

Can We Really Get Better With Age?

The short answer is yes – but what does ‘better’ mean?

Live longer and less dependent?

Every user of the SHAPE Analyser gets an estimate of the three stages of the rest of their life, based on Australian data.¹

AGE NOW	ABLE YEARS	LESS ABLE YEARS	DEPENDENT YEARS	TOTALS
65	10	7	4	21
75	5	4	4	13
85	2	2	3	7

**Dependent years have severe or profound core activity limitations. Core activities comprise self-care, mobility and communication.*

The longer we live, the longer we’re likely to live, so the overall amount of Able time tends to increase with age and the Dependent stage is likely to be shorter. So ‘better’ means both length and quality of life are potential gains.

Just in Australia?

Finnish studies comparing physical and mental capabilities of men and women today and 30 years ago showed length and quality of life had improved. More years have been added to midlife and less to dependency – as with the Australian findings.

Body and brain?

The comparisons showed improvements in muscle strength, walking speed, reaction speed, verbal fluency, reasoning and working memory. There was no significant change in lung function tests. Longer education was the main reason for cognitive improvement.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. Life Expectancy and Disability in Australia 2003-2017

Consequences

The steady increases in length and quality of life in part reflects communities providing an improving framework for living, including the availability of medical care and other benefits.

In addition, if we choose we can prepare better to make our own decisions if we apply what we now know about ageing to making the best of our own situation.

A clearer understanding of our own potential time frame, its stages and the underlying reasons is the first step.

This is the purpose of the SHAPE Analyser. Enlisting the support of health advisers to identify appropriate actions can sharpen our focus. Then we are better prepared to address other important decisions in our lives.

Better prepared for what?

Financial decisions will be more soundly based if they reflect our own time expectations. Decisions about work and retirement are better informed.

Decisions about where to live, for how long and why are clarified. Estate planning and intergenerational issues can be more easily dealt with. Aged care and end of life decisions can be addressed while in reasonable shape rather than in crisis mode.

By planning for our longevity, we can get on with pursuing our interests, confident that we are well prepared to make the best of the rest of our life.

Your Longevity Plan

Start or revisit your own Longevity Plan to prepare for the future.

Try your free upgraded
SHAPE Analyser now