

> KEEP FIT

Someone to keep you motivated

A 68-year-old cancer survivor turns his heart health around with a personal trainer

TALIA WOOLDRIDGE
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

After retiring from an accounting career three years ago, cancer survivor Pierre Bocti decided to make his body and health his top priority.

He hired a personal trainer in 2014, shortly before his 69th birthday, and within eight months of working out, dropped 30 pounds and lost four inches from his waistline. More importantly, his strength and heart health improved.

So much so, that Bocti's cardiologist was amazed earlier this year when the score of his treadmill stress test — measuring his heart, EKG, and respiratory rate changed dramatically. The scores moved from below average (within the 65th percentile with an impaired fitness level) to within the 95th percentile. His incline on the treadmill also increased from 8 to 14 degrees.

"The results were amazing," Bocti said.

"Actually, the cardiologist's jaw dropped. He was so impressed with my cholesterol and said, 'Your stress test results are phenomenal!'"

Bocti credits his progress to personal trainer, Igor Klibanov. "I've been with Igor for two years and he's a very caring, knowledgeable trainer," Bocti said.

"Working out is hard, but Igor makes it easy and always finds the answers to all of my questions about my health and nutrition."

Inevitably, the need for proper exercise and nutrition increases as we age and the body slows down. When executed correctly, strength training and cardio exercise can have great benefits. It's that balancing act between eating and exercising sensibly that can help manage common conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure and cardiovas-

cular health.

"What happens as we get older? We get weaker, our endurance declines, cholesterol rises, blood sugar rises, blood pressure rises, and there are other negative effects," said Klibanov, who is 29 and the CEO of Fitness Solutions Now in Markham, Ont. He is also the author of *Stop Exercising! The Way You Are Doing It Now*.

"What does strength training and cardio do? It makes you stronger, gives you more endurance, improves cholesterol profiles, blood sugar, blood pressure, and (has) many other positive effects," Klibanov said.

"In other words, exercise is the ultimate anti-aging treatment. Never mind all the fancy, high-tech methods. Sometimes, the low-tech is the most effective."

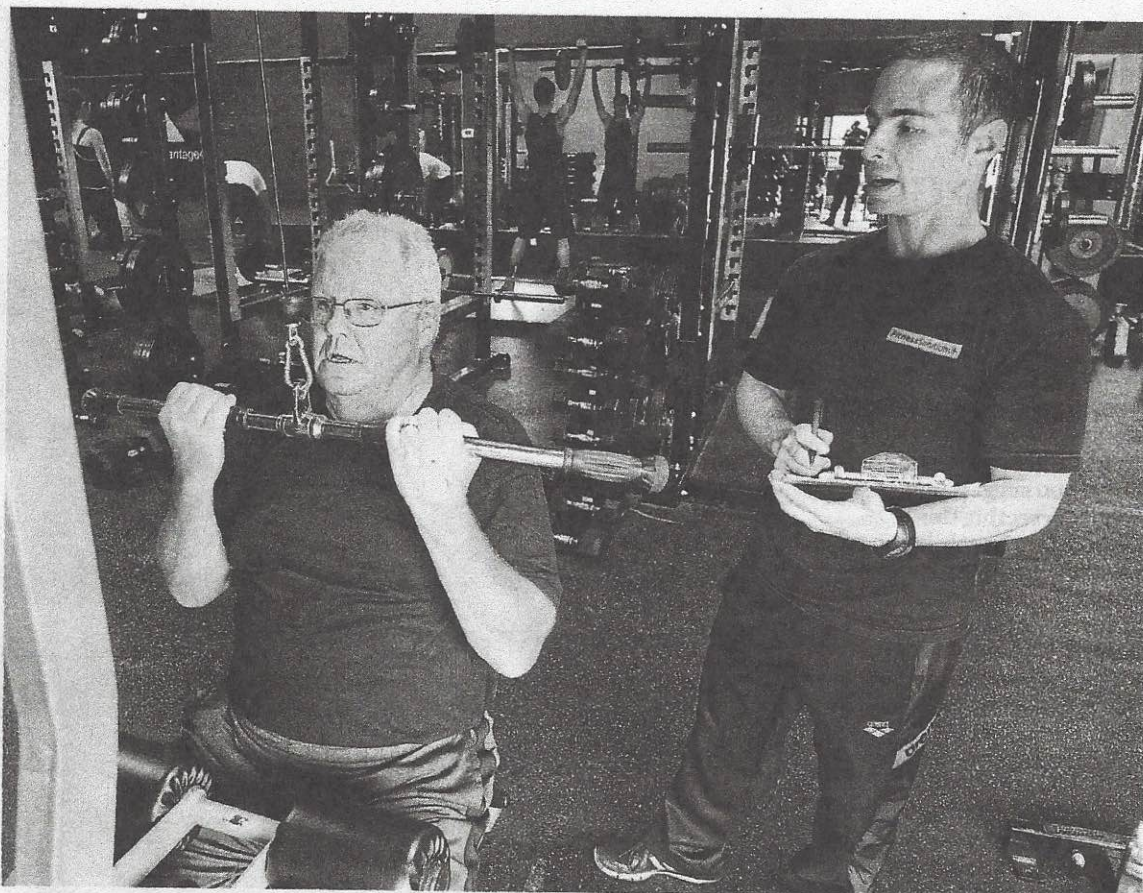
Dr. Paul Oh, medical director of the Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Program at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, University Health Network (UHN) agrees.

