

Introduction

How can we stay healthy in old age? Beth and Phil discuss this and teach you some new vocabulary.

This week's question

The oldest recorded person ever to have lived was a woman who was born in 1876, and lived to 122. But which country was she from? Was it:

- a) Japan
- b) France or,
- c) Italy?

Listen to the programme to hear the answer.

Vocabulary

young at heart

(idiom) think and behave in a youthful way, in spite of your age

positive attitude

feeling hopeful, confident and focused on the good aspects of life rather than the bad ones

twin studies

scientific research using sets of twins to investigate the roles of genetics and environment in human development

Mediterranean diet

food typically eaten by people living around the Mediterranean Sea, such as fresh vegetables, olive oil and fish

communal meal

occasion when people sit down together to eat, talk and share a meal

multigenerational household

people from two or more generations of the same family living in a house together

TRANSCRIPT

Note: This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Phil

Hello. This is 1 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Phil.

Beth

And I'm Beth.

Phil

Grey hairs, wrinkles, and poor eyesight are common signs that our body is growing old. Much as we'd like to, we can't avoid ageing, so it's important to stay healthy as we get older.

Beth

In this programme, we'll be hearing about some new research offering fresh advice on how to stay **young at heart**, an idiom meaning to keep a youthful outlook on life, whatever your age. And, of course, we'll be learning some useful new vocabulary as well.

Phil

But 7 Minute English isn't just about vocabulary – we improve your listening skills as well, so why not turn on the audio subtitles or download the script to read along as you listen? It could also help you answer my question. The oldest recorded person ever to have lived was a woman who was born in 1870, and lived to the ripe old age of 122. But which country was she from? Was it:

- a) Japan
- b) France or,
- c) Italy?

Beth

I am going to say Japan.

Phil

OK, Beth, I'll reveal the correct answer later in the programme. Ageing is partly caused by the body's cells starting to decay, so you might think we're powerless to stop it. But listen to this good news from Professor Sarah Harper, Director of the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing:

Prof Sarah Harper

I think the really exciting thing is that even 10 years ago we would have thought: Yes, it's all to do with our cells. Now we understand this relationship between what we call 'cell and society', and we really can make a difference! And in fact, a recent paper just came out which said that 70% of our ageing can be controlled by how we live.

Beth

Professor Harper says that 70% of ageing is determined by something we *can* influence, our lifestyle. So, what lifestyle should we choose? Here's Sarah Harper giving more details to BBC Radio 4 programme, 'Inside Health':

Prof Sarah Harper

You know, there's obviously things like diet, which I think we'll come to, but there's also a **positive attitude**, and there's been some wonderful **twin studies** that have been done where you've had twins and they have been able to map them across their lives, and if you're positive, you actually have far greater health in later life than if you're negative.

Phil

One important factor in ageing well is a **positive attitude** - feeling hopeful, confident, and focused on the good things in life. This conclusion was based on several **twin studies**, scientific research which uses twins to study the roles of genetics and environment in human development. In studies, Professor Harper found positive twins stayed healthier than negative twins as they aged.

Beth

Loneliness can be another problem as we get older. Here, Professor Sarah Harper explains how in countries like Spain, Italy and Greece, regular social interaction helps people age well:

Prof Sarah Harper

Loneliness can have the same impact as smoking in the statistics. And when we talked about the **Mediterranean diet**, it's also got two other sides: it's got exercise because these people tend to be outside more because they have that kind of a climate, but also they still tend to live [communal meals]... Absolutely they have **communal meals**, they tend to live together more in **multigenerational households**, that is changing a bit, so there's a whole lifestyle around it.

Phil

The healthy food, such as fresh vegetables and fish, eaten by people living in countries around the Mediterranean Sea, is known as the **Mediterranean diet**. Mediterranean cultures have other advantages too, including outdoor exercise, which is easier in warm climates, and **communal meals**, occasions when people sit down and share food together.

Beth

Mediterranean people are also more likely to live in **multigenerational households**, where people from two or more generations of a family live together in the same house. Not everyone can live in the **Mediterranean**, but it seems a positive attitude and social interaction are two things we can all do to age well. Speaking of which, what was the answer to your question, Phil?

Phil

OK, well, I asked you about the oldest living person ever recorded. I asked what country they came from, and you said Japan. Well, I can reveal the answer is actually France. A lady in France lived for 122 years and 174 days. And if you knew the answer to that, there are other questions about this programme in the quiz on our worksheet, which you can find on our website, bbclearningenglish.com. OK, let's recap the new vocabulary we've learned about staying **young at heart**, an idiom which means to think and behave in a youthful way, in spite of growing older.

Beth

People with a **positive attitude** feel hopeful, confident, and focused on the good things in life.

Phil

Twin studies use twins to investigate the roles of genetics and environment in human development.

Beth

A **Mediterranean diet** describes the foods typically eaten by people living in countries around the Mediterranean Sea, including fresh vegetables, olive oil and fish.

Phil

At a **communal meal**, people sit down together to talk and share food.

Beth

And finally, a **multigenerational household** is when people from two or more generations of the same family live together. Once again, our six minutes are up, but if you enjoyed this discussion then head over

to the BBC Learning English website to find the accompanying worksheet and quiz, along with loads of other programmes and resources to help learn English. See you there!

Phil

Bye!