

How to live to 114 (in theory)

FILL IN THE GAPS WITH THE MISSING WORD.
THERE ARE 4 WORDS YOU WON'T NEED.

AVERAGE	BE	BEING	BLOOD
BOOST	CUT	DEBTS	EARLY
IN	LATE	LEAST	MONITORED
MORE	MOST	NONE	OFF
RAISE	RISE	ROUGH	SHORT
SOME	SPAN	UNDERWENT	WHILE

People who are happy, having an active sex life, and who avoid outlive the miserable, abstainers and the poor, as do chocolate eaters, churchgoers and vegetarians.

New research shows exactly how many years longer people can live by adopting healthy behaviours – from stopping smoking and losing weight to eating less meat and being positive.

A Harvard University study that 600 people for 60 years shows that seven lifestyle factors are key to determining how well we age- avoiding alcohol abuse, not smoking, having a stable marriage, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, developing good coping mechanisms and pursuing education.

"Successful ageing isn't simply a matter of genes or fate. Making healthy choices can pave the way for a long, vital life. How well you will help dictate how long you stay alive and how happy you are to do so," say the authors of the study.

Researchers at Cambridge University have shown that adopting four healthy behaviours – exercising regularly, eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, not smoking and drinking moderately – could be worth an extra 14 years.

Research also shows how important marriage is, adding up to a decade to life – at least for men. For women, the picture is more complex, with some research suggesting that the stress and strain of living with a man can take years a woman's life.

1.8 years

Be a winner

Nobel Prize-winning scientists live nearly two years longer than those who were nominated but who lost out, according to a Warwick University study. Winning an Oscar can also add years, according to Toronto University researchers who studied all the actors to win an award. Winners lived four years longer on while double winners bagged an extra six years. One theory is that high social status had a positive effect.

Eat chocolate

Studies have suggested that dark chocolate is good for the heart and may boost longevity. Research based on Harvard graduates showed chocolate eaters lived a year or so longer than those who do not indulge. Those who ate one to three bars a month came out best with a 36 per cent lower risk of premature death. Antioxidants, especially in dark chocolate, may be responsible.

2.5 years

Have lots of sex

A number of studies have suggested that sex is good for health and longevity. A University of California study reported that it could add more than two years, while a Bristol University study showed that men who have frequent orgasms live longer. The risk of an earlier death in men who had sex twice or more a week was half that of men whose frequency was less than once a month.. The physical exercise and mental sense of well are thought to be implicated.

2.5 years3 years

Be religious – and have friends

Regular attendance at church or chapel can be as good for the health as jogging. A study at the University of Pittsburgh showed that weekly attendance at a religious service added two to three years compared with three to five for physical exercise and 2.5 to 3.5 years for people who take statins. "Regular religious attendance is comparable with commonly recommended therapies, and estimates suggest religious attendance may be more cost-effective than statins," say researchers. One theory is that it reduces stress levels or that the camaraderie increases the ability to cope with stress. A similar effect has been found for having friends. Harvard University research shows that men and women who were less likely to attend church, travel, or take part in social activities were 20 per cent more likely to die early than those who socialised the Those who engaged often in activities such as work, shopping, or gardening, were 35 per cent more likely to die prematurely.

3.6 years

Eat less meat

Diets with low levels of meat and vegetarian diets have been linked to lower risk of premature death. A review of research by public health specialists at Loma Linda University in America looked at the life expectancy of those who rarely ate meat – less than weekly – and found that long-term adherence to such a diet added 3.6 years to life. "Results the possibility that a lifestyle pattern that includes a very low meat intake is associated with greater longevity," they say. The health effect may be due to lower saturated fat intake and higher antioxidant levels as a consequence of eating more fruit and vegetables.

3.7 years

Keep active

Moderate to high levels of activity can extend life by between 1.3 and 3.7 years. Researchers at Erasmus University in the Netherlands say the main reason is the beneficial effect that physical activity has on the heart. Exercise also means people are less likely to be overweight and more likely to have a better quality of life.

4 years

Drink wine

Regular drinking of small amounts of wine can add four years to life for a man, according to a Dutch study. Researchers from Wageningen University found that men who drank about half a glass of wine a day were 38 per cent less likely to die prematurely. The researchers suggest that small amount of wine may be good for the heart and that it may prevent blood and also boost levels of good cholesterol.


