

## **Body Age and Visceral Fat**

**Body age** is a measurement of how old you are biologically based upon your health and fitness level as opposed to what your birth certificate indicates (chronological). For example, someone who is 35 years old may have a **body age** that is ten years older (45).

At the very least, your **body age** should be the same as your chronological age.

It has been shown that as we grow older, certain hormone levels decrease and others increase. The hormones that decrease are DHEA (boosts the immune system and brain function), estrogen, progesterone and testosterone (sex hormone that also helps build muscle, bone and connective tissue, keeps us mentally alert and protects us from heart disease) and human growth hormone (stimulates bone, nerves, muscles, skin and organs to regenerate). The hormones that increase as we age are insulin (increases blood glucose levels, predisposing us to diabetes) and cortisol (stress hormone, leads to weight gain, decreased immune function, increased inflammation and ongoing pain). Aging is not related to just one thing. It is a cumulative effect of multiple processes occurring at the same time.

### **Steps to Reducing Your Body Age:**

1. **Limit Toxins**

This includes tobacco, pollution, pesticides and insecticides (from non-organic foods), chemical in cleaning products, radiation (over-exposure to the sun, x-rays, mobile phones, computers, TV, and other electrical equipment) and recreational drugs.

2. **Minimize Stress**

While some stress is necessary to keep up motivated, excessive stress places strain on our immune system, messes with our hormones, slows our metabolic rate and increases our fat storage. Techniques such as meditation, guided imagery, prayer, massage, tai chi, chi-ball method, Pilates classes and yoga are always a way of reducing stress.

3. **Healthy Diet**

Limit refined carbohydrates to help control blood sugar and eat plenty of foods high in antioxidants such as fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, dark chocolate, green tea and decaffeinated coffee to control free radicals. Omega-3 fats and fibers are also important and can be sourced from fatty fish, fish oils, pumpkin seeds, dark green vegetables, walnuts, grains, corn, oats, rice and legumes. It is also important to drink plenty of water to maintain hydration.

4. **Get Regular Health Check-ups**

Many degenerative diseases can be managed or eradicated if they are identified early. If you are over 40, you should regularly see your General Practitioner for checks of your blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol to name a few.

5. **Get plenty of Exercise**

Regular exercise is one of the most effective ways to reduce your **body age**. It has been shown to improve mood, improve brain function, improve the body's antioxidant defense mechanism, decrease pain and reduce depression. It has also been shown to reduce the risks of Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, diabetes and dementia. Research indicates that intense interval exercise is more beneficial to the body than long-duration, lower intensity exercise. However, to ensure you can achieve this without hurting yourself. You must build up slowly.

6. **Work on Your Strength**

Performing at least 2 strength training sessions per week helps to counteract the wasting of muscle tissue that occurs with age. It also helps improve body composition, increase metabolic rate and prevents hormone levels of DHEA, testosterone and human growth hormones failing too low.

7. **Get Enough Sleep**

There is no doubt about the damaging effects of sleep deprivation. To ensure you get a great night's sleep and are well rested to try to get to bed and wake up at the same time each day, avoid caffeine after 4pm, wind down with relaxation in the half hour before bed, and make your bedroom a "haven" without a TV, and with the room dark and cool, this helps facilitate sleep. Ensure you get at least 7 hours of restful sleep per night.

8. **BE POSITIVE**

There is much evidence to suggest that a positive mindset can have a beneficial effect on your longevity. The 'placebo effect' is a strong indicator of the success of 'mind over matter'.

**Visceral fat** is a type of body fat that's stored within the abdominal cavity. It's located near several vital organs, including the liver, stomach, and intestines. It can also build up in the arteries. **Visceral fat** is sometimes referred to as "active fat" because it can actively increase the risk of serious health problems.

If you have some belly fat, that's not necessarily visceral fat. Belly fat can also be subcutaneous fat, stored just under the skin. Subcutaneous fat, the type of fat also found in the arms and legs, is easier to see. **Visceral fat** actually is inside the abdominal cavity and isn't easily seen.

Fortunately, **visceral fat** is extremely receptive to exercise, diet, and lifestyle changes. With each pound you **lose**, you **lose** some **visceral fat**. When possible, you should exercise for at least 30 minutes every day. Make sure to include plenty of both cardio exercises and strength training.