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The Older Diver

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Genetic clocks

To my knowledge there is no specified age limit to sport diving. Chronological age and physiological age can differ markedly; and each individual ticks to his own genetic clock. This having been said, most elderly divers are not capable of sustaining the work load required by all but the least physically demanding dives. The majority of elderly divers do not exercise regularly or adequately. Physical training can definitely minimize the decline in physical capacity in older divers.

Good screening necessary

Older divers have a higher incidence of chronic diseases; i.e., cardiovascular disease and chronic lung disease. Atherosclerosis affects

the blood flow to the brain, heart, kidneys and limb muscles and therefore the function of these organs. Appropriate screening evaluations of the heart and coronary arteries with exercise testing is useful in older divers before instituting a diving program.

"I'm gonna live (dive) forever!"

If a 90 year old is in good physical condition and is mentally alert enough to do adequate problem solving at depth, then I would personally have no qualms in certifying him to dive.

Ask for Help

Most very old divers arrange for a personal dive guide to assist them in suiting up, donning gear, managing their entrances and exits from the water and accompanying them during the dive. The problem comes in getting us old GCFD's ("geezer-codger-fogy- duffers") to recognize when the time comes to ask for help! It's darned hard to get an old surgeon out of the O.R. - but doubly hard to get an old diver out of the water!

Older-Safer!

The obverse may also be operative; the older diver is more likely to take fewer chances and to obey the rules. There are few 70 year-old 'Buccaneers'!



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Diver's Alert Network

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