere commitment to go the extra mile with each and every client who put themselves in Vic's capable hands. That same morning I told him how I wanted to sign up for Tai Chi and get some good stretching and toning happening. He then introduced me to his program for joint and muscle rehabilitation and encouraged me to join the downtown YMCA/YWCA where Vic meets with his clients. He believed that I could achieve the benefits I was seeking through a gently controlled environment. November 20, 2010 I had my orientation and muscle assessment. I was ready to go for it.

By the beginning of December Vic introduced nutrition counseling to my regime. I reduced sugar in my coffee and served myself a smaller bowl of cereal in the mornings, plus made sure that I added protein to each meal. I began to go to bed earlier and snack less in the evenings, both involuntary actions, due to the addition of ample protein throughout the day. I had more energy, got tired earlier, and ended each day with a new sense of contentment.

By mid-December I no longer experienced low back, neck and shoulder pain that I had been experiencing every day thus reducing the intake of pain medication. The weight resistance training was strengthening and toning some critical areas for me. My range of motion increased, bending was easier, and I was able to fit into a pair of pants that I received as a gift a year and a half earlier that I could not get done up. My winter coat was buttoning easier, and my self-esteem was quickly rising.

By January 2011 I could fit into chairs (with arm rests) that I could not for many years. I was shrinking! And I was very encouraged. My weight wasn't changing, and I wasn't getting my body fat index down as I should have, but I didn't want those to be stress factors. I wanted them all to remain as positive challenges and lifetime goals. I still struggle with balancing everything as the pain levels in my legs are constant and drain my mental and physical energy very quickly. There are some realities in life, and this is one of them. I did have Polio. I was totally paralysed. I was in an iron lung. There were and still are repercussions from all that, but coping is the key. I do what I can when I can and make the most of it.

I enjoy precious playtime with my grandson, Owen. Not only do we enjoy colouring and reading, but he gives my cardio a workout every time we're together and helps in my weight training as I've been lifting and carrying him every week since he was born (2 years ago). He is now about 35 pounds of solid "boy" and I can still lift him up and into a shopping cart. I'm not worth a button at the end of those days with Owen, but I wouldn't miss one moment of them, pain or no pain. Now he has a wee sister, Alice, who is also growing and blessing everyone around her.



Life is worth living, so live it the best way you know how – whatever it takes within your means – go for it! We may not all achieve groundbreaking results, but we will all achieve some sense of accomplishment by saying that we tried and finding at least one area of improvement along the way.