A Willingness to Surprise Yourself: The Longevity Mindset

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Super Age Games Founding Athlete, 48, says success in business and longevity require the same thing.

For some, chasing longevity means trying to stay young. But Jaime Schmidt's goal is the opposite: Not *staying* any way at all.

"Longevity means continuing to evolve … constantly surprising myself, and getting excited about an unknown future," the 48-year-old says. "The biggest underlying message or theme in my career has been surprising myself constantly. When I look back on things two or five years later, I'm always shocked — I never would have anticipated that for myself."

Evolving, Schmidt says, is all about getting out of her comfort zone, a strategy that made her a smashing success in the business world: The soft-spoken introvert pushed herself to sell her kitchen-made natural deodorants at farmer's markets, then in retailers, and ultimately sold her company, Schmidt's Naturals, to Unilever in 2017.

That same willingness to embrace discomfort later landed Schmidt on the pickleball court five years ago. At the gym, she embraced strength training for the first time in an effort to improve her game, priming her body for her new hobby — and ultimately, her health and life.

Since then, she's been exploring the world of longevity and challenging her own perceptions about aging. It's what inspired her, while sipping a smoothie on a fitness retreat, to say "yes" to the inaugural Super Age Games and become a founding athlete.

"It popped up on my feed and I signed up immediately. I was like, 'it's going to sell

out. I've got to be the first one,'" she says. "I'm excited for the Super Age Games so I can see where I stand on my journey to a healthy, fulfilling life."

Pickleball: A Doorway to Longevity Fitness

When Schmidt and her family moved to southern California in 2021, the entrepreneur and newly-minted author of **Supermaker: Crafting Business On Your Own Terms** settled in a neighborhood with free pickleball lessons. A one-time high school tennis player, Schmidt gave *dinking* a shot.

"My husband and I started playing, and we fell for it pretty hard, pretty fast," she says. "We were playing five times per week for the first couple of years."

Schmidt says she loved that pickling not only helped her get moving, but also built community. Unfortunately, that community was getting better at the game; to keep up, she started strength training with Brad Jellis, a former strength coach with the NHL's Dallas Stars.

"I just didn't have space in my life for it before, and I thought pickleball was a good excuse to make that investment," she says. But then, she surprised herself again: "When I started strength training, my priorities and long-term goals kind of shifted a little bit. I started realizing I wanted to strength train not just to be a better pickleball player, but also to look good and feel good and see myself get stronger."

She dialed back pickleball to a few times per week, and tuned up her strength schedule to include two lower-body days, an upper-body workout, and a full-body session on weekends. And she got curious about other aspects of longevity science, too.

She got a Truvaga, a vagal nerve stimulator that is supposed to relieve stress — Schmidt says she's seen a difference in her resting heart rate and heart rate variability with the device. She started using a vibration plate, which is used by pro athletes and biohackers alike to improve **bone** and **joint** health, and reduce age-related muscle

loss. And she's been looking into **peptide therapies**, but with a healthy skepticism.

"I know these aren't going to solve all of the problems or all of the things, but I think everything's one little piece of the recipe," she says. "I like things based in science, but I am also very open to anything new that comes on the market."

Becoming a Super Age Games Founding Athlete

One of those "new" things that piqued her interest was the Super Age Games. Schmidt was on a fitness and wellness retreat in Belize, and the November event popped up on her social feed. Inspired by her surroundings, she jumped at the chance to sign up — another way, she says, to put herself in unfamiliar ground.

"I like doing things alone sometimes; I was on this retreat by myself, and didn't know any of the women. The Games was something where I didn't feel the need to have a teammate, or come in with a bunch of people I knew. So I signed up on my own," she says. "I like those experiences by myself because I like to be outside my comfort zone, and one part of that is being alone when I try these fun things."

The "fun" part, she said, is what appealed to her most.

"It sounds like it's going to be a whole vibe," she says, imagining the event as "a community of people who are excited, with music and the games. I like the gaming aspect… because it's not just a conference or convention around wellness and aging," she adds.

Schmidt thinks her weekly training, and the agility from her pickleball, will serve her well in the Games' physical trials. It's the cognitive performance challenges that give her pause.

"I don't explore that as much as I do other parts of myself," she says. "It'll be a good opportunity for me to lock into that and know where I stand. That'll be fun."

The Games, she says, will not just give her a test of how her healthy life choices are impacting her longevity. They'll also give her a benchmark to see how they improve if she re-tests each year as the Super Age Games continue. They're an opportunity, she says, to see how she continues to evolve.

"Building a company definitely taught me resilience and delayed gratification… It's the patience and the consistency, not just the motivation. It's about locking in, and being able to make things happen, and know it's not going to happen overnight," she says. That commitment to putting in the work in the gym, she says, "is such a big piece of aging well."

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