4.1 years

Have low blood pressure and cholesterol

Having a low blood pressure and cholesterol levels are associated with a four-year-longer life according to a Yale University report.

5 years

Be educated and play golf

Highly educated women can expect to live more than five years longer than their less-educated contemporaries, while men with a university degree have an extra 7.8 years, according to a Harvard University study. Adoption of healthier lifestyles is one explanation, and one of the biggest differences was in heart disease rates. A Danish study found more modest increases in life expectancy –2.7 years for well-educated men and 2.2 years for well-educated women. Other research shows that men and women with PhDs live longer than those with Masters degrees, who turn outlast those with a degree. Research at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden shows that golfers live five years longer. The study shows a 40 per cent reduced risk of a premature end. Exercise may be partly responsible, but the health benefits of companionship be implicated 

6.6 years

Eat well

Adopting a diet proposed by Erasmus University could increase life expectancy by 6.6 years. The diet involves daily consumption of dark chocolate, almonds, fruits and vegetables, garlic and wine – and fish four times a week. This, say the researchers, could heart disease risk by 76 per cent. "It promises to be an effective, safe, cheap, and tasty alternative to reduce cardiovascular disease and increase life expectancy in the general population," they say.

7 years

Lose weight

Losing weight can add as much as seven years to life. A team at Oxford University showed that people who are obese at the age of 40 – body mass index or BMI greater than 30 – died, on average, seven years earlier. A Harvard study found that people who gained no more than five pounds between age 20 and midlife had one third the risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and gallstones as men and women who put on between 11 and 22 pounds.

7.5 years

Stay positive

Study based on 660 people aged over 50 shows that those who had a more positive take on life and ageing lived on average 7.5 years longer than the grouches. Results from the 23-year Yale University study are supported by work in the Netherlands which shows that optimists also live longer. Optimists had a 55 per cent lower risk of death. Researchers say pessimistic people may be more prone to developing habits and problems that cut life , such as smoking, obesity and high blood pressure.

8 to 10 years

Don't smoke

Not smoking adds up to 10 years to life. A team at the University of Helsinki found that those who had never smoked lived an average 10 years longer than those who smoked more than 20 a day. Research on men in New Zealand showed that 50 per cent of smokers die prematurely, and that they die 14 years earlier than non-smokers, and heart disease, strokes and cancer are among the biggest killers. The good news for smokers is that it is never too late to give up. According to the US National Institute on Drug Abuse, a 35-year-old man who quits smoking will, on average, increase his life expectancy by 5.1 years. A study at the Erasmus Medical Centre in Rotterdam showed that even men who heart surgery lived three years longer if they gave up smoking after the operation.

10 years (men)

Get married

According to a Chicago University report, married men live, on average, 10 years longer than non-married men, married women live about four years longer than non-married women. One theory is that men who marry add years to their life because they adopt less risky and more healthy lifestyles as a result of the commitment brought on by marriage. Married women may live longer due to improved combined financial wellbeing as a result of marriage. However, one Swiss study found that being married shortens a woman's life by 1.4 years, possibly due to the stress and strain of living with a man. According to an Australian government report, never marrying increases the risk of death over the next 10 years by 10.6 per cent, while being separated or divorced increases it by 9.4 per cent.

10-plus years

Be happy

A study based on nuns shows that the happiest lived a decade longer than the miserable. The two-year study at the University of Kentucky, found happy nuns were also less likely to develop Alzheimer's. One theory is that happy people are more likely to spot when they are ill and

1

14 years

Change your lifestyle

Changing four behaviours can add 14 years to life expectancy according to a study based on 20,000 people over 45 led by Cambridge University. Researchers found that those who exercised regularly, ate five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, didn't smoke, and had a moderate alcohol consumption lived an average of 14 years longer than those who adopted of these behaviours.

20 years

Be wealthy and live in the right neighbourhood

Wealthy people live longer than the poor. One of the starkest contrasts was found by Baltimore health officials in the US. In the impoverished neighbourhoods, average life expectancy was 63 years, against 83 in wealthy suburbs.

Adapted from The Independent.ie