

Interview with Denise Medved, Founder and Creator of Ageless Grace® and Ageless Grace for KIDZ!™

### **What is Ageless Grace®?**

Ageless Grace® is a seated exercise program--so it's all done in a chair--to work the core and activate the organs and systems of the body. The program uses organic rather than choreographed moves, so everybody can participate at his or her own level of ability, within his or her individual range of motion. The 21 different exercises that we call "tools" are based on the cutting-edge science of neuroplasticity—the ability of the brain to change structurally and functionally.

### **What inspired you to create this program?**

It all began a number of years ago when I was studying in a graduate program in gerontology. I was stunned to discover that the material in a course called "The Architecture of Aging" meant designing homes and workspaces for people so that when they lost their mobility, they'd be prepared. Being prepared meant having a wheelchair ramp already installed; handrails in the walk-in shower; kitchen counter heights at wheelchair level. Cabinets and shelves should be installed no higher than can be reached without bending down or standing on a stepstool.

While it's inevitable that some people will indeed lose their mobility, I was appalled by the conventional thinking. I began to think about what could happen if the focus was shifted away from accommodating physical limitations, to doing everything possible to forestall those limitations, or at least diminish the severity of them. I felt sure that many of the so-called inevitable signs of aging were really not inevitable at all; they were simply "lack of practice" of the skills needed to maintain youthful function.

### **Do you have a background in fitness?**

Yes, I do. While I spent many years in the world of advertising and public relations, I also have a substantial track record in the fitness industry, so I was familiar with movement and the human body. For nearly 15 years, she was one of 13 Black Belt Nia Technique trainers in the world. I have been teaching Nia for 26 years, and I'm a certified personal trainer and a tai chi instructor. Movement has always been part of my life.

I think that this background made it possible for me to approach aging from a different mindset. I decided that it was time to change the model of aging in the world, beginning with the brain and the development of neural pathways to create efficient and effortless physical function. With this aim in mind, I spent seven years creating Ageless Grace®: 21 Simple Tools for Lifelong Comfort and Ease™.

### **What are the tools that you speak of?**

Each tool, or exercise, addresses a primary factor that causes physical aging, and all the tools stimulate and utilize the five functions of the brain—analytic, strategic, kinesthetic learning, memory/recall, and creativity and imagination. From birth through approximately the age of 21, the brain is busy creating a complex web of neural pathways. But functional and cognitive skills that were developed through traditional childhood games, sports and leisure activities are typically no longer practiced in adulthood. Ageless Grace® serves to re-open those pathways, and equally important, stimulates the creation of new ones by having participants perform movements that are novel and creative.

### **What kinds of benefits does Ageless Grace® offer?**

Regardless of the level of someone's physical condition, performing the tools in a chair activates the core of the body, including the internal organs and systems, such as the respiratory system, endocrine system, and digestive system. Being in a chair also increases stability and range of motion. This allows people of all ages and abilities (including children), to perform the movements. Those with weight and joint issues, diabetes and other challenges such as those in wheelchairs or with other physical limitations, also can practice Ageless Grace® as a wonderful way to get moving. The other thing is that I recommend doing just two or three tools each day - no more than 10 minutes per day. This way, it's not overwhelming and it's easy to make it a regular part of one's daily schedule. In just one 10-minute break from one's desk is all the time that's required to get plenty of benefit from the program. No need to go to a gym, no need for special equipment; all that's needed is a chair.

### **How did you introduce this program to the world?**

In 2010, I formed Ageless Grace, LLC, and in early 2011, a playbook, a set of three DVDs demonstrating all 21 tools, and a set of flashcards were published by Purple Iris Press, LLC. It was in January 2011 that I started training a cadre of certified Ageless Grace® educators. Since that time, more than 500 educators have been trained in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Educators are teaching in retirement communities, elementary schools, rehabilitation programs, community centers, churches and synagogues, and in fitness centers, for example.

### **Where can we learn more about the program?**

An introductory clip about Ageless Grace® is available on the home page at [www.agelessgrace.com](http://www.agelessgrace.com). The website also contains a list of educators around the world, and some of the organizations where Ageless Grace® is being taught. There are lots of testimonials on the site from people who are benefiting from this program on a daily basis, as well as photographs from classes and some of our

trainings. The publisher offers a special website only price of \$75 -- and shipping is free -- for the playbook, the three-DVD set, and the set of flashcards. That offer is available at [www.agelessgrace.com/Products.html](http://www.agelessgrace.com/Products.html).