



# Healthy Ageing Quiz

Practical tips for ageing well

## WELCOME TO THE HEALTHY AGEING QUIZ

This quiz will help you determine whether your current lifestyle choices are helping you age well. If you are aged 50 years or over, male or female, this quiz is for you.

Take a moment to read the instructions, then complete the quiz.

### Instructions:

- The quiz will take about 10 minutes to complete.
- For each question, tick the most appropriate response based on your current circumstances (unless otherwise specified).
- Select the options that best describes your regular activities/behaviour in a typical week.
- If you cannot decide between two scoring options, tick the lower scored option.
- When you have answered all the questions, add up your score and refer to page 21 to see what your score tells you about your current lifestyle choices.

Regardless of your final score, if you score less than 2 points for any question (or 4 points for question two), check out the corresponding tips. A summary of tips to help you age well is provided also on page 22 of this booklet.

You can also take your completed quiz to your doctor to see what he/she recommends for improving your health, or use the action plan on page 23 to start planning new, healthy behaviours.

Good luck and healthy ageing!

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

1. In a typical week, do you do 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity a day?

*This means exercise or activity that causes the heart to beat faster and makes you breathe harder but during which you can still talk comfortably. For example, brisk walking, mowing the lawn, digging in the garden, or medium paced swimming or cycling, or heavy housework. The 30 minutes could be achieved in several 10-15 minute blocks.*

Yes, 5 days or more a week	2 points
3-4 days a week	1 points
0-2 days a week	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

2. Tick which of the following exercises you undertake regularly in a typical week. *Some activities may include several of the components below.*

Strength/power training	1 points
Balance and Mobility activities (e.g. walking, balance)	1 points
Cardiorespiratory activities (e.g. aerobics, swimming, cycling, brisk walk)	1 points
Flexibility (stretching, yoga)	1 points
None of the above	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

## TIPS

Score less than 2 on question one and less than 4 on question two? Try these tips to improve your level of physical activity.

- Physical activity is good for both your body and your mind.
- Aim to do at least 30 minutes of moderate activity each day. The 30 minutes can be done in 10-15 minute blocks and can include structured exercise or physical activity such as gardening or walking.
- Include a variety of exercises that help improve your function and independence: strength/power training, balance, mobility and cardiorespiratory activities and flexibility.
- Exercise programs are available through local councils, gyms and community health centres, or a physiotherapist can develop an individually tailored program for you.
- See the new physical activity guidelines for older people on the National Ageing Research Institute's website ([www.nari.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.nari.unimelb.edu.au)) or call 03 8387 2305.

**TOTAL SCORE FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** \_\_\_\_\_

## BALANCE & FALLS

### 3. Do you feel unsteady or at risk of losing your balance when walking and turning?

	No unsteadiness	2 points
	Very little/minimal unsteadiness	1 points
	Moderate to severe unsteadiness	0 points
	<b>My Score</b>	

### 4. How many falls have you had in the last 12 months? *A fall is where you land on a lower surface, and includes trips and slips.*

	Nil in 12 months	2 points
	1 in the last 12 months (no medical treatment needed)	1 points
	2 in the last 12 months (no medical treatment needed)	0 points
	1 or more requiring medical treatment	0 points
	<b>My Score</b>	

## TIPS

Score less than 2 on either of the last two questions? Try these tips to improve your balance and prevent falls.

- If you have concerns about your balance, or have fallen, investigate the cause. A number of factors could be contributing to the problem including vision, muscle weakness, balance problems, inactivity, medication, certain medical conditions, foot problems or inappropriate footwear.
- For further information about fall risk factors and strategies to prevent falls, talk to your doctor or visit the following websites: [www.nari.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.nari.unimelb.edu.au) or [www.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.health.vic.gov.au)

**TOTAL SCORE FOR BALANCE & FALLS** \_\_\_\_\_

## SMOKING & ALCOHOL USE

### 5. Do you smoke or have you ever smoked?

Never smoked or stopped over 10 years ago	2 points
I was a smoker but stopped within the last 10 years	1 points
I do not smoke but others smoke around me	1 points
Yes, I currently smoke (this includes being an occasional smoker)	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

**6. Do you drink more than the recommended level? *The recommended level for low-risk drinking is two standard drinks a day or less for healthy men and women, and no more than four drinks on any one occasion. A standard drink contains 10g of alcohol. That is 100ml of (12%) wine; 285ml of full strength beer or 570ml of light (2.2%) beer; 60ml of (18%) sherry and 30ml of (40%) spirits.***

I never or rarely drink	2 points
No, I drink within the recommended level	2 points
Yes, I drink more than the recommended level	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

## TIPS

Score less than 2 on either of the last two questions? Try these tips to stop smoking and reduce alcohol use.

