

Older— and Wiser

MYTHS ABOUT GROWING OLDER ARE EVERYWHERE. ARE YOU WISE BEYOND YOUR YEARS?

QUIZ

Who says getting old means slowing down? More seniors are debunking that myth on a daily basis. And it's a good thing too, because we're living longer than ever. Take this quiz to see how much you know about aging.

1. Older folks don't work as hard as younger people. (True/False)
2. Getting older means you stop setting—and achieving—your goals and dreams. (True/False)
3. As you get older, your physical health inevitably declines. (True/False)
4. Most older adults are able to live on their own. (True/False)



As Old as You Feel

Staying active is the key to staying healthy. Visit aarppfitness.org and click "free exercise library" to watch videos demonstrating more than 100 simple exercises you can do in your home or the gym.

ANSWERS

1. **False.** "Oh, goodness, no," says Jim Dau, national spokesman for the AARP. "The CEO of AARP, Bill Novelli, is 67. He puts in grueling hours. He takes the stairs every day to his 10th-floor office. I wish I had a quarter of the energy he does and I'm in my 30s." Dau argues that not only do some older people work harder; they also work smarter than their younger counterparts. "The assets older people bring to the workforce are very strong. They have skills and experience you can't get right out of school."

2. **False.** "This is quite the opposite now," says Dau. "We're finding millions of seniors are using their retirement years to achieve their goals." Whether it's becoming a teacher or joining the Peace Corps, seniors are taking advantage of the absence of work and children at home to do all the things they didn't have time for before. And many of these dreams, Dau says, include service. "People now aren't just taking trips. They're doing *voluntourism*," he says. "They're dedicating their time to serve others."

3. **False.** Not true again, says Dau, who cites the advancement of science and medicine plus an explosion in personal fitness to explain how seniors stay healthy and active. "This is a generation that still exercises as they grow older." According to the 2007 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report on aging, the United States met four of 11 Healthy People 2010 targets six years ahead of schedule. They are an increase in mammograms, colorectal cancer screenings, cholesterol checks and smoking cessation. "Older people are healthier in general," Dau says.

4. **True.** The vast majority of senior citizens live on their own or with friends or family. Only 2 percent of people ages 65 to 84 reside in long-term care facilities. After age 85, that percentage increases but only to 14 percent.

Score:

3-4: You know the secret to staying young.
1-2: It's time to brush up on the basics of aging.
0: Get a clue. Age is just a number.