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## LIVING TO BE 100 - IT'S DOABLE

**D**o you want to live a long and healthy life? While we all aspire to that end, few of us do the necessary work to attain good health. It is not really complicated. If you have

killers, such as heart disease, strokes, and diabetes is the next step.

Today, the biggest single problem that gets in the way of health is obesity. Sixty percent of Americans are overweight or obese, making it the major health issue facing not only our children, but adults as well. It is the primary contributor toward hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, elevated cholesterol, sleep apnea, reflux, gallbladder disease, fatty liver, and arthritis. It also raises the risks for breast, colon, and prostate cancer.

Fortunately, all of these conditions are reversible with weight reduction and lifestyle change. Avoidance of salt, fat, and sugars, along with a regular exercise program, can get you on the way to better health and a more attractive physique. Salt, fat, and sugar trigger overeating, and are somewhat addictive. It is no wonder that many of the foods consumed at restaurants are laden with these elements. Learning how to order and what to avoid when eating out is imperative, especially if you find yourself eating out frequently. Reading labels and eating primarily whole foods that are not canned or seasoned allow you to control what is ingested. Exercise can lead to augmenting muscles and decreasing fat, which is the goal.

Why would anyone want to take medications for hypertension, type 2 diabetes,

and high cholesterol if they can be controlled naturally with diet and exercise? But unless you are motivated to commit yourself to a new and healthy lifestyle, it will not happen on its own. Recent data are strongly suggesting that Alzheimer's disease can be averted in those who are and remain physically and mentally active, and very recent data found that obese children and adults actually had smaller brains and poorer memories than normal weight individuals.

There is no quick fix with pills, surgery, or injections, but persistence and hard work will get you to your goal. Jack LaLanne, the health guru of the 1950s often said, "Your waistline is your lifeline." And today there is active discussion of waist measurement replacing BMI (Body Mass Index) as the main obesity indicator.

If you are obese and have medical problems as listed above, then weight loss is preferable under a doctor's supervision so that the medications can be tapered appropriately as you get healthier and more fit. Why not make up your mind to lose weight, get healthy, and be happy? Who knows? You just may live to be 100.

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inherited great genes, you will not have to work as hard. Otherwise, a combination of judicious eating, exercise, a zest for life and enough rest is the first step. Then a plan on how to avoid the biggest