

Healthy Living[®]

El Paso Times

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ELPASOTIMES.COM/HEALTH

Read even more health and fitness advice for men, women and seniors, as well as watch videos and get healthful tips.

Health watch

YWCA session to teach ways to cope with stress

EL PASO — The YWCA will have a Lunchbox Leadership training session on coping with stress from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday at the Holiday Inn Airport.

The cost is \$20 for YWCA members, and \$25 for nonmembers.

Reservations must be made by 5 p.m. Monday. **Information:** 838-3533.

Times staff report

Feel your breakfast oats in quiz on nutrition

What say we channel our inner Wilfred Brimley and rhapsodize about oatmeal, which may be the best breakfast option

out there? You remember breakfast, don't

you? The

most important meal of the

day? A recent survey

conducted by the International Food Information Council found that 90 percent of respondents called breakfast "important," but only 49 percent copped to eating breakfast daily.

1. Which food has more soluble fiber than oatmeal?

- a) apple
- b) lentils
- c) lima beans

Golden Age fitness

Program at UTEP gets seniors exercising

By **María Cortés González**

El Paso Times

EL PASO — Before most other people start their day, Pat Woodhouse and other senior citizens are getting their morning exercise at Sun Bowl Stadium.

Don't get any mental images of seniors taking slow walks around the stadium or doing simple stretching exercises.

Divided in groups, these invigorated adults are taking turns jumping over small hurdles, performing squats on balances and tossing a medicine ball to each other.



"At first, we used to get sore. We hadn't used those muscles like in a hundred years," Woodhouse joked. "But now we're used to the exercises, and we can jump those hurdles with ease. It's been just awesome."

Perhaps a well-kept secret in the senior community of El Paso, the Physical Fitness in the Golden Age program was started almost three years ago by the University of Texas at El Paso's department of kinesiology, through an annual \$50,000 grant from the Paso del Norte Health Foundation.

The program also is funded in-kind by the University of Texas at El Paso, which provides the fitness site and much of the exercise equipment.

Sandor Dorgo of the kinesiology department designed the program as part of the department's mission in research and community service.

The program is open to seniors 60 and older who have a doctor's recommendation and pay a minimal fee of \$25 a month.

The exercise program started small but has grown quickly, mostly through word of mouth.

These days, about 150 participants, ranging from their 60s to 80s, go to the research department's exercise facility and the Sun Bowl three times a week to exercise.

What appeals to the seniors, Dorgo said, is that they are in a comfortable environment with other people their age who are working together for a common goal.

"Many older adults are discouraged or don't have the confidence to participate in a (traditional) exercise program," he said. "They need an environment that feeds their confidence and where professionals can take the time to work with them."

Dorgo said the exercise program is based on scientific research, which makes it more advanced than other programs. The senior athletes are tested for fitness prior to beginning and periodically afterward to chart their progress.

"We really are looking at the latest research and newest trends to increase their quality of life and to become more functional," Dorgo said. "We focus on the holistic fitness."

As people age, Dorgo explained, they tend to lose functionality, range of motion and flexibility.



Photos by Victor Calzada / El Paso Times

Linda Corral, center, and Kathy Brunk participated in agility drills at Sun Bowl Stadium. About 150 people participate in the Physical Fitness in the Golden Age program at UTEP.



Participants in the exercise program perform stretching exercises.

"Everyday activities — like reaching in a cabinet or taking the stairs — can become difficult later in life," he said.

Dorgo believes the specialized program helps seniors with their motion and flexibility but is also helping with some of their ailments, such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol.

The program is a combination of workouts in the Sun Bowl and weight-training in the facility.

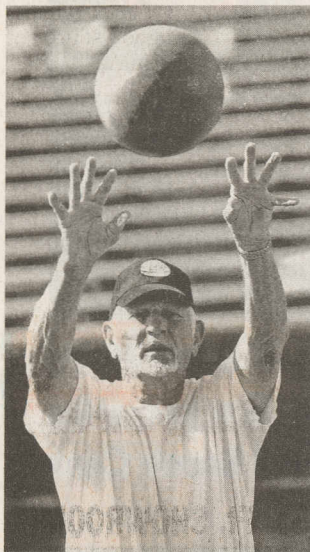
Woodhouse, 64, doesn't have blood pressure or cholesterol problems, but she said the program has improved her health.

Join in

- ▶ **Physical Fitness** in the Golden Age is open to seniors 60 and older who get a doctor's note that they can exercise.
- ▶ **The cost is \$25 a month.** Seniors exercise in 1½-hour sessions, three times a week.
- ▶ **For more information** or to donate to the program: 747-6091.

Please see **Golden 2D**

Continued from 1D



Victor Calzada / El Paso Times

Jim Brown tosses a medicine ball during an exercise session. Seniors exercise about three times a week in the UTEP program.

Golden

Continued from 1D

"I went to the doctor's the other day, and they said my pressure was better than anyone's in there," she said, adding she can now walk around the stadium about four times in six minutes.

She also thrives on the personal attention from professionals.

"They're there to help you and give you enthusiasm that you're doing a good job," she said. "And I'm one to ask if I'm doing something right, and they will tell me."

Anticipating the end of the foundation's grant in January, Dorgo is already working hard to seek other methods of funding for the program. He also welcomes

donations from any businesses and is already thinking of the future for the program.

"My vision for the program is to see it transition and open up more to the community," he said. "I would like to see it grow beyond the boundaries of UTEP and put it out in the recreation centers and collaborate so that we have satellite programs so that it's much more convenient to our seniors."

Enrique Mata, senior program officer for Paso del Norte, said the Golden Age program really set an example of how seniors' lives can be enhanced with regular exercise and hopes it continues.

"It really shows that older adults can significantly improve their health simply with exercise, rudimentary motion and activity. And I

think it will have some lasting ways of change within older adults because of it."

Mata said the Paso del Norte Health Foundation initiatives for 2008 will primarily focus on children and youth.

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