

I was just listening to a Swiss podcast about health. The presenters were talking about free radicals and how to fight them. They first of all listed all the situations in life that cause free radicals to be produced in our bodies: emotional and physical stress, pollution, medicines, a poor diet, alcohol, smoking and more. Jokingly, one of the presenters asked, "What doesn't produce free radicals?" because it seems that everything does. A discussion developed about a healthy life style, the importance of eating right, and how physical activity is crucial to general good health. So, what are good forms of exercise? Walking and swimming are probably the two best; you get the most movement with the least strain. Then there is cycling, running, weight training, ball sports, types of skiing, and yoga. Really, anything that moves your body, uses your muscles, and increases your heart rate is good. There are different benefits to different types of exercise. Some will build muscle, while others will make you flexible. When I was young, the idea of being strong was based on muscle that can lift a lot of weight. Thankfully, now the definition of strength is broader. Weight lifting strength is just one kind, then there is endurance (which is how long you can keep doing something), and flexibility. There are other kinds, as well, but in this podcast, I'm focusing on these three. It's not difficult to keep kids active. I find that my children just need to be given an opportunity to do something physical, and they will take it. While my sons play ball sports, my daughter does gymnastics. Watching her and other older children do gymnastics certainly makes me think of strength. They stretch, they bend, they hang from bars and swing. You can see that they use all of their muscles without even realizing (realising). There are posters in the waiting area that show how, with

the right training, a body can become both flexible and strong, where the muscles are useful and quick, not just big and bulky. Gymnastics reminds me of martial arts: both require speed, accuracy, strength, and flexibility. I hope to introduce my daughter to martial arts at some stage. The physical discipline is admirable, and self defense is very useful. Maybe we could do it together. As she grows up, she needs to develop physical confidence, and as I get older, I need to maintain my flexibility.

Grammar notes

Related vocabulary: free radicals, flexibility, broad, crucial.

1. Eating burned meat releases a lot of free radicals into your body, so be careful when you barbecue.
2. That gymnast has incredible flexibility; she can bend her body into all sorts of positions.
3. The term of strength is very broad; it means many things.
4. It is crucial to get regular exercise and quality food to maintain a healthy life.

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