

Toolbox Talks

The Scenic Route to a Longer Life Part 1

THE SCENIC ROUTE TO A *Longer* LIFE

There are certain widely accepted paths to good health and a longer life. But if quitting smoking, eating a balanced diet, and maintaining a healthy weight aren't your thing, what's an aspiring centenarian to do? Luckily, studies are released seemingly every day that tout some new way to extend your life. Though they're not without their drawbacks, here are a few of the most unlikely keys to longevity. Interesting though the results of these studies are, do bear in mind that you're likely to get much more suitable advice from your GP or the NHS.

WHAT TO EAT *and* DRINK

ALCOHOL

Drink up! Among older adults, moderate drinkers may actually have a lower risk of mortality than those who abstain from drinking altogether.

INCREASED RISK OF MORTALITY COMPARED TO MODERATE DRINKERS

Drinkers
Non-Drinkers



COFFEE

Keep your caffeine fix. Recent studies suggest coffee can protect women against heart disease and other ailments.

WOMEN WHO DRINK 2-3 CUPS OF COFFEE A DAY ARE 25% LESS LIKELY TO DIE FROM HEART DISEASE COMPARED TO THOSE WHO DON'T DRINK COFFEE.

WOMEN'S RISK OF DEATH FROM HEART DISEASE



CHOCOLATE

Those who eat a moderate amount of chocolate live longer than those who eat it several times per week and those who never eat it.



GARLIC

Load up on it. Garlic and the vegetable family it comes from have been linked to a host of different health benefits.

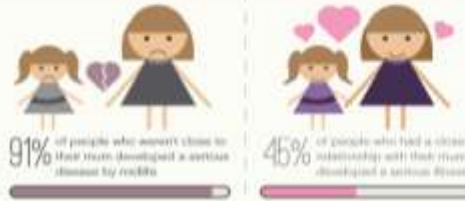
GARLIC'S SUPERPOWERS



THE BIG PICTURE

LOVE YOUR MUM

People who have close relationships with their mum have a dramatically smaller risk of disease by middle age.



START SCHOOL LATER

School can wait. Beginning school at an earlier age can lead to increased risk of mortality.

STARTING FORMAL SCHOOL BEFORE THE AGE OF 6 IS A RISK FACTOR FOR EARLIER MORTALITY.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SPOUSE

Wed wisely. Companionship has links to longer life over time, but who you choose to marry also makes a difference.

LONGEVITY IS AN INHERITED PHENOTYPE ACROSS THREE GENERATIONS. CHOOSING A SPOUSE WHOSE GRANDPARENTS ARE STILL ALIVE CAN HELP YOUR CHILDREN LIVE LONGER.



DEVELOP A STRONG HANDSHAKE

Get a grip. Grip strength is a suggested indicator of longer life. People with greater physical capabilities are likely to live longer.

IN ONE GROUP OF STUDIES, THOSE WITH A WEAK HANDSHAKE WERE BETWEEN 2 AND 3 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO DIE DURING THE PERIOD OF STUDY.



LIVE IN THE COUNTRY

Leave the concrete jungle. According to the Office for National Statistics, people who live in rural areas typically live longer than people who live in cities.

WOMEN'S AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY



OWN A PET

Pets heal the heart. Owning a pet decreases loneliness, limits depression, encourages laughter, and prompts exercise. Studies suggest they also have an impact on heart health.



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The Scenic Route to a Longer Life Part 2

EVERYDAY LIVING

BE POSITIVE

Think happy thoughts. People with a positive outlook are usually less stressed and better able to deal with challenges. That positive outlook has been linked to decreased mortality risk.



OPTIMISTIC PEOPLE LIVE ABOUT 12 YEARS LONGER THAN PESSIMISTS.

LISTEN TO YOUR DENTIST

Floss every day. Poor dental care has been linked to a host of serious illnesses later in life, including heart disease.



BACTERIA THAT LIVE IN THE MOUTH CAN CAUSE A PERSON'S ARTERIES TO SWELL AND CAN LEAD TO GREATER RISK OF HEART DISEASE.

MEDITATE MORE

Free your mind. Meditation is a powerful healing tool for stress, which can lead to increased risk of disease later in life.



15 MINUTES OF MEDITATION CAN PRODUCE A MUCH MORE RELAXED STATE OF MIND THAN 1 HOUR OF DEEP SLEEP.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH INDOOR PLANTS

Stock up on super plants. Indoor pollutants are responsible for more than 16 million deaths each year. Certain plants can significantly improve the quality of indoor air.

BEST PLANTS FOR REMOVING AIR POLLUTANTS:

-  Purple Waffle Plant (Farfugium coccineum)
-  English Ivy (Hedera helix)
-  Waxy Leaved Plant (Zamioculcas zamiifolia)
-  Aloe Vera Plant (Aloe vera)

GET UP EVERY HOUR

Sitting could kill you. The average person should take roughly 10,000 steps a day. Taking fewer than that could have an impact on your risk of death.




PEOPLE WHO SIT FOR 4 HOURS A DAY OUTSIDE WORK HAVE A 50% GREATER RISK OF DYING THAN THOSE WHO SIT LESS THAN 2 HOURS A DAY.

JUST RELAX

Chill out. Letting stress roll off your back is one way to live a healthier and longer life. Anger is typically linked to high blood pressure and can cause increased risk of certain ailments.



MEN WITH THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF ANGER IN RESPONSE TO STRESS ARE ...

-  Three times more likely to develop premature heart disease.
-  Six times more likely to have a heart attack by age 55.

SOURCES: MSH, FORBES, TIME, "ALCOHOLISM, CLINICAL AND EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH," DAILY MAIL, HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, NILLAGE.CO.UK, EXAMINER.COM, THE LONGEVITY PROJECT DIGITAL SPY, MAYO CLINIC, JOURNAL OF AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGY



The Scenic Route to a Longer Life [infographic]

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After reading this infographic, it seemed to me that all of the suggested methods to promote one's longevity had a common theme: enjoying yourself. Among those included were such indulgences as chocolate, drinking, owning a pet, & simply thinking happy thoughts.

The secret is wonderfully simple. Just enjoy yourself. Of course, if you are unhappy & all of your energy is expended on something you don't enjoy or something that ultimately creates more stress than pleasure, your immune system is going to suffer.

The power with which your body can fight off illness is directly related to the level of stress in your life. The more panicked you are in your everyday life, the more energy your body expends being stressed, & conversely, the less energy you have to fight off illnesses.

Another very simple way to maintain longevity is to keep nature as a constant in your life. Keeping plants in your living space relieves air pollution & pumps your environment with fresh oxygen. Living in rural areas, close to wilderness also correlates to a longer life.

Wanna live past 100? **Try keeping it simple, & living in harmony with your environment.**