

## You Can Do It Better

Our longevity is the rest of our life. While there are no certainties, many of us can take more control of the quality and length of our longevity with a personal strategy, that builds and sustains our confidence and enables us to adapt to external and personal changes.

## Starting with What?

Our wellness is a basic building block for our planning. Understanding where we are now provides a clearer picture of our potential personal time frame, why and what we can do about it.

Immediate preventive actions are increasingly likely to be significant in our future. For example, it's widely accepted that about a third of dementia cases could be deferred or prevented through personal lifestyle changes, including managing high blood pressure, air pollution, obesity, excess alcohol, smoking, obesity and hearing loss. Key solutions include adequate physical activity and sleep.

The SHAPE Analyser typically identifies several actions each of us can take. Reviewing these with our health advisers and documenting them in our longevity plan means we have more confidence in being on the right track for our general health as well as for specific issues like dementia.

On a broader front, social disadvantage is also an important indicator of poor outcomes at all ages. Those of us not so affected could well consider more active support in this space, ranging from child support through grandparenting and education. Wider actions could include support through charities and volunteering, and even political action through local representatives who may be becoming more influential as support for major parties dwindles. Having a strong social purpose is also a contributor to wellbeing.

## Then What?

A personal preventive approach can be extended into the Longer-Term steps which are part of longevity planning. Let's consider just one of the seven steps – Aged Care.

Aged care services – at home or in residential facilities – are likely to be needed once we are in the dependent phase of our lives, as suggested in your SHAPE results. By taking appropriate steps earlier in our lives, we are more likely to defer the need for aged care, with many favourable consequences:

more time to plan for aged care, lower costs, and a longer healthy lifespan to enjoy. Longer longevity is on average accompanied by a shorter period of dependency.

## Why Should I Bother?

Despite all the attention being paid to improving aged care in Australia, significant solutions will take years to implement effectively. It makes sense to take steps to reduce the impact of aged care by taking all steps we can to minimise this period – with a major bonus of likely longer and healthier lives.

For those of use who expect aged care to be a long way off, it's likely our parents are close to this zone. Encouraging them to take appropriate action to defer it can be to mutual benefit.

At a personal level, once both partners in a relationship have adopted longevity planning, their preferred solutions can often be enhanced by the informed dialogue their individual plans support.

Finally, it's common to kick things down the road if we don't like the thought of having to deal with them. By separating the key Longer- term steps into bite-sized chunks, longevity planning enables us to deal with each of them more effectively and in a timely way.

## Next Steps

If you are already a subscriber, consider checking into your own plan and refining one of your own longer-term steps. If you are undecided, we are constantly refining the longevity planning process and adding support webinars for subscribers and newcomers. You can now easily explore your own initial plan by just taking the free SHAPE Analyser online and starting your own Immediate Steps.

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**SHAPE Analyser** now