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PROFILE

Beating The Clock Profile A Triumphant Goal To Look And Feel Younger

In addition to her careful attention to diet, rigorous exercise regime, voracious reading on well-being and longevity, spiritual beliefs, companionship and love of family and friends, and formidable list of vitamins and supplements, Shirlana "Lana" Neander has another secret weapon in her health arsenal-pets. "I attribute a lot of our health to our animals," says the 49-year-old Neander, who lives southeast of Chicago with her extended family and four cats. "Patting animals lowers your blood pressure and your pulse, and if you respect animal life, you will respect human life, just as if you love others, you will love yourself."

Lana, who's lived with cats, dogs, tropical fish, rabbits, hamsters and mice, is a household pet judge in the American Cat Fanciers Association and at 4H shows, and also writes articles about cats. Today, when she's not being a stay-at-home aunt to her eight-year-old nephew, Jacob, she's at work on a book for animal lovers and history buffs that's set in the early 20th century and chronicles the life of a cat named Beauregard. She has worked hard to create a healthy, nontoxic home environment, that includes only environmentally safe products. So conducive to long life is this safe haven, that it's not unusual for a Neander pet to live to be 20 years old. Lana has the same long life span in mind for herself, and she intends to look as young as possible for the duration.



"I'll be 50 in December," she says. "[Chronological age] used to bother me a lot, but not any more because I know that biological age has nothing to do with your actual age-it has to do with how you feel, and biologically I feel like I'm in my late 20s."

Lana's health course was set shortly after she turned ten, when bad eating habits and a lack of exercise had left her overweight and unhappy. Her very progressive mother, Shirley, who happened to be a professional model, took charge-throwing Lana's beloved chocolate syrup in the trash and stocking the refrigerator with fresh vegetables, fruits and lean meats. Then came regular mother and daughter bicycle rides and daily doses of multi-vitamins and Vitamin C. As the weight began coming off, Lana noticed that her moodiness lifted as well and her frequent headaches disappeared. Her grades even improved. It was a life-altering experience.

Over the years, Lana continued to battle health issues, including her tendency to gain weight, hypoglycemia, asthma, allergies and debilitating menstrual migraines, all of which were quick to punish her if she strayed from her strict regime. Her spiritual faith helped her transform these problems into blessings. She now understands that if she didn't have to be so careful about what she puts into her system, she wouldn't be-and then she might actually feel and look her age.

Though Lana says she isn't naturally athletic, exercise is an important component to her life. She typically alternates a 45-minute walk one day with a 45-minute weight training session another. After trying out short repetitions of heavy weights, she modified her workout to include multiple repetitions with lighter, five to ten pound weights, so as not to overstress her immune system.

Of course, diet plays a key role as well. A typical maintenance diet for Lana starts with fruit and a bowl of cereal in the morning, then an egg-white omelet with onions and peppers for lunch and regular snacks throughout the remainder of the day, such as fresh fruit and raw vegetables. She avoids meat, preferring instead to get her protein from soy products such as garden burgers and tofu. Fat-free dairy products are permitted and she keeps plenty of sugar free popsicles and jello on hand to satisfy her cravings for sweets. Eight glasses of water a day are a must, as is plenty of green tea. When she's trying to take off pounds, she uses Chromium Picolinate in the morning as well as Phenylalanine capsules to suppress her appetite and L-Carnitine to burn fat. If her blood sugar drops as she diets, leaving her with a headache, she's found that letting a Co-enzymated B6 tablet dissolve under her tongue will quickly relieve the pain.

Though once viewed as a "kook" by her friends because of her early embrace of vitamins, Lana now takes pride in her foresight and continues to expand her daily regimen as her research into new areas of health dictates. She and her entire family went on Life Extension Mix in 1983, the year her mother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. "It's a basic," she says. "I never miss it, even if I'm in a hurry." Though Mrs. Neander ultimately lost her life to the disease in 1989, she battled bravely. Today, Lana's 76-year-old father, Raymond, her sister, Lori Niemeyer and Jacob all consume a variety of nutrients and vitamins, as well as Life Extension Mix everyday. Raymond still plays golf three times a week, chainsaws, and helps with Jacob's Little League team. Jacob himself

is seldom sick.

Lana's own list of vitamins and nutrients is extraordinarily comprehensive. For brain enhancement she typically uses Ginkgo Biloba, Cognitex and DMAE, and just added Phosphatidylserine capsules. Twice a week she turns to RNA capsules to help both her brain and her skin. Since she tries to keep her polyunsaturated fats low, she uses evening primrose oil and Mega Soy helps her fight cancer. In order to build muscle during her weight training, Lana uses Creatine. She tried Melatonin for awhile, because she had read so many wonderful things about it, but found that even a .5-mg. dose made it hard for her to wake up in the morning.

Lana fights off the wintertime blues by regular sittings in front of her sunbox, whose light helps increase her level of serotonin. St. John's Wort also helps lift her spirits and she boosts her immune system to ward off colds during the winter with the help of Thymic Immune Factors, which contains Goldenseal and Echinacea. Garlic capsules also work well if she feels a sickness coming on. When she stops the Goldenseal and Echinacea, she immediately begins taking Acidophilus to replenish the bacteria in her intestines.

To help with her menstrual moodiness, cramps and migraines, Lana turns to a host of products. Kava Root works well for PMS symptoms and by starting to take DHEA the week before her menstrual period begins, Lana is able to avert the migraines that result from the estrogen drop. "Now, if I forget to mark the date [to begin DHEA] on the calendar, I get a headache," she says.

Because she uses DHEA she turns to other nutrients, such as Coenzyme Q10, to help balance its effects. Initially, Lana used 10 mgs of CoQ10 daily, but recently read that upping that dose to 100 mgs would help prevent gingivitis. This sparked the beginning of a crusade to protect her gums in which she stepped up her Vitamin C intake in an effort to fight tartar buildup and began using Life Extension mouthwash. Today her gums are so healthy that she has been able to extend her regular cleanings from three months to six months. Two friends, a dentist and a periodontist, were so impressed by these results that they now recommend the same regime to their own patients.

And, so that people will continue to mistake her for being in her late 20s, Lana uses Rejuvenex and gives herself a Living Skin organic mask a couple of times a week. She finds it helpful to wash her face with sugar, noting that it draws out the bacteria in her skin. L-Cysteine capsules not only help keep her lungs clear, but also give a healthy shine to her hair and help keep it long.

Lana knows the list is long, but she also knows it's working. "People say to me, 'Why do you take so many things? You're young and you're in perfect health,' and I tell them that I intend to stay this way-and that's why," she says. "I have an open mind and try to read as much as I can. If I think something will help prevent the aging process or boost my immune system, I'm going to try it. I know I can control the aging process with the help of organizations like Life Extension that provide the resources to help do it responsibly."

Twig Mowatt

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