

Henry Koontz: 95 years old and healthy

Heather Young
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About five to six times a week, 95-year-old Henry Koontz arrives at the Paso Robles Athletic Club, next to Vons, and works out for about 40 minutes.

Henry starts his exercise regime on a stationary bike until he tires. From there he circles around the free weights and machines stopping at about 13 stations.

"The thing is, if he doesn't do this, he's real wobbly," Henry's son Gary Koontz said. "He's got great bone density. He fell and didn't break anything; it's because he works out."

Henry was born March 11, 1909, on the Texas/Oklahoma border, at the panhandle of both states.

"They didn't even issue birth certificates when he was born. It wasn't until years later when he needed it for Social Security that he got one," Gary said.

Henry married Mildred in 1934, after knowing her for 10 years. They were married until her death last September.

"My wife died the seventh of September. Since she died, I come here to work out, go through the routine," Henry said. "I sure miss her."

Henry has plans to travel back to Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas the first of June to visit family and friends if he is able.

"I hope I'm able to make that trip, I'm healthy. I had my cholesterol checked, it was low. She said for someone my age, it was really low—that made me feel good," Henry said.

Henry's daily routine begins at 8 or 8:30 a.m. with his work out at the athletic club, followed by playing pool at the senior citizens home until lunch at 11:30 a.m.

"I think that's what keeps me going—I'm 95—keeping active, I'm in a kitchen band (at Creston



Village), I play the tub. I enjoy that," Henry said with a chuckle.

In 1941, Henry and Mildred moved to Long Beach where Henry worked at Douglas Aircraft until he retired in 1975. They returned to Texas in 1977.

"We just had to come back to California. So we came back in '82 and we've lived in Paso Robles since. I really like Paso Robles. The people, climate, everything," Henry said.

Henry has always been physically active and has been a member of the Paso Robles Athletic Club since 1994. According to Gary, he used to ride his bicycle to work in Long Beach.

"He's always been very active. He loved to dance with my mom; he liked to dance a lot," Gary said.

Gary remembered his father visiting and picking dandelions and mustard from the yard and making salads using the plants, which are chock-full of necessary nutrients.

"He was into his own health food thing before it was popular," Gary said. "We didn't have a lot of money, so we ate meals without meat. I would partly attribute that to his health."

Henry encourages everyone to work out for a healthy life.

"I think it's good for anybody to be active and work out. I'm trying to get my son to come in here and work out. He said he will," Henry said.

Henry and his son attribute his good health and longevity to his regular workout schedule as well as his laid back demeanor and living life in moderation rather than excess.

"It's all about moderation. He has one beer a day; he figures one a day is good for him," Gary said. "As well as his even temperament [that added to his long life]. It's not that he doesn't have strong opinions or doesn't get mad—he just doesn't carry it."