

HEALTH

Championing the Right to Age Well

NewsUSA

(NU) - In 1967, one of today's most iconic runners made her mark in history.

Despite an angry official who tried to push her off the course of the Boston Marathon, Kathrine Switzer defiantly ran on, broke barriers and became the first woman to officially complete the legendary race.

Today, at the age of 70, Switzer continues to defy the odds.

This year, she ran the 26.2-mile Boston Marathon again to celebrate the 50th anniversary of her historic milestone and continued to inspire others to break new ground. She also announced a partnership with the health and well-being company, Humana, to help celebrate seniors, encourage them to take an optimistic view of aging, and live healthy, active lifestyles.

"When the Boston Marathon race director tried to shove me off the course in 1967, my life's purpose was crystalized. I knew I wanted to be a champion for others committed to blazing their own path," Switzer says.

"I'm working with Humana to inspire seniors to achieve their best health, so they can experience all that life has to offer."

Switzer shared tips on how she maintains an optimistic outlook on aging, and why she believes that great things are ahead when your health is ready – no matter what age you are!

Don't let your age define you. The biggest tip is to realize that you're never too old, too slow or too out-of-shape to begin living an active lifestyle. Whether it's walking the dog a bit further than usual, or taking a swim at the local health club – finding ways to get active can help you live healthier and be more optimistic.

Take it one step at a time. Allow time to adjust to a new routine. Start small and build on your efforts in small intervals. Listen to your body and be proud of your progress.

Two is better than one. To help you stay motivated, get a buddy who has similar fitness goals. If a buddy is waiting for you, you won't worry about being embarrassed or feeling slow; it'll just be the two of you. There are few



things greater than sharing victories and accomplishments with someone close.

Make time for rest. Equally as important as staying active is ensuring that your body recovers from the stress endured from physical activity. Not only will your body thank you, but you will grow to love your active lifestyle more without aches and pains holding you back.

Switzer recently took her message to the National Senior Games presented by Humana, one example of how the company is committed to championing seniors and breaking barriers – namely, the stereotypes associated with seniors in today's society – and proving that with a healthy body and mind, age is truly just a number. While at the Games, she participated in the 10K Road Race in a celebratory role and presented an inspiring and encouraging speech at the Celebration of Athletes.

In addition to being a fierce advocate for seniors and optimistic aging, Switzer has been a lifelong advocate for women runners in general.

In 1972, she co-founded the first women's-only road race; in 1984, she led the drive to get the women's marathon into the Olympic Games; and in 2015, she founded 261 Fearless, a global non-profit that empowers and connects women through the transformative action of running, and encouraging them to overcome life obstacles and embrace healthy living.

"I think optimism is everything and you don't have to be a marathon runner to possess it," Switzer says.

"The more you do, the more you can do!"