



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Defusing the Aging Process – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Kenneth Cooper

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk a radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: Well welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, the apostle Paul reminds us that our bodies are temples devoted to the Holy Spirit. Most of us understand this metaphor to signify our responsibility of spiritual purity and our dedication to God. However, this verse also implies that it's our duty as well to care for our physical bodies and we certainly can do more to help others if we are in good health.

On today's classic program, Dr. Dobson sits down with revolutionary health and fitness expert Dr. Kenneth Cooper. For more than 50 years, Dr. Cooper has studied the correlation between diet and exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. With his findings, Dr. Cooper published a book called *Aerobics*, which was read by millions due to the popularity of his groundbreaking research. He was named "The father of aerobics." Dr. Cooper has written 18 other books that collectively have sold more than 30 million copies. He also started the Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas, Texas and founded the Cooper Institute as well. This nonprofit organization is determined to promote lifelong healthy habits in this culture.

Dr. Cooper has been a frequent speaker and an outspoken advocate for aerobic fitness lecturing in over 50 countries, and he remains in great health having run over 38,000 miles in his lifetime and now has reached the age of 92. Today he and Dr. Dobson will be discussing various unhealthy factors that actually speed up the aging process. Dr. Cooper will also look at technological advances in medicine and will explain the connection between heart disease and obesity. Now as we begin, Dr. Cooper is talking about how the Baby Boom generation neglected their physical health. So let's begin today's program with our guest, Dr. Ken Cooper and our very own Dr. James Dobson right here on Family Talk.

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: Well, hopefully you maintain the power of youth as you grow older and don't lose it. For example, this book was written for the baby boomers who really led the exercise movement in the late sixties, early seventies and throughout the

eighties, but unfortunately as of 1996, every minute six baby boomers are turning 50 years of age and they haven't kept up the practice of preventative medicine that they practiced over the years, and that's one reason why we're the fattest we've ever been in the history of this country and our level of fitness in our children has really gone to pot. So what I'm trying to do with this book-

Dr. James Dobson: You said 53% of Americans are overweight?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: Above 25%, as far as the BMI is concerned and that's exactly true and that's a tragedy when we become so oriented reducing the fat in our diet and reducing the cholesterol in our diet. But what's happened too is Americans been so enamored with buying low fat or no fat foods. They're ignoring the fact that there's a lot of calories in those foods that have no fat or low fat. From 1971 until 1996, during that 25 year period, we cut our fat consumption way down, but we increased weight tremendously because we increased the chloric consumption per day by 300 calories. In other words, in 1996, we're consuming 300 calories more per day than we were in 1971. It's pure and simple. If you consume more calories whether they come from protein or carbohydrates or fat, you're going to gain weight unless you can burn up those calories.

So that's why we have to stop and regroup here as far as the baby boomers are concerned. So this book was written primarily for the baby boomers to try to stimulate those 76 million people who were born between 1946 and 1964 to regain what they had during the '70s, '80s and '90s. So that's the first step here. But the other thing we're still convinced in as I indicate in the book, that you can only slow down the aging process. In many cases, you can reverse it and you find examples in the book of people in advanced years like 75, 80, 85, 90 years of age who are still enjoying life to the fullest and in every case you'll find that one thing is common throughout all this is they have remained physically active over the years. As I say in the book too, if you want to slow down aging, there's three things must be eliminated in this order. They are number one, cigarette smoking, number two, inactivity and number three, obesity. Those are three things that accelerate aging. If you'll control those, you can slow down the aging process and in many cases even reverse it.

Dr. James Dobson: In 1968 you wrote that book *Aerobics*, which took the country and indeed the world by storm. I'm sure you had no idea what was about to happen to you and that started, as I understand it, a 22-year fall in a heart disease or deaths from heart disease, which has now begun to reverse itself and people are moving away from the things that made that possible. How come?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: That's exactly correct. Now, from 1968 until 1990 during the 22-year period that you mentioned, we had a drop-off of decimal heart attacks by 48%. All right? Then it started flattening out in 1990 and now we're only down 52%. That is the problem in those days.

Dr. James Dobson: Has technology done just about what it's going to do for a time?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: You see in the first 22 years, about two thirds of that reduction in decimal heart attacks, we attributed to Americans changing their lifestyle. One third was due to the technology, what do we do to change our lifestyle? During that 22-year period that resulted in a tremendous decrease in decimal heart attacks and an unprecedented increase in longevity. The child born in 1970 had life expectancy of 70 years. In 1960 it was 69 years. Each decade we expect a one-year increase in longevity, but because that decrease in decimal heart attacks during the 22-years, the child born in 1990 had life expectancy of almost 76 years. It was tripling what we'd anticipate during that 20 year period, and so that's something we have to think about too, the aging of our population.

