

Introduction

My name is Vladimir Ingerman. I was born in 1940 in the Northern Caucasus of the Soviet Union. In 1941, during the Second World War, my older sister, mother, and I were evacuated to Bukhara, Uzbekistan. While in Bukhara, my mother tragically passed away from typhoid fever. I also fell ill and barely survived.

After the war ended in 1945, life, though still marked by hunger, became surprisingly fascinating. My childhood was spent immersed in nature, free from the constraints of teachers and technology. Together with my tomboy friends, I explored the captivating landscapes of the North Caucasus, studying everything from flora to fauna, including bird nests. While we carefully took one egg at a time for our collections, we did not harm the nests. Snakes, however, were given no such mercy; we killed them, collecting their venom for reasons we never quite understood. We often dug up potatoes to bake over a fire, as hearty meals were rare at home. Independence defined us, and we made decisions on our own while the adults were busy at work.

From those early years, I developed a deep love for life and an unwavering belief that we are all meant to live happily. This passion and faith have only grown stronger with age, fueled by meaningful work, close friendships, love, sports, hiking, and travel. Over the course of my life, I have explored 74 countries and swam in 55 seas and oceans. These trips, many of which are described in the book, have shown me the immense beauty of our planet and its people. It's impossible to see everything in a single lifetime. Yet, every trip revitalizes me, inspiring new ideas and fresh ambitions. The memories of these adventures are treasures, replaying in my mind like a soothing, golden archive.

Professionally, my journey has been equally rewarding. I began in the Field Expedition of Tajikistan, transitioned into scientific circles in Moscow, led the exploration and development of oil and gas fields in Western Siberia, and eventually traveled across the world to the United States. Along the way, I learned the values of resilience and adaptability—skills that have been essential in my pursuit of health and longevity.

Throughout my life, I've prioritized physical activity, mental strength, and meaningful social connections. For me, these three elements form the foundation of a thriving life. I've always made time for sports like tennis, skiing, and windsurfing, which have not only kept my body strong but also sharpened my mind.

This book is my way of sharing the lessons and practices that have guided me to live a vibrant, healthy life. Inside, you'll find practical advice and personal stories about maintaining physical fitness, nurturing mental sharpness, and building supportive social networks. These aren't abstract ideas, they are strategies that have worked for me and can work for you, too.

Aging often comes with challenges, such as fears of losing independence or joy. I understand these concerns, but I firmly believe that with the right mindset and habits, these hurdles can be

overcome. This book is meant to inspire you and equip you with the tools to not just age gracefully, but to live fully.

My goal is simple: to motivate you to approach each day with energy and enthusiasm. Growing older does not mean letting go of dreams or adventures, it's an opportunity to pursue them with greater wisdom and passion. Together, we will explore topics such as staying mentally sharp, fostering a sense of community, and tackling health challenges head-on. Each chapter is filled with strategies and insights tailored for your own life.

There's no denying it - health is a crucial ingredient for happiness. Unfortunately, many people tie health too closely to medicine. Modern medicine, though valuable, often operates as a business. It is an ideal business model may seem to prioritize keeping patients alive but in a chronic state of illness, requiring frequent consultations. While most doctors strive to follow the Hippocratic Oath, they are bound by the circumstances of this system. However, for those of us who are proactive about our health, we can often avoid fitting into this model altogether - though, of course, there are times when medical care is essential.

The brilliance of our bodies lies in their ability to communicate when something is wrong, often through pain or discomfort. One of the best remedies is increasing blood flow to the affected area, achieved through specific exercises. For example, when my knees started troubling me at age 73, I experienced an acute episode during a lively dance at a friend's anniversary celebration. The next day, I flew to a ski resort but could only manage the gentlest of green slopes.

Upon returning, I visited a doctor who, after a thorough (and expensive) examination, diagnosed my issue as age-related and recommended either surgery or regular injections. I refused both. Instead, I began meticulously exercising the muscles around my knees daily. This includes both regular squats and various exercises with an expander, you will find their descriptions in subsequent chapters. I also practiced kneeling and holding a seated position where my thighs were fully bent. At first, this position caused significant pain, but I believed that it was crucial for improving blood flow to my knees. Gradually, I increased the time spent in this position, enduring the discomfort because it was a small price for healing.

For exercises to be effective, they should push you slightly beyond your comfort zone without overstraining your body. Only ourselves can determine the ideal level of exertion, and no one else can do the exercises for us. Within a month, my efforts paid off. I returned to playing tennis without requiring surgery, injections, or medications. Eleven years later, I still play tennis and ski, enjoying the activities I love.



Colorado 2008



Florida 2016

The desire for a long, healthy, and happy life is universal. However, living well into old age without the common impediments of aging requires effort - a joyful effort, I might add. At 84 years young, I live as fully as I did when I was 40. My friends, some of whom are decades younger, tell me that I inspire them. They urged me to write this book, convinced that my experiences could help millions.

This book isn't just about health. It's about maintaining a positive outlook, self-control, and a zest for life. It's about loving yourself, listening to your body, and awakening the immense reserves of strength within. Whether it's through simple exercises, a youthful mindset, or indulging occasionally in good wine or cognac, life is meant to be savored.

If you believe that a certain age brings limitations, then those limitations will come to you. I choose not to dwell on aging - I simply don't have time for it. Youthful thinking opens doors to the extraordinary, no matter your age.

I invite you to join me on this fulfilling adventure. Together, we'll uncover ways to live actively and joyfully into our senior years. This book is not merely a guide; it's a companion, here to inspire you every step of the way. Here's to a life rich in vitality and happiness. Happy reading!