

HEALTH & WELLBEING



IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO SLOW, STOP OR EVEN REVERSE THE AGEING PROCESS? DR DORIAN DUGMORE OFFERS SOME INSIGHT INTO THE CURRENT THINKING ON THIS AGE-OLD PROBLEM

THE STRESSES AND strains of modern management can take their toll on a manager's health and fitness, and can even contribute to premature ageing. So, is there a way that managers can 'hedge their bets' and either beat the ageing clock or, at least, turn it back a little?

It will come as no surprise to most that the key to 'quality ageing' is the same as the key to most health and wellbeing issues... regular exercise.

In a recent study (the findings of which were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*), Dr Ralph Paffenbarger tracked thousands of former Harvard graduates to monitor how they aged. The results demonstrated that men who expended at least 2,000 calories (equivalent to three to four hours of exercise) per week through exercise were more likely to live to reach 80 and beyond than

their more sedentary counterparts. Members of this group also had significantly lower levels of heart disease and cancer.

In addition to your exercise regime, maintaining a good eating pattern is also crucial (or, more to the point, eating too much and at the wrong time can have a seriously negative effect).

The world-famous Cleveland Clinic advises us that as we age beyond 35-40 years, eating five smaller meals throughout the day maintains energy, avoids the famous 3pm energy slump and controls weight gain more effectively. This is because as the human body ages, it handles smaller 'calorie bundles' more effectively than it handles large meals, particularly those that are consumed late at night. Redesigning the plate so that it's smaller, has three-quarters of its space filled with healthy, nutritious (and multi-coloured) fresh vegetables and fruit, and features regular oily fish as a main item, is the way to go.

As most managers are driven by a passion for what they do, it's unlikely that they will leave their position by choice. So, according to *Time* magazine's 'How to Live 100 Years' feature (February 2010), to extend their careers and turn back the ageing clock "the first step to a longer life and career span is to get back some of what we lose by living our overfed, overstressed and underactive lifestyles".





DO WE HAVE AN ANTI-AGEING CLOCK?

Dr Walter Pierpaoli, an anti-ageing expert and *New York Times* bestseller, has focused on the discovery of what he calls the “anti-ageing clock”, which resides in the brain’s pineal gland complex. He suggests that melatonin, a substance naturally secreted by this gland, slows the ageing process and assists in the quality of sleep. However, because this secretion slows with age, taking melatonin supplements (not readily available in the UK at the moment) can help delay the onset of old age.

Only about 30% of ageing for most people is genetically based, which means 70% of other variables that can delay ageing are in our hands



CATCH OF THE DAY

Omega 3 fatty acids found in fish oil and flaxseed help protect you from age-related illnesses, such as heart disease, and may slow how your cells age. Research on heart patients in San Francisco showed those with high levels of omega 3 fatty acids positively slowed the shortening of chromosomes, slowing the ‘biological ageing clock’. So eat oily fish (high in omega 3) at least three times per week.

EXPERT COMMENT

“Research from the Salk Institute, La Jolla, California, suggests that our health-related behaviours, thoughts and feelings can modify our health risks by controlling the expression of our genetic code. A recent study highlighted four key behaviours: regular exercise, not smoking, not being obese and consuming a plant-based diet. Together, they reduced the risk of heart attacks by 81 per cent and chronic disease by 78 per cent.”

Dr Lee Rice, CEO, Lifewellness Institute, San Diego, California. Former USA Olympic Team & America’s Cup doctor

HOW TO DELAY THE AGEING CLOCK

AGE MARKER	ACTION REQUIRED
Heart reserve	Exercise, low-fat diet, anti-oxidants up
Lung reserve	Exercise, avoid smoking and toxic environments
Cholesterol	Measure annually, fish oil, exercise, low-fat diet
Blood pressure	Measure annually, limit salt, weight control, low-fat diet
Blood sugars	Measure annually, weight control, exercise
Weight gain	Early-morning exercise, regular small meals
Bone loss	Weight-bearing exercise, cardio, stretching
Skin ageing	UV protection, avoid midday sun, annual skin exam
Dental decay	Floss, avoid sugars, visit hygienist, check gums

SUPPLEMENTS AND AGEING

Experts in the field of anti-ageing are predicting that longevity should and will increase. Anti-ageing supplements, although sounding fanciful, may not be so far away. Already *Time* magazine (February 2010) has cited the potential benefits of resveratrol, a substance found in grapes, red wine and peanuts that mimics the response to caloric restriction. The latter seems to extend the life span in humans and animals. One theory is that a state of slight hunger acts as a mild but constant stressor that makes an organism stronger and more resistant to the ills of ageing.