But what did we do? Number one, we put smoking in great numbers. Number two, we have better control of high blood pressure. Number three, we changed our diets to extent that fewer people were eating fat and cholesterol without question. Number four, we learned about how to control stress. And number five, more people were exercising. Those are the five things that we did during that 22 year period that primarily counted for that reduction in decimal heart attacks. But what's happened from there on though, we slowed down 48% to 52% and most of that improvement now is because of modern technology. We have gone back to the old habits unfortunately, but modern technology has kept up to an extent that we haven't reversed it completely, but we've gone about as far as we can go with modern technology. Look at the things we're doing now. We weren't doing back in the '70s, such things as heart transplants, such things as balloon angioplasty, bypass surgery, and now they have these new laser technologies where you can actually open up those occluded vessels, all those technologies. How much farther can we go? I don't think we can go much farther and we're going to have to stop and regroup and go back to the basics that made it so successful during those early years.

Dr. James Dobson: Are people really exercising less now than they were 5, 6, 8, 10 years ago?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: Give a statistic from the Gallup Post in 1968, we had 24% of our adult population exercising and less than 100,000 joggers. We reached the peak by 1984, we had 36 million people claiming to be jogging regularly and up to 69% of the people were involved in some type of exercise program. But from 1984 on, it started dropping off. By 1990, we were down to about 35% to 40% of Americans were exercising regularly, but we still had about 20, 25 million joggers. That's dropped on down since 1990, but still we have about 25 to 30 million joggers. That's an interesting statistic, but the numbers people exercising have dropped way back down again.

So we're trying to regenerate that with this book is one of the hopes of this book. But along with this too, though, Jim, as you've mentioned this a minute ago, it was a devastating condition, a very terrible condition of our children because first of all, the baby boomers didn't bring their kids along with them. They exercised, but they didn't encourage their kids to exercise. They tried to follow a diet and lose weight, but their kids didn't do the same thing. They were too engrossed with computers and with video games and things of that type.

Dr. James Dobson: And now the internet, which is taking their time.

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: Are the implications for that 40 or 50 years from now?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: No question. We're going right back up to where we were before 1968. We're going to see an exponential increase in epidemic and heart disease and we're going to see a falloff in the aging of our population. We anticipated by the year 2000, the average life expectancy of a child born in America would be 78 years. It's only 76 years. It hasn't changed much. We anticipated by the year of 2030 we'd have a million Americans over 100 years of age. We have 64,000 right now, but that's not happening either, and we're beginning to see that all this obesity and inactivity, and all the things that we're doing is taking its toll. So all the benefits that we've had over the last 25 to 30 years will go for naught unless people stop and regroup, take a self-evaluation and follow some of the principles in this book.

For example, I can tell the listening audience that is overweight that if you'll just change the way you eat, the way you consume your food, if you consume 25% of your calories for breakfast, 50% for lunch and 25% of the evening meal, always try to eat before 7:00 at night and eliminate snacking, the majority of you will lose weight if you're overweight.

If you don't need to lose weight, then 25% of your calories for breakfast, 30% for lunch, and then 45% the evening meal. Distribute the calories throughout the day if you don't need to lose weight. But the other thing that you'll do if you'll exercise prior to the evening meal, that will suppress your appetite and the way most Americans abuse their diet and abuse their weight is they consume 60% of their calories after 6:00 at night. Between 6:00 and 10:00 PM evening meal snacking, your body has all that fuel circulating and it reaches its peak four to six hours later and your fast asleep. There's no way you can burn up those calories. And so if you have your heaviest meal before 1:00 in the afternoon, you'll burn it up before you go to bed at night.

By changing my dietary habits, exercising before the evening meal, it does several things for me. Number one, it suppresses my appetite, makes me thirsty, but not hungry. That's a very important thing for controlling the caloric consumption of the evening meal. But number two is something that's now reached in scientific literature. When I go out to run my two or three miles at 6:30 at night, then I find my resting heart rate's about 48 beats a minute. When I run, it goes up to 170. As soon as I finish within five minutes, it's back down to about 95, but it takes two hours to get back to 48 because I'm repaying the slow part of the oxygen debt. During that two hour period, I eat my evening meal, I have stoked the furnace, my metabolism is up, and so what I eat at the evening meal is more effectively burned up. It's a very, very important point for weight control.