- Quit smoking now! Speak to your doctor or ring the Quitline on 137 848.
- You can also visit the website [www.quit.org.au](http://www.quit.org.au) for strategies to help you beat the habit.
- Although there are some health benefits associated with some moderate alcohol use (e.g. a glass of red wine), use alcohol wisely and drink within the recommended level for low risk drinking.
- For older people it may be preferable to drink less or no alcohol because the body's ability to process alcohol decreases with age and alcohol may interact with any medication.
- The alcohol guidelines (and precautions for older people and other subgroups) can be downloaded from [www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/ds10syn.htm](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/ds10syn.htm).

**TOTAL SCORE FOR SMOKING & ALCOHOL USE \_\_\_\_\_**

## WEIGHT

**7. Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure of body fat based on height and weight. Is your BMI within the normal range, that is between 20 to 25? (Check the BMI table on the next page).**

My BMI is between 20 to 25	2 points
My BMI is between 26-27 but I am over 65 years of age	2 points
My BMI is above 25	0 points
My BMI is below 20	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

**8. What is your waist circumference? Place the tape measure directly on your skin, roughly in line with your belly button, breathe out normally and measure. The tape should be snug but not squeezing the skin.**

<b>For Men:</b>	
94cm or under (37")	2 points
Below 102cm but over 94cm	1 points
102cm and over (40.2")	0 points
<b>For Women:</b>	
80cm or under (31.5")	2 points
Below 90cm but over 80cm	1 points
90cm and over (35.4")	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

## TIPS

Score less than 2 on either of the last two questions? Try these tips for reaching a healthy weight.

- Being, obese, overweight or underweight increases your risk of many chronic diseases.
- Ensure your weight is within the healthy range for your height.
- Your Body Mass Index should be between 20 and 25. If you are over 65 years of age a BMI of 26-27 is also acceptable.
- Your waist circumference should be 80cm or less for women and 94cm or less for men.
- To control your weight, eat healthy balanced meals and exercise regularly.
- Your doctor or a dietician can also provide other advice on ways to reduce your weight.

**TOTAL SCORE FOR WEIGHT \_\_\_\_\_**

# BODY MASS INDEX TABLE

## Table of Acceptable Weights for Height

**Instructions:** Find your height in the table (note 160cm is 1.6m). If your weight is in the range listed on that line (51-64 kg) in the first half of the table then your BMI is within the 20-25 range. If your weight is in the second half of the table (65 to 69) then your BMI is in the range of 26 to 27. If your weight is either below or over the weight range listed, then your BMI is below or over that BMI range (20-25 or 26-27).

Based on Body Mass Index (BMI) in the range of 20-25. Suitable for use with both men and women over 18 years of age.				Based on Body Mass Index (BMI) in the range of 26-27. Acceptable BMI if aged 65 & over.	
cm	feet, inches	kg	stone, pounds	kg	stone, pounds
140	4,7	39-49	6,2 – 7,10	50-53	7,12 – 8,5
142	4,8	40-50	6,4 – 7,12	51-54	8,0 – 8,7
144	4,9	41-52	6,6 – 8,3	53-56	8,5 – 8,11
146	4,9.5	43-53	6,11 – 8,5	54-57	8,7 – 8,14
148	4,10	44-55	6,13 – 8,9	56-59	8,11 – 9,4
150	4,11	45-56	7,1 – 8,11	57-60	8,14 – 9,6
152	5,0	46-58	7,3 – 9,2	58-62	9,2 – 9,11
154	5,0.5	47-59	7,6 – 9,4	59-64	9,4 – 10,1
156	5,1.5	49-61	7,10 – 9,8	62-65	9,11 – 10,3
158	5,2	50-62	7,12 – 9,11	63-67	9,13 – 10,8
160	5,3	51-64	8,0 – 10,1	65-69	10,3 – 10,12
162	5,4	52-66	8,3 – 10,5.5	67-70	10,8 – 11,0
164	5,4.5	54-67	8,7 – 10,8	68-72	10,10 – 11,5
166	5,5	55-69	8,9 – 10,12	70-74	11,0 – 11,9
168	5,6	56-71	8,11 – 11,3	72-76	11,5 – 11,14
170	5,7	58-72	9,2 – 11,5	73-78	11,7 – 12,4
172	5,8	59-74	9,4 – 11,9	75-80	11,11 – 12,8
174	5,8.5	61-76	9,8 – 12,0	77-81	12,2 – 12,11
176	5,9	62-77	9,11 – 12,2	78-83	12,4 – 13,1
178	5,10	63-79	9,13 – 12,6	80-85	12,8 – 13,5
180	5,11	65-81	10,3 – 12,11	82-87	12,13 – 13,10
182	5,11.5	66-83	10,5.5 – 13,1	84-89	13,3 – 14,0
184	6,0.5	68-85	10,10 – 13,5	86-91	13,8 – 14,5
186	6,1	69-86	10,12 – 13,8	87-93	13,10 – 14,9
188	6,2	71-88	11,3 – 13,12	89-95	14,0 – 14,13
190	6,3	72-90	11,5 – 14,2	91-97	14,5 – 15,4
192	6,3.5	74-92	11,9 – 14,7	93-99	14,9 – 15,8
194	6,4	75-94	11,11 – 14,11	95-101	14,13 – 15,13
196	6,5	77-96	12,2 – 15,2	97-103	15,4 – 16,3
198	6,6	78-98	12,4 – 15,6	99-106	15,8 – 16,10
200	6,7	80-100	12,8 – 15,10.5	101-108	15,13 – 17,0

