

It is never too late to learn French!

As a French teacher, I often hear people say, "I am too old to learn French now"! After three years of teaching French at Learn French at Home to English expatriates with different French levels and of varying ages, I can testify that age is not necessarily a factor (unless you're a small child) in one's ability to acquire a second language. Motivation is the key! I'll never forget the time when one of my current students called me two years ago, a man in his sixties who lives in the South of France, and said to me: "I have been living in France for three years and can-

not put a sentence together and to top it off, I am clueless about grammar, even in the English language!". Being a man of communication, he was feeling a sense of frustration. I suggested that he take one lesson per week followed by some homework. He took the learning process seriously, and today this same man speaks about most subjects to everyone in his village and is very excited about grammar! Motivation enabled him to break through this psychological barrier to language learning. Many others have experienced the same thing. At a mature age, people are more prone to be much more serious about learning a language, and most of the time the person will diligently devote the necessary study time for the task. On the other hand, you cannot force a younger person to learn if he or she is not motivated. I've seen better and more consistent results with the more mature people than with some younger adults (who many times don't have time to allocate to learning French).

mental health effects of learning a second language. Dr Andrew Weil, the author of *Healthy Aging**, states that learning a foreign language can reduce the risk of age related symptoms such as "memory loss, dementia and Alzheimer's". Dr. Weil wrote: "You don't have to master it. Just the attempt to learn a language is like running different software through the brain. You're exercising more communication channels in the brain." In his blog**, Dr. Weil also said in reply to a question: "Learning a language is another perfect challenge to take on now that you've retired. Some people have a natural ear for language and learn quickly, but anyone who can hear and imitate sounds can learn a new language at any age. And you don't have to master it; it's the attempt to learn that gives the benefit... Learning another language should be more protective than any supplements or smart drugs designed to stave off cognitive decline."

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www.learnfrenchathome.com

Reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease!

Another factor concerning people of a certain age and language learning is that more and more doctors stress the positive

* *Healthy Aging: A Lifelong Guide to Your Physical and Spiritual Well-Being*: Knopf, 2005.

** www.drweil.com

A Few Useful Websites

Useful information on health, insurance, social assistance, practical life, retirement, activities, etc. can be found in several websites, such as the one of the well-done magazine dedicated to

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