

Biological Age: How old are you...really?

Unless you've inherited a rare genetic disorder or have been in an accident, everyone generally starts aging at a similar rate. By the time we hit our 30s, however, biologic function and performance has already started to decline for many. The rate of decline varies dramatically among individuals. While some people will lose a function as they age, others will show almost no decline at all. In fact, for many functions some people can even improve as they progress from thirty-five to eighty years.

You know how old you are. However, do you know how your body currently functions physically and biologically compared to people at different chronological ages? Some call this our biological age. Measuring biological age is a way of determining your risk of aging-related disability or dying, compared to that of someone either older or younger than you are. By making unhealthy choices in life, it is possible to age biologically at a rate equivalent to someone 15-20 years older. The question is how can you be one of those people who show almost no decline over time? The goal is not necessarily to live longer but to live better, suffering less illness and disability.

Many assume that how a person ages is carved in "genetic stone." But studies continue to show that for most of us, lifestyle choices and behaviors have far more impact on longevity and health than our genes. Determining your biological age lets you know the impact of the choices you have made, but more importantly how to prioritize the choices that are best for you. A board certified preventive-aging physician can help you make this assessment. While we cannot turn back the clock chronologically, we can rewind it, and possibly set it back biologically.