Modified from: Dietitians' Pocket Book November 2004 School of Public Health, Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Science, Curtin University of Technology

**To calculate your specific BMI:** You will need to divide your weight in kilograms by your height squared:

$$\text{kg/m}^2 \quad \text{Example: } \frac{70 \text{ kg}}{1.6\text{m} \times 1.6\text{m}} = \frac{70}{2.56} = 27.3$$

## DIET

### 9. In a typical week, do you eat a well balanced diet?

The Australian Healthy Eating Guidelines recommend that your diet should include:

- 5 vegetables (including legumes) a day,
- 2 fruits a day,
- Cereals (breads, rice, pasta, noodles, preferably wholegrain),
- At least three servings of calcium rich foods (e.g. milk, yoghurt, cheese),
- Lean meat, fish, poultry and/or eggs, legumes and nuts,
- Plenty of water/fluids (approx. 6-8 glasses a day),  
and should be:
- low in fat,
- low in sugar (including food and drinks containing sugar), and
- low in salt (including vegetable salts)

Ticking the boxes above will give you a better idea of whether your diet is well balanced, and will help you answer the options below:

Mostly or always	2 points
Sometimes	1 points
Never or rarely	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

### 10. Do you eat three regular meals a day?

Yes	2 points
Mostly	1 points
No	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

## TIPS

Score less than 2 on either of the last two questions? Try these tips to improve your diet.

- Your body needs fuel for energy and vitamins and minerals to function efficiently and for this you need a healthy, balanced diet. Poor diet is associated with many preventable chronic diseases.
- Aim to eat three meals each day (or more frequent smaller meals).
- Ensure that your diet meets the guidelines for healthy eating outlined above. The guidelines can be downloaded from: [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/\\_files/n31.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/_files/n31.pdf).
- A dietician can help you develop a healthy meal plan.

**TOTAL SCORE FOR DIET** \_\_\_\_\_

## CHRONIC CONDITIONS & MEDICAL CARE

**11. Do you have any of the following conditions: arthritis, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, depression, bronchitis/emphysema, osteoporosis (low bone density) or other chronic condition?**

I have no chronic conditions	2 points
I have one or more chronic conditions but they are well managed	1 points
I have one or more chronic conditions that cause me some concern	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

**12. Have you visited a doctor (GP or other medical practitioner) in the last 12 months for an annual check up?**

Yes	2 points
No	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

### TIPS

Score less than 2 on either of the last two questions? Try these tips for better care of chronic conditions.

- Learn all you can about your chronic condition – what helps the condition and what makes it worse. Talk to your doctor or contact a relevant chronic disease association (e.g. Arthritis Foundation, Diabetes Australia, Cancer Council of Australia, Kidney Health Australia, National Heart Foundation of Australia, National Stroke Foundation). These organisations can be found in the yellow pages under “Associations”.
- Understand the medication you take, their side effects and any contraindications. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist. Ask them about a Home Medicines Review.
- Have a general check up each year, as early detection of problems improves outcomes. If aged 75 and over (or 55 years and over if an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) ask your doctor about the Older Person’s Health Assessment.

