



# *PLAYING* every day keeps the doctor away.

## **We're working longer and harder:**

There is not much argument that Americans are working longer and harder. Juliet Schor, a researcher from Harvard, found that the number of hours worked in this country has increased over the past ten years to add the equivalent of one extra month of labor a year.

Ten years ago, if you asked an audience to use just one word to describe American workers, the word would have been “lazy”. Memory of that perception is so remote for most Americans, people have difficulty believing it could be true. All that extra work has increased stress and contributed to our harried, out-of-balanced lives. We have collectively forgotten the importance of play. Lenore Terr, MD. addresses this trend in her book, “Beyond Love and Work...why adults need to play”. Even children are overbooked and overstressed

## **Learning from centenarians:**

Antibiotics and immunizations have wiped out many past scourges, and stress remains a major contributor to the top ten killers in America today. At the same time, researchers studying healthy centenarians and older adults are unlocking some of the secrets of a long and vital life. They conclude that optimism and the ability to respond with flexibility are common traits found in successful agers. In addition, healthy centenarians are effective stress managers, are able to find meaning in their activities, and appreciate the importance of exercise in maintaining mobility. Play, along with laughter, has begun to emerge as a popular tool for over-worked, stressed-out adults who are juggling multiple demands and generally trying to DO IT ALL.



## **Go out and play!**

The unspoken secret is that adults have always loved to play. Play has a way of making us drop out of time; to arrive in a place where we can't be worrying about what we could have, should have, or ought to have done. When we are totally absorbed in an activity we can put aside worries and concerns, and go back at a later date renewed and refreshed. Play is a great way to keep active, challenge your brain and stay connected with family and friends; all important ingredients for creating a long, successful older life and having fun to boot.