Dr. James Dobson: Speaking personally, I like to get out of bed in the morning and go right straight to a treadmill. By doing that in the morning, it may not be the best time to do it, but I can get into a routine that is never interfered with by the activities of my day.

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: Let me comment on that because over the years we've tried to decide the best times that to exercise. Four good times early morning, during the lunch hour, particularly if you want to lose weight, just eat something light and then after you finish your exercise before the evening meal, physiologically the best time to exercise, but then at least two hours after the evening meal, those are the four good times. The most consistent exercise over the years has always been the early morning exercise.

Dr. James Dobson: How much exercise is needed for health?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: For 40 years I've been trying to answer that question in my old book. Back in 1968, I said you had to run, you work up to running three miles five days a week. You had to get the aerobic training effect, all those beautiful things that occur in the body. Your resting heart rate goes down, your blood pressure goes down, you increase the blood supply to the heart. All these things we collectively call the training effect, but we thought that until 1989 that unless you exercise vigorously and got aerobic training effect, exercise might make you feel good, but it wasn't doing anything else. But yet, Dr. Steven Blair from our center took some 13,400 healthy men and women and followed them for about 8.6 years. They were all healthy. He looked at their levels of fitness measured by their treadmill time versus all causes mortality, heart attacks, strokes, diabetes and deaths from heart attacks.

And he found during that 8.6 year period, those people were healthy but totally sedentary, had a death rate from heart disease was quite high as compared to the people, the top 20 percentile. And so we described a new category of fitness, we call the Health and Longevity Fitness. We now have three categories of fitness. We have the sedentary and there's at least 48 million Americans in this category now who are totally sedentary, but they're healthy. That's about 20 percentile.

The next 40 percentile on the fitness scale is called health and longevity, and the top 40 percentile is called aerobic fitness. We still have that. What does it take to get health and longevity fitness? Walking two miles in 30 minutes three times a week, can't walk that fast. That's four miles per hour as you know Jim. Or you walk two miles in 35 minutes and do that four times a week or two miles in 40 minutes at three miles per hour pace, and do that five times a week. Or walk three miles and 45 minutes twice a week or have 2, 45 minute aerobic dance classes per week. If you listing audience knows the aerobics program, you should say you had to use, take it 30, 35 points a week. That translates only 15 points a week that you need. And our study has clearly show us, been duplicated by other organizations now that just avoiding inactivity, Jim, is the

first step. Now who doesn't have time to go out and walk the dog for 30 minutes three times a week?

Dr. James Dobson: And you really can see an improvement in general fitness and a lowering of the death rate-

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: And increase in longevity.

Dr. James Dobson: ... by that small amount of activity?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: It'll increase your lifespan by two and a half years.

Dr. James Dobson: What does walking do for you?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: Well, many things, but the other thing too I want to elaborate on though, 30 minutes doesn't even have to be continuous. It could be 10 minutes, three times a day just incorporating walking up down a flight of stairs, walking to work, getting off of the bus or however you're transportation to work, parking your car farther away from work and walking more than you used to do. That could all be incorporated if you just have little bits here and there throughout the day collectively, if you get 30 minutes most days of the week, you'll get some training effect from that.

Dr. James Dobson: We are talking about the book *Regaining the Power of Youth* at any age. You talk in here about the concept called targeting. Explain what you mean by that?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: It's a unique concept. Over the years we've had just general recommendations for people go out and exercise and do some weight training, whatever it may be. But this concept is targeting the particular needs of the individuals. I use as a reference in the book when I went to Russia many years ago and was in Leningrad and I went to the Institute for Physical Culture and I noticed how they were training their Olympic rowers and they actually put transducers throughout their body and tried to find out which muscle is being used the most during that rowing activity to prepare for the Olympic competition. And so they found that the bicep or the tricep, or the quadricep muscles are being used. And so then they developed training programs specifically designed to develop those muscles. That's targeting, that's targeting from musculoskeletal standpoint. We have broadened this to the whole field of wellness, targeting.