**TOTAL SCORE FOR CHRONIC CONDITIONS & MEDICAL CARE \_\_\_\_\_**

## SLEEP & STIMULATING YOUR MIND

### 13. Do you have difficulty sleeping?

I generally sleep well	2 points
My sleep is interrupted but I usually go back to sleep without difficulty	1 points
I generally have difficulty sleeping	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

**14. In a typical week, do you engage in activities that challenge/stimulate your mind most days of the week? For example, reading, writing, playing a musical instrument, playing games (cards, checkers, doing crosswords), watching stimulating TV programs (such as documentaries) and learning new activities/skills.**

Yes, 5 days or more a week	2 points
3-4 days a week	1 points
0-2 days a week	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

## TIPS

Score less than 2 on either of the last two questions? Try these tips to improve your sleep and stimulating your mind.

- Your body needs sleep to repair any cell damage and to refresh your immune system. A good night's sleep (generally 8 hours) helps your concentration and your memory function.
- Avoid smoking or consuming alcohol or caffeine before bedtime, avoid too much daytime napping, establish regular sleep hours and a routine, and keep active during the day. Exposure to sunlight (at least 2 hours a day) helps regulate your sleep-wake cycle. Limit the use of sleeping tablets; they are a short term solution and can cause long term health problems.
- Investigate the causes of sleep problems and address them. They may include pain, medication, lack of exercise, psychological stress or sleep disorders, such as sleep apnoea. Talk to your doctor.
- Just like your body, you need to keep your mind active.
- Learn a new skill or take up a new hobby (eg painting, carpentry), do a short course, read, write, do crosswords puzzles, learn to play a musical instrument or a foreign language.
- Keeping physically and socially active also helps.
- If you have concerns about your memory, see your doctor.

**TOTAL SCORE FOR SLEEP & STIMULATING YOUR MIND \_\_\_\_\_**

## SOCIAL CONNECTIONS & PRODUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**15. In a typical week, do you have activities that keep you socially and productively engaged (ie that are worthwhile and satisfying)? For example church or volunteer work, paid work, taking care of your grandchildren, or creative or craft activities.**

Yes, 5 days or more a week	2 points
3-4 days a week	1 points
0-2 days a week	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

**16. Are you involved in any group activities (formal or informal), community or religious organisations (in total at least once a week)? For example, lawn bowls, golf club, choir, reading group, church activities, National Seniors Australia branch activities, Probus etc.**

At least once a week	2 points
Once or twice a month (not weekly)	1 points
Rarely	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

**17. How often do you see or hear from family and/or friends in a typical week?**

Yes, 5 days or more a week	2 points
3-4 days a week	1 points
0-2 days a week	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

**18. Do you have people you feel you can depend on?**

I definitely do	2 points
I do to some degree	1 points
I definitely do not	0 points
<b>My Score</b>	

## SOCIAL CONNECTIONS & PRODUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT (continued)

### 19. Do you have people you feel very close to?

	I definitely do	2 points
	I do to some degree	1 points
	I definitely do not	0 points
	<b>My Score</b>	

### TIPS

Score less than 2 on any of the last five questions? Try these tips to improve your social connections.

- Do things that make you happy and that are worthwhile to you – this may include working, looking after grandchildren, volunteering, and doing creative arts and crafts.
- Take time to develop and nurture your relationships with family and friends; not only are they people you can turn to in need, but they provide a social outlet and companionship.
- Group activities and volunteering give you an opportunity to meet new people.
- If you feel lonely and isolated, speak to someone – a family member or friend, your doctor, a social worker or a psychologist.
- If you have persistent symptoms of low mood, see your doctor.

**TOTAL SCORE FOR SOCIAL CONNECTIONS & PRODUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT** \_\_\_\_\_

## OPTIMISM & ADAPTABILITY

### 20. Are you generally an optimistic person?

	Yes	2 points
	To some degree	1 points
	No	0 points
	<b>My Score</b>	

### 21. Do you always look for opportunities that maximise what you can still do or find new activities to meet your current abilities or circumstances?

	Often or always	2 points
	Sometimes	1 points
	Never or rarely	0 points
	<b>My Score</b>	

### 22. Are there things that you look forward to each day?

	Often or always	2 points
	Sometimes	1 points
	Never or rarely	0 points
	<b>My Score</b>	

## TIPS

Score less than 2 on any of the last three questions? Try these tips to improve your optimism and adaptability.

- It is important to have something to look forward to each day, no matter how big or small.
- Keep a positive attitude and an open mind to opportunities that come your way.
- Plan your retirement, including what you will do to keep mentally and physically active.
- If your health changes, look at what you can do and not what you can no longer do.

**TOTAL SCORE FOR OPTIMISM & ADAPTABILITY** \_\_\_\_\_

## YOUR FINAL SCORE

Add up your total scores for each sub section and write them in the score column.

<b>Physical Activity</b> (Questions 1 & 2)	
<b>Balance &amp; Falls</b> (Questions 3 & 4)	
<b>Smoking &amp; Alcohol Use</b> (Questions 5 & 6)	
<b>Weight</b> (Questions 7 & 8)	
<b>Diet</b> (Questions 9 & 10)	
<b>Chronic Conditions &amp; Medical Care</b> (Question 11 & 12)	
<b>Sleep &amp; Stimulating Your Mind</b> (Question 13 & 14)	
<b>Social Connections &amp; Productive Engagement</b> (Questions 15 to 19)	
<b>Optimism &amp; Adaptability</b> (Questions 20 to 22)	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	

## HOW DID YOU RATE?

### **POOR (a score of 0-15)**

There are many areas in your lifestyle that could be negatively impacting on your chances of ageing well. Go through the quiz and highlight each question where you have scored less than 2 points (or 4 points for question two). Then check the tips in each section to see what you can do to improve each lifestyle factor.

### **FAIR (a score of 16-30)**

Although there are some areas in your lifestyle that are helping you age well, there are other areas that are letting you down. Go through the quiz and highlight each question where you have scored less than 2 points (or 4 points for question two). Then check the tips in each section to see what you can do to improve each lifestyle factor.

### **GOOD (a score of 31-46)**

You have adopted many positive lifestyle choices that are maximising your chances of ageing well. Go through the quiz and highlight each question where you have scored less than 2 points (or 4 points for question two). Then check the tips in each section to see what you can do to improve each lifestyle factor.

## SUMMARY TIPS

**Here is a summary of some actions you can take to help you age well:**

### **Physical Activity**

Do at least 30 minutes of moderate activity each day, include various types of exercise (strength/power training, balance, mobility and cardiorespiratory activities and flexibility).

### **Balance & Falls**

If you have concerns about your balance or have fallen, investigate the cause; talk to your doctor.

### **Smoking & Alcohol Use**

Quit smoking now and use alcohol wisely (no more than two standard drinks), for older people it may be preferable to drink less or no alcohol

### **Weight**

Keep your weight within the healthy range for your height; know your Body Mass Index (BMI) and waist measurement; exercise and a healthy diet are important.

### **Diet**

Aim to eat three meals each day (or more frequent smaller meals); ensure your diet meets the guidelines for healthy eating and drink enough water to keep you hydrated.

### **Chronic Conditions & Medical Care**

Learn all you can about your chronic condition - what helps the condition and what makes it worse - and your medication; have a general check up each year.

### **Sleep**

Investigate the causes of sleep problems and address them; limit the use of sleeping tablets; establish regular sleep hours and a routine.

### **Stimulating Your Mind**

Keep your mind active (e.g. learn a new skill, take up a new hobby, do a short course, read, write, do crossword puzzles, learn to play a musical instrument or a foreign language); see a doctor if you have concerns about your memory.

### **Social Connections & Productive Engagement**

Do things that make you happy and are worthwhile to you; develop and nurture your relationships with family and friends; get involved in group activities and volunteering; if lonely, isolated or have persistent symptoms of low moods talk to someone (e.g. family, friend, doctor, social worker, psychologist).

### **Optimism and Adaptability**

Keep a positive attitude and an open mind to opportunities that come your way; plan your retirement activities as well as your finances; look at what you can do and not what you can no longer do.

## ACTION PLAN

Life style risk factor	Action to address risk factor
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>People/groups to contact:</p> <p>Date to be completed:</p>
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>People/groups to contact:</p> <p>Date to be completed:</p>
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>People/groups to contact:</p> <p>Date to be completed:</p>
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>People/groups to contact:</p> <p>Date to be completed:</p>
<p>Additional Notes:</p>	



# KEEP ACTIVE, EAT WELL, STAY CONNECTED

Developed by



NATIONAL  
AGEING  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE

for



NationalSeniorsAustralia  
Productive Ageing Centre