



Shoes shriek and voices shout for the ball. A quick glance at the basketball court shows mostly men in their 40s and 50s, some with goggles, all with sweat patterns of various shapes spreading across their T-shirts. Amid the sea of bodies flowing from basket to basket, you soon discern two very similar-looking women, their dark curly hair showing the faintest tinges of grey. They thread through the action, taking shots and dribbling up the alley. Playing basketball is how Linda Murphy and Anne Hanson have chosen to celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.



The identical twins have played basketball in this church basement with roughly these same people for over 25 years, 2-3 times a week for over an hour at a time. They have always done this, exercising. Growing up on a farm near Conquest, SK, they played every sport available to them: softball, volleyball, basketball, and track. Their chores included rounding up cattle through the massive hills cut into a river valley and they ran, skated, and horseback rode throughout their childhood. When they moved from the farm, the twins continued to make exercise a part of their lives. Linda's young children could often be seen on the back of her bike as she rode around Saskatoon. She began playing tennis with her husband after their first baby was born. Anne played soccer, football, and catch with her children and walked daily. They both played national-level fastball and travelled the country in tournaments. Both women have followed a home weigh-lifting program for 20 years.

Today, the twins are among the most faithful participants of the thrice-weekly basketball game. Just as their own children once waited on the sidelines while Anne and Linda sweated up and down the court, Linda's grandchildren now sit or play quietly until Nana is finished her game. The twins have played indoor soccer for the past 5 years, where they are the senior members of their team by about 15 years. They play volleyball with friends every Sunday in the winter, yet they eagerly await mild weather every year so they can get out their bicycles. Linda plays squash year-round and tennis with her husband and children in the summer. Anne plays co-ed slowpitch on a team with her son and his friends. Over the years there have been broken fingers, sprained ankles, and ugly bruises pancaking over their thighs.



Linda and Anne have never been active in order to be role models; indeed, both women brush aside exclamations and comments about their athleticism. For them, exercise is not about proving something, about making statements, about being an inspiration, though all of these things have happened as a by-product of their exertions. Anne and Linda have only ever exercised for the sheer love of it, for the love of the strength, the pumping heart, for the sharpening of skills. That's why, three times a week, you will still find them, down in the church basement.