"Engaging in regular physical activity is critically important across the entire age spectrum, but especially so for seniors since muscle mass, bone strength and fitness decline steadily as we get older unless we purposely intervene," Oh said.

Oh helps run the Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation program at the Toronto Rehab Institute and the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre at the UHN.

In Toronto, the six-month supervised education and lifestyle management program sees approximately 2,400 people a year, including those recovering from heart attacks, surgery or living with complex heart conditions. The UHN now collaborates with 80 cardiac rehab sites through the Cardiac Rehabilitation Network of Ontario (CRNO), servicing approximately 18,000 patients annually.

According to Oh, "a simple program of walking at a moderate pace 30 minutes a day and light strength-



AARON HARRIS FOR THE TORONTO STAR

Igor Klibanov guides his client Kent Hawkins, 61, through his weight training at Advantage 4 Athletes in Markham.

ening exercises with a rubber band, dumbbell or even a soup can twice a week can significantly improve heart health, blood pressure, cholesterol and sugar control, and bone strength. It can also improve mood, memory and brain function."

When it comes to exercise, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. But navigating a gym can be intimidating, even dangerous without supervision. A reclining leg press machine, for example, is not suitable for those over 50 with high blood pressure, as any exercise that exerts legs above the head can raise blood pressure. Similarly, for best results, a cardiovascular stress test should be done on a steep incline, not using a stationary bike or flat treadmill — something only an expert would know.

Developing a proper regime should take into account an individual's overall physical condition and health history, particularly if that person is on medication such as a beta blocker, which keeps the heart rate down.

This is why hiring an experienced personal trainer can pay off.

"Education and motivation are the two reasons to hire a personal trainer," said Klibanov. "Some people don't need the motivation, but benefit from education around correct posture and designing a workout routine."

Trainer expertise varies, as do rates. According to Klibanov, hourly rates can range from \$40 to \$185 per hour, while credentials may be a three-day certification course or a four-year, post-secondary degree in kinesiology or nutrition.

Notable certifications include those from Canadian Fitness Professionals (CanFit Pro), the Certified Professional Trainer's Network (CPTN) and the Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology (CSEP).

Beyond credentials, look at the trainer's success rate assisting clients with similar goals, and health profiles, to your own, and review the initial one-on-one assessment. Kli-

banov — who charges \$90 per hour, has a kinesiology degree and regularly takes courses to improve his knowledge and skill set — uses a three-part assessment including an extensive questionnaire. He tailors an exercise program and adds nutritional supplements when necessary.

"If you're not eating correctly nor taking the right nutritional supplements, you won't achieve the desired results with just exercise," Klibanov said.

Even if you have always been active, a personal trainer can keep you motivated and exercising safely into your senior years.

David, a 71-year-old architect (who did not want his last name used), credits working with a trainer with bringing him out of a prediabetic phase.

"A personal trainer helps keep you on track," David said. "But you need a good trainer — one who understands nutrition and diet. You can't put a price on your health."