What is your problem? Cigarette smoking. What is your problem? Drinking. What is your problem? Obesity. What is your problem? Inactivity. What is your problem? Your diet. Target. And then we talk about many things like the trilogy of stretching, and strengthening, and endurance type of activities of that type, stretching and strengthening, and stretching, and those are very, very important as we get older to regain the power of youth. I know for a fact, and you'll see in the book too, we talk about changing your program as you get older. This is the targeting concept that I used to say, "All you had to do was go out and do your

aerobics, just walk, run, cycle or swim." And now we know as you get old, if you don't bring some musculoskeletal conditioning along with that, you might be able to run three miles and 24 minutes but can't pick up a sack of groceries without pulling your back out.

And that's why the recommendation of the book now is as follows, if you're 30 years of age, you spend 80% of your exercise program aerobically, walking, running, cycling, swimming, but then 20% you spend musculoskeletal conditioning working on the weights, calisthenics that's at 30s. In your 40s it drops to 70% in 30s. If you're 50, 60 and 40. In my age past 60, it should be 55% aerobic and 45% musculoskeletal conditioning. And you're going to start needing that more and more as I do. I found that too.

One thing I discovered, Jim with this concept is that at 55 years of age I could run three miles, four miles at about an eight-minute pace without too much difficulty, but all of a sudden I couldn't ski more than two hours and I love to ski as you know, without my quads burning so bad had to stop and rest. I couldn't believe that. How can I be such great aerobically condition and I couldn't even ski more in two hours without getting such fatigue it had to stop? And the answer is the specificity, that's targeting, the specificity of training. So what did I do 13 years ago? I started doing weight training, concentrating on the quads and on my birthday, March the 4th 68 years of age just a few weeks ago, I skied seven hours that day without a single problem.

Dr. James Dobson: This program goes by so fast and especially when we have a guest like this with so much to say and yet we have indicated that we're going to let this big audience here or some members of it express their questions and we just have a few minutes left, so let's do that. If somebody would like to ask a question, we'll pass the microphone to you.

Patrick Hill: My name is Patrick Hill and I'm from Groton, New York and I was wondering what kind of foods are best to eat to keep your blood pressure low?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: Good question in one of my books, *Controlling Hypertension*, I talked about ways that you can control blood pressure physiologically without having to resort to medications which are expensive. They have side effects. The effectiveness wears out. These things, number one, just lose weight if you want to control your blood pressure. Number two is to reduce the sodium or salt in the diet. That's the food that you're going to have to cut way down any type of salty foods you must eliminate. Number three, eliminate or restrict beverage alcohol to no more than two ounces per day. Alcohol increases the blood pressure. Number four, again, back to the food. You have deficiencies in vitamin C, potassium, magnesium and calcium all relate to hypertension in one form or another.

Next on the list, you have to reduce the intake of saturated fats and high fat foods to control your blood pressure. And next on the list is increase the roughage in the diet, fresh fruits and vegetables. That's number six. Number

seven then is use stress management techniques to control high blood pressure using bowel feedback if necessary. And then finding number eight is aerobic exercise protection from developing high blood pressure and can be used to treat high blood pressure. So you see at four of those that I mentioned, three or four that I mentioned are related to food intake.

Dr. James Dobson: Question over here.

Shelley Kimball: My name's Shelley Kimball and I'm from a small dot in Idaho called Carrie. And I have a question. I've been on hormone replacement therapy since I was 21 years old and I'm now 25 and I've heard, but I cannot find any information that I can control this without the medicine by diet and exercise and I was wondering if there was anything you could tell me about that?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: Well, I'm really happy you asked that question because in this book we're talking about, we've talked about that at length. In fact, there's five different blocks situation that women can get into to answer the question whether you even need hormone replacement therapy. All right, as I tell my postmenopausal of women, the good Lord's provided you with a way to overcome the harmful effects of menopause physiologically, what are the three things that happen when you go through the menopause? Number one, your HDL or protective type of cholesterol drops. Number two, you increase the risk of osteoporosis or brittle bone disease. And number three, you have menopausal symptoms. Now, menopausal symptoms are transient. Most women get through that in 6 to 12 months maximum. The other two are very important things. Now women start having an increase of heart attacks after they go through the menopause and actually more women die of heart attacks annually than men, but they die later in life. That's the situation there.

So again, what we can do now with exercise, and no one argues about this, if you get involved in a good aerobic exercise program, you can actually build up and maintain a high level of HDL cholesterol just as effective as you can by taking postmenopausal estrogen.

