

Fountain Of Youth

Reduce your real age by 6.4 years!

Looking for a new way to stay young? Share this information with your friends and family. Michael Roizen, M. D. is a professor of medicine at the University of Chicago who has studied the impact of individual habits on aging.

Dr. Roizen says the long-term health benefits of daily flossing are so powerful that patients who adhere to this practice should deduct 6.4 years from their actual age.

Moreover, those who vigorously keep up on their oral hygiene so that they avoid dental disease, especially gingivitis and periodontitis should subtract two years from their chronological ages. “I would say to the patient, “This makes you younger”” he says. Dr. Roizen has coined the term “Real Age” to explain that people who embrace certain healthful habits enjoy a rich payback in years subtracted from their biological age. At the same time, deleterious habits age people faster than their chronological years. These are summarized in Dr. Roizen’s book, *Real Age: Are You as Young as You Can Be?* (Cliff Street Books, 1999), and on his website [www. RealAge.com](http://www.RealAge.com).

To arrive at Rest Age calculations, Dr. Roizen and a team of medical experts read some 25,000 clinical studies that show the increased or

decreased mortality rates associated with a variety of behavior. In the end, they focused on 125 behaviors, each of which has been the subject of at least four major studies. Through risk vs. benefit analysis, they quantified the impact of individual routines on biological years.

One study by Emory University and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention linked gingivitis and periodontitis and mortality. Translated into Dr. Roizen’s Real Age terms, these dental diseases age individuals by 3.4 years over those with healthy gums. Dr. Roizen says periodontitis causing bacteria produce reactions in the body, such as hardened arteries, and paves the way for heart disease, stroke and memory loss.

Flossing, brushing and good gum care will help patients live longer. He points to his own example:

“I never flossed daily until three years ago, when we were doing the analysis of this data,” he says. “It jumped out at us, so I began to floss every day.” Same other tips to keep time on your side, culled from Dr. Roizen’s book:

Know your blood pressure: People with low blood pressure (about 115/75 mm HG) are as much as 25 years younger than those with high blood pressure (over 160/90 HG).

Manage your health: Those who are proactive about seeking high quality medical, dental care, and managing chronic conditions have a Real Age as much as 12 years younger than those who do not.

Exercise vigorously:

An exercise plan that includes boosting physical activity to 3,500 Kcal a week, building stamina and building strength with 30 minutes of resistance exercises a week, can make your Real Age as much as nine years younger.

In addition, some things that pile years on:

Stress: In highly stressful times your Real Age can be as much as 32 years older than your calendar age.

Smoking: Smoking advances your Real Age by eight years.

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