

# Real life begins in their 50s for these enthusiastic ladies

While young people increasingly grapple with age anxiety, a group of women are riding the waves to reconfirm their value in life. Among them, some started acting at the age of 50, some picked up new careers after retirement, while others ran marathons, performed catwalks and traveled around the world, dabbling in fields they had never tried before. They say life is short, and you need to live to the fullest. A wonderful life can start at any age. May every "she" become herself.

(Compiled by Li Xinran)



Ni Lihua

My name is Ni Lihua, and I am 66 years old. At age 62, I became a restorer of the exterior of clocks and watches.

Before retirement, I was engaged in mechanical design of marine instruments, and a complete layman in repairing timepieces.

In 2019, my husband, who was a volunteer at the Dalai Time Museum, told me that there was a shortage of timepiece exterior restoration technicians at the museum. Since I had some basic knowledge of art, I decided to join this team.

Enthusiasm is surely not enough in doing the demanding work. To become a qualified technician, it is very important to acquire professional skills.

Through self-study, I mastered the Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and other drawing softwares, and my repair techniques also improved gradually after practice.

Clocks and watches are made of different materials, such as wood, ceramics, bronze and lacquer, and each of them requires different skills.

I still remember the experience of repairing a marble clock. When the clock arrived, its four edges and corners had all been "shattered." I had to use plaster to reshape the damaged part and make a wax mold first, and then tried filling it with resin material.

Whenever I repair a timepiece, it is to learn and master new knowledge.

Recently, I managed to repair a Mason porcelain clock shipped from Europe. Featuring delicate petals, the clock's body was broken in many places.

The most difficult part in repairing this clock was that the porcelain adhesive would solidify within just a few seconds, and even small mistakes could rarely be fixed.

After great patience and meticulousness, I eventually accomplished the task, which offered me a great sense of pride and achievement.

Of course, I can't be successful in each of my endeavors. However, that won't stop me. The process of repairing seems to be a silent dialogue with the timepiece and I do enjoy every bit of it.



Zhou Chunlian

Born in the 1950s, my name is Zhou Chunlian. I didn't expect to become an actress at the age of 50.

I still remember clearly my first cast audition. I was competing against seven or eight middle-aged women for a mother's role in a television series. I made a brief introduction about myself to the director first and took a screen test with the "daughter" in the series on the spot. The director then decided to let me play the role of the mother in the TV series.

Since then, with roles in a number of films and TV series, my retirement life has been greatly enriched.

I was on a public transport bus one day and a woman recognized me immediately. She came up to me and said: "The mother you played in the TV series really impressed me. In reality, my daughter doesn't

listen to my opinions on her relationship with a man; what should I do?"

I then helped her figure out the whole story patiently and told her that as parents, we had better respect our children's choices and not put too much pressure on them. To my relief, the woman felt much better when we bid farewell, which also made me feel my own value.

I have already quit acting for some time but am still pursuing my art dreams. With the support of the community, I have established an art troupe for grey-haired residents to provide more elderly people with opportunities to express themselves as well as a stage to perform.

It is my belief that as long as I keep working hard and making continuous effort, I will be able to live a meaningful life.



Jin Weiwei

My name is Jin Weiwei, 52, and I am a faculty member of Shanghai University. I have joined a runners' club where everyone likes to call me Abu. So far, I have participated in more than 20 marathons.

Encouraged by my friends, I registered for the Shanghai Marathon for the first time in 2014. I ended up with a No. 43 spot in the women's group, clocking 3 hours and 37 minutes, which was really beyond my own expectation.

From then on, I began to participate in marathon competitions one after another. What I remember most clearly is the 2020 Shanghai Marathon. I was actually not in very good physical condition prior to the run but performed surprisingly well in the competition with a new personal record.

As I took part in more competitions,

my own expectations gradually rose and I became quite obsessed with my performance. That didn't stop until 2022 when one of my friends asked me to be his pacer in the competition. For the first time, I put my own goal aside and accompanied him all way through the finish line. He finally accomplished what he had aimed for and I suddenly realized at that moment that it was perhaps more fulfilling to help others achieve their goals.

Running marathons has changed me as I have become a more positive, optimistic and self-disciplined person. It has also taught me how to live a more healthy, happy and meaningful life. I definitely won't stop running and it is my wish that I can participate in one marathon competition every year in a new city, appreciating various beautiful scenery while running.



Wang Hong

My name is Wang Hong, and I am 55. I am an administrative personnel at a local enterprise with a deep passion for travel and exploring the world.

In the eyes of many people, women who are about to retire are *damas*, or "housewives or aunts." Actually, I don't agree with that. What seems very important to me is that one should try as many new things as one can in one's whole life so that it can get as much enriched as possible.

At the age of 53, I accidentally fell and injured my knee, which confined me to bed for a whole month. After some initial recovery, I embarked on my trip to Tibet in west China with the help of crutches. So far, I have traveled to over 40 countries and regions around the world.

As planned, I will leave for Egypt next month.

Though in the 50s, I'm still in great physical shape. My passion for exploration and curiosity for the world hasn't ebbed. When I

was in my 20s, I thought those in their 30s must be considered "old people." Now, I have changed my opinion. For me, physical age is just a number, and there are probably no limitations and boundaries in my life.

In 2015, the Nanxiang Town Qipao Team organized a recruitment for catwalk models no older than 45 years to sport the traditional Chinese dress. I was already 47 at that time but still managed to pass the interview and became a member of the team. I am currently the captain of the *qipao* team, being responsible for regular training of the members and taking the team to participate in various catwalk competitions.

In my opinion, women are responsible for their own lives and we are the creator of our own lives. Age will never be able to stop us from doing what we want and all we should do is trying our utmost in every one of our pursuits to make our dreams come true.