Bone density. There's a great study, it is a book written a few years ago entitled *Strong Women Stay Young* And in this book, they were able to show that women with an average age of 61 years who were postmenopausal at least five years, and they found that in a 50-week program exercising only twice a week for 45 minutes and then taking 800 milligrams of calcium daily, they actually reversed the bone loss and built up new bone in the back and the hip without hormone replacement therapy. Ladies, the good Lord provided you with a means of being able to accommodate and overcome the harmful effects of the menopause without taking hormone replacement therapy in the majority of cases.

Dr. James Dobson: Over here.

PJ McCilly: Hi, my name is PJ McCilly. I'm from Moundsville West Virginia and it's a two-part question. First of all, you talked about the slowing down the process of aging and my question is can we really prolong life or just enhance the quality of the life we have? And the reason I ask that is, it seems to me that God appointed us, called us into the world and he'll call us out when he's ready. And so my question, something I'm personally struggling with is I have a hard time justifying a half hour a day, an hour a day of working out because it seems so self-centered when the Christian life seems to be other-centered and I could be doing other things.

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: "For you're bought with a price glorify God in your body as well as your spirit." Where does that come from? That's pretty definitive there.

Dr. James Dobson: But may I read it? 1 Corinthians 3: 16-17, "Do you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is sacred and you are that temple." That's pretty direct, isn't it?

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: It's just as much of a sin to be overweight, as inactive as it is to drink or smoke, whatever it may be, and I'm afraid that a lot of Christians don't accept that. Now I can show you that you're shortening your life by inactivity, by obesity. Are you doing what the Lord commanded you to do? Are you squaring off the curve, living a long healthy life, the fullest and then dying? Suddenly there's that hope there. Here I'm 68, still practicing medicine, still very busy, still enjoying life. That isn't my happenstance. It's because I've adhered to these concepts that I've practiced now for the past 40 years and Lord has blessed me immensely with my work, with my family. It's just unbelievable and Jim's in the same category, but that didn't happen by happenstance. Sure, I could have given up and I've seen many people are full-time in the ministry that have done this, and they feel that their responsibility is to minister something to the spirit and forget about the body.

It's surprising to me that in one denomination in this country, the leading cause of medical complaints is this is pastors and their families the leading cause of hospitalization is for psychotic problems. Number two is because of heart attacks. I won't mention the nomination.

Dr. James Dobson: That is really unbelievable.

Dr. Kenneth Cooper: That's a fact as you know Jim, so again, you can get so overwhelmed from one aspect of this to ignore the other. You lose the balance in your life. I think if I have, I don't have any harmony in my life and peace of my life unless I have God at the top, family second, and work third, then I'd add onto that physical fitness fourth, and then enhances everything. Look, for example, we can show with psychological testing that people who are physically fit, we can prove this, everybody's proven this, who are physically fit, they are less depressed, they are less of a hypochondriac, have an improved self-image, a much more positive attitude towards life and fewer somatic complaints. You ask people why they've

been exercising year after year, and the vast majority give you one answer is because it makes me what makes me feel good. That's the way I can glorify God to the highest if I can feel good.

Dr. James Dobson: Thank you, sir, for coming to be with us. It is a pleasure to have you here and thank you all for being with us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, who doesn't want to feel good and improve their health and longevity in the process? Lots of useful information discussed by Dr. Kenneth Cooper and Dr. James Dobson today here on Family Talk. If you'd like more information about Dr. Cooper's various organizations or if you'd just like to listen to the program once again, visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And by the way, if you're searching for more encouraging content to help your family grow stronger spiritually, emotionally, and physically, be sure to check out the dobsonlibrary.com website. That's dobsonlibrary.com.

Raising kids in today's culture certainly comes with its challenges. If you're a parent, you know exactly what I'm talking about. There is incredible weight on your shoulders to guide your kids through a confused and turbulent culture. Everywhere you turn, it seems like there's yet another ungodly agenda being pushed upon your kids and it starts at such an early age.

Here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we want to walk alongside you and better equip you with timeless biblically based advice and tools. A couple of those resources are bundled now together in one resource. Dr. Dobson has bundled his books called *Bringing Up Boys* and *Bringing Up Girls* together as one resource and we'll be happy to send it to you as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount. In support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute today. To request your copy, simply click the link on the broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk and we'll be happy to send this timeless bundle right to your home. Again for the *Bringing Up Boys* and *Bringing Up Girls* Bundle, simply include a gift of any amount in support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute when you go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk today.

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Be sure to join us again tomorrow as we'll hear the conclusion of Dr. Dobson's classic interview with Dr. Ken Cooper. You will not want to miss it. I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of everyone here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thank you so much for making Family Talk a part of your day.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.