



## LAKE COMO - ITALY

### Surprising Skills That Improve With Age

**Many of us associate ageing with a decline of skills and quality of life. However, the truth is not as black and white as this. While certain skills and functions do tend to suffer as we age, surprisingly there are many abilities that actually improve as we grow older.**

Some studies have shown that happiness is U-shaped, proving that the mid-life crisis is real, with the ages between 40-60 holding the highest amount of stress and responsibility for adults. It seems that happiness increases steadily after this period, with the average 80 year old reporting themselves to be as happy as the average 20 year old.

There is also evidence that your beliefs about ageing can act as a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you are positive about ageing, then your experience will be more positive than if you have negative beliefs about it.

It's not only good news about your mental health though. Studies have also shown that while your short-term memory might decline, other skills such as creativity can actually increase. One of the biggest reasons for a decline in skill and function is the disuse that comes with retirement from work. Keeping active and mentally stimulated can be enough to keep your skills up to speed.

It has also been shown that confidence grows in both genders as we age. Making decisions becomes

easier as we know ourselves better and have a wealth of experience to draw on when a tricky situation arises.

Certain physical skills such as strength and agility might decline, however it seems that other aspects of physical ability might increase, including endurance. There are many triathletes who are in their 70s, 80s, and unbelievably even in their 90s. In the absence of any serious disability, it might be the case that age is an excuse rather than an actual hindrance to being active.



Verbal ability and vocabulary are also skills that improve as we age, which may explain why crosswords are so popular with the elderly. Making the most of your abilities at every age is important, so try not to let age be a barrier to trying new things and keeping active.

**Physiotherapists are dedicated to helping people stay active at any age and can help you with achieving your goals. Speak to your physiotherapist for more information.**



**Miami Physiotherapy  
+  
Lakelands Physiotherapy  
& Allied Health**

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### Brain Teaser

1. What breaks yet never falls, and what falls yet never breaks?
2. I come down, but I never go up. What am I?
3. What came first, the chicken or the egg?

### Shin Splints



Shin splints can easily be confused with other conditions, including stress fractures. Seeing a physiotherapist for correct diagnosis is essential for the right treatment.

# Focus on Calf Tears

## What are they?

The calf muscles refer to a group of muscles at the back of the lower leg that act to point the foot away from the body and play an important role in walking and running. A tear or strain of these muscles occurs when some or all of the muscle fibres are torn or stretched. This is a common injury that can affect anyone from athletes to those with a more relaxed lifestyle.

## How do they happen?

Calf tears are often caused by sudden, forceful movements or overuse of the calf muscles, leading to the rupture or strain of muscle fibers. Common mechanisms of injury are a quick take off during a sports match or simply going for a long walk when not accustomed. Factors that may increase the risk of a calf tear are previous calf tears that have not been fully rehabilitated, tight and weak calf muscles, poor balance and ill fitting footwear.

## What are the symptoms?

Typical symptoms of a calf tear are sharp pain over the site of the tear, especially

with movement, swelling, bruising, and difficulty walking or standing. The severity of the injury can range from mild muscle strain to a complete tear, which will determine the appropriate treatment approach.

## How can physiotherapy help?

The first step in managing calf tears is accurate diagnosis by a medical professional, who is able to rule out other conditions that might mimic a calf tear. They can determine the extent of the damage and create personalised treatment plans based on the patient's specific needs. This ensures that the rehabilitation process addresses the root cause of the injury, leading to better outcomes.

Reducing pain and inflammation is important in the first one to two days following the injury. The muscle may need support during this time, depending on the severity. Over time as the swelling and inflammation subsides, your physiotherapist will help to address any factors that contributed to the injury such as muscle weakness or imbalance.

Calf tears often lead to stiffness and limited range of motion in the affected leg. Physiotherapists implement targeted stretching and range of motion exercises to restore flexibility and prevent the formation of scar tissue that may impede

recovery. Gradually, the patient can regain the ability to move the calf muscle without pain or discomfort.

Rehabilitation past this point will progressively challenge the calf muscles without causing further damage. Strengthening these muscles not only aids in the healing process but also reduces the risk of future calf tears. Proprioception, the body's ability to sense its position in space, is crucial for balance and coordination. Physiotherapy includes specialised exercises that enhance proprioception and balance, reducing the likelihood of re-injury. This aspect of rehabilitation is especially important for athletes and active individuals who need to return to high-intensity activities safely.

**None of the information in this newsletter is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your individual condition.**



Answers: 1. Morning and night. 2. Rain 3. The egg, dinosaurs laid eggs before chickens.

# Spaghetti Aglio e Olio

## Ingredients

400g Spaghetti  
4-6 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced  
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (you can adjust the amount based on your heat preference)  
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil  
1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped  
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated  
Salt and pepper to taste



1. Cook the Spaghetti: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the spaghetti and cook according to the package instructions until al dente. Drain the spaghetti, reserving about 1 cup of the pasta water. Set aside.
2. Prepare the Garlic and Chili Oil: Heat the olive oil in a large pan over medium-low heat while the pasta is cooking. Add the thinly sliced garlic and red pepper flakes to the skillet. Cook gently until the garlic turns golden, and the oil becomes infused with the chilli and garlic flavours. Be careful not to burn the garlic, as it can become bitter.
3. Combine Pasta and Sauce: Add the cooked and drained spaghetti directly into the skillet with the garlic and chilli oil. Toss the pasta gently to coat it evenly with the oil and flavours.
4. Season and Garnish: Season the dish with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Stir in the chopped parsley and half of the grated Parmesan cheese,

**Serve and garnish with parsley and parmesan.**



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