

HUMAN INTEREST

Grandmother, 102, still works at a health resort — here's why retirement isn't for her

By [Adriana Diaz](#)

Published July 4, 2024, 10:39 a.m. ET

 Comments

A centenarian revealed her secrets to a long and happy life and career.

Deborah Szekely is still working at the health resort she co-founded 80 years ago and doesn't have a retirement date in sight.

The 102-year-old opened Rancho La Puerta in Baja California, Mexico, with her late husband in June 1940 and has worked at the health resort ever since — but she doesn't mind.



Deborah Szekely is still working at the health resort she co-founded 80 years ago and doesn't have a retirement date in sight.

Courtesy of Rancho La Puerta

In fact, she shared a few of her tips for living a long and happy life.

One thing Szekely has not given up on is exercise.

“The specific type of exercise doesn't matter; what matters is that you're pushing yourself enough to feel it, getting your heart rate up, and breaking a sweat. If you get really huffy puffy, you're doing a good job,” Szekely **told Barrons**.

She also, perhaps unsurprisingly, still eats a healthy diet.

Szekely has been a pescatarian since childhood and tries her best to eat “as fresh as possible.”

She grows much of her own food but also doesn't deny herself a treat — especially coffee ice cream.



The centenarian also does her best to stay positive despite turmoil around the globe.

“The world has tons of problems, and you can’t do anything about them,” Szekely [told Women’s World](#).
“When you worry, you add to the problems. By not worrying, you subtract from the problems.”

She also doesn’t believe in looking back on the past.

“That’s a total waste of time. You can’t do anything about it — it’s done,” she [told CNBC](#).

But as Szekely’s work ethic has proven, she does believe in getting involved.

“Community survival is absolutely vital to longevity. The health and happiness of our neighbors are not only important; they are a requirement. Without the health of the things surrounding you, it’s hard to be healthy,” Szekly [told Barrons](#).

Szekely is part of a growing group of people living past 100.

Only 0.27% of Americans were 100 or older in 2021, but the rate of people in the US becoming centenarians has nearly doubled in the last 20 years, according to data from the [United Nations](#).

As more people reach this milestone, researchers at Boston University and Tufts Medical Center analyzed [the DNA and lifestyles of seven centenarians to seek the fountain of youth](#).

The scientists studied their peripheral blood mononuclear cells — a broad category of immune cells found in the blood — and determined these centenarians have highly functional immune systems that successfully fought off and recovered from many ailments.