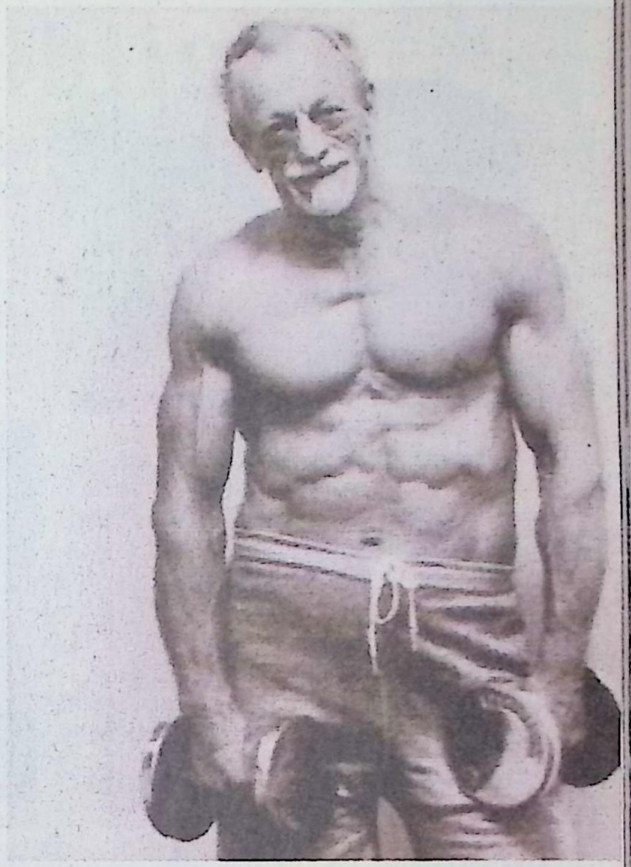
Older adults: Build muscle and you'll live longer

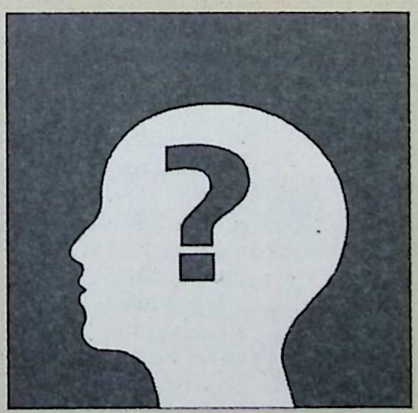


New UCLA research suggests that the more muscle mass older Americans have, the less likely they are to die prematurely. The findings add to the growing evidence that overall body composition -- and not the widely used body mass index, or BMI -- is a better predictor of all-cause mortality.

The study, published in the *American Journal of Medicine*, is the culmination of previous UCLA research led by Dr Preethi Srikanthan of UCLA that found that building muscle mass is important in decreasing metabolic risk.

"As there is no gold-standard measure of body composition, several studies have addressed this question using different measurement techniques and have obtained different results," Srikanthan wrote. "So many studies on the mortality impact of obesity focus on BMI. Our study indicates that clinicians need to be focusing on ways to improve body composition, rather than on BMI alone, when counselling older adults on preventative health behaviours."

We must forget to avoid serious mental disorders



In order to function properly, the human brain requires the ability not only to store but also to forget: Through memory loss, unnecessary information is deleted and the nervous system retains its plasticity. A disruption of this process can lead to serious mental disorders. Basel scientists have now discovered a molecular mechanism that actively regulates the process of forgetting.

The scientific journal *Cell* has published their results.

The human brain is build in such a way, that only necessary information is stored permanently – the rest is forgotten over time. However, so far it was not clear if this process was active or passive. Scientists from the transfaculty research platform Molecular and Cognitive Neurosciences (MCN) at the University of Basel have now found a molecule that actively regulates memory loss. The so-called musashi protein is responsible for the structure and function of the synaptic connections of the brain, the place where information is communicated from one neuron to the next.