

[IMAGE]

Feel Young, Live Longer?

By Editorial Staff

Does longevity really boil down to how you feel? According to research, the answer may have to do with *how old* you feel, regardless of your numerical age.

Researchers tracked just over 5,000 participants in a long-term survey of adults ages 40 and older that asked participants about the amount of perceived stress in their lives, any limitations in daily activities (walking, dressing, bathing, etc.), and their subjective age – "How old do you feel?" Over a three-year period, people with lower reported stress experienced a more gradual decline in functional health compared to people with higher reported stress. This association was strongest for older study participants: the older the person, the more profoundly perceived stress impacted daily function.

Interestingly, subjective age seemed to offer some protection against this stress-related decline. In fact, people who felt younger than their actual age seemed better able to manage stress, at least in terms of its impact on functional health. In this case, the oldest adults who still "felt young" enjoyed the most protection from functional decline.

We all experience stress, and we all eventually get old. But living out our Golden Years with as much function and ability to do things "like we used to when we were younger" may have less to do with our age and more to do with how old we *feel*. Feeling younger also may translate into better overall health, a better attitude, lower use of health care services (including hospitalization and long-term care), and more. *Feel young, live longer*; it could be as simple as that.

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