

The test that could take years off you



Sophia: She's 70, but what's her 'real' age?

HOW TO MEASURE YOUR BIOLOGICAL AGE



Test 1: Bend your right leg at a 90 degree angle and put your hands on your hips. Close your eyes. Time how long you can keep your balance. Repeat three times and use best score.

70+ secs	Age 20
60-70 secs	Age 30
50-60 secs	Age 40
40-50 secs	Age 50
30-40 secs	Age 60
20-30 secs	Age 70
Less than 20 secs	Age 80



Test 2: Place the end of a ruler on your cheekbone below your eye. Put a business card on ruler with the text facing you and slide it towards your eye until the words begin to blur. Measure distance at which the card can be easily read.

0-9cm	Age 20	30-60cm	Age 50
9-16cm	Age 30	60-90cm	Age 60
16-30cm	Age 40	90+cm	Age 70



Test 3: Look closely at your eyeball in a mirror. Is there a white arc around the edge of your

cornea, the transparent outer shell of the eye? The longer the arc, the higher your cholesterol level. An unbroken line is normal in someone aged around 80. The more complete the line, the older your biological age.

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By **Andrew Levy**

FOR those who've looked after themselves, it will be an enticing prospect. Those who haven't may not want to know.

Science has produced a new way of measuring age based not on the calendar but on the condition of your body, giving new meaning perhaps to the legend that you're only as old as you feel.

A test costing between