



Here's to Your Health!

The New Year is a time when many people resolve to take better care of themselves and maybe even start an exercise program, quit smoking, or lose weight. We have been heartened to learn, from www.realage.com, that there are many (even easy!) ways to improve your health and make your real (biological) age lower than your chronological age! Here are some practices that RealAge recommends, with a few additional ones that we believe are also very important.

1. Take Your Vitamins

Regularly taking vitamin C (1200 mg/day), vitamin E (400 IU/day), calcium (1000-1200 mg/day), vitamin D (400-600 IU/day), folate (400 mcg/day), and vitamin B6 (6 mg/day) can make your biological age 6 years younger.

2. Quit Smoking and Avoid Passive Smoke

Smoking makes your biological age 8 years *older*. The U.S. Surgeon General has stated, "Smoking cessation (stopping smoking) represents the single most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives." And according to the American Cancer Society: "No matter what your age or how long you've smoked, quitting will help you live longer. People who stop smoking before age 50 cut their risk of dying in the next 15 years *in half* compared with those who continue to smoke. Ex-smokers also enjoy a higher quality of life with fewer illnesses from cold and flu viruses, better self-reported health, and reduced rates of bronchitis and pneumonia."

If you want to quit smoking, go to www.cancer.org and click on Guide to Quitting Smoking or call 1-800-ACS-2345 to double your chances of quitting for good. Do it now. It's that important!

3. Know Your Blood Pressure (& get it treated if it's too high!)

A person with low blood pressure (~115/75 mm Hg) is as much as 25 years younger than a person with high blood pressure (greater than 160/90 mm Hg).

4. Reduce Stress

In highly stressful times, your biological age can be as much as 32 years older than your calendar age. By building strong social networks and adopting stress-reduction strategies, you can erase 30 of those 32 years of aging caused by stress.

5. Floss Your Teeth

Flossing and brushing daily can make your biological age 6.4 years younger than your chronological age. What an easy way to stay young!

6. Weigh No More Than 10 Pounds More Than When You Were 21 Years Old

You probably know that there is an obesity epidemic in the United States. In 1991, obese adults made up less than 15% of the population in most U.S. states. By 2004, not a single state could claim that distinction, and in nine states more than 25% of the residents were obese. Today, an estimated 149 million adult Americans weigh more than is healthy.

BMI (Body Mass Index) is a convenient way for most of us to determine if our current weight is healthy or not. For a simple calculator to determine your BMI, go to National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's web site (<http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>) and simply fill in your height and weight. For a web site with tons of great information on healthy weight and nutrition, go to Harvard School of Public Health (<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/>).

If you need to lose weight, keep reading (#7 and #8). Rather than strict dieting, start by being more active and concentrate on getting more fiber into your diet. You'll find you feel more satisfied on less food. And if you need to lose a lot of weight, consult with your doctor, nutritionist, or Holistic Health Counselor (To find one, go to <http://www.integrativenutrition.com/HHCFinder.aspx>)

7. Be Active

Even a small amount of exercise—two 20-minute walks per day—can make your biological age nearly 5 years younger.

8. Fill Up on Fiber

Getting 25 grams of fiber per day in your diet can make your biological age 2.5 years younger than if you only included 12 grams of fiber per day in your diet. Men need even more fiber every day (38 grams)! A couple of cookbooks with tasty recipes that can help you accomplish this are:

The New American Plate Cookbook: Recipes for a Healthy Weight and a Healthy Life by American Institute for Cancer Research

Moosewood Restaurant Simple Suppers: Fresh Ideas for the Weeknight Table
by Moosewood Collective

9. Wear Your Seatbelt & Slow Down!

Regularly wearing a seat belt and driving within 5 miles per hour of the posted speed limit can make your biological age as much as 3.4 years younger. And think of the money you'll save on speeding tickets!

10. Monitor Your Health

People who are proactive about seeking high-quality medical and dental care and managing chronic conditions can have a biological age as much as 12 years younger than their peers who do not.

11. Use alcohol in moderation, if at all.

In low doses, alcohol produces a feeling of relaxation and well-being, makes people more interactive and talkative, and has beneficial effects on the cardiovascular system. In even moderate doses, alcohol begins to have its real effect – as a depressant. Alcohol is estimated to be one of the top five precipitating causes of death in the U.S. and affects not only the drinker but the entire family.

12. Be a Lifelong Learner

People who remain intellectually involved throughout their lives have a biological age as much as 2.5 years younger.

13. Laugh!

Laughter reduces stress, strengthens the immune system, and can make your biological age as much as 8 years younger. And you'll have fun doing it!

To find out *your* RealAge, take the RealAge Test and develop an age-reduction plan at www.realage.com. Have a Happy and Healthy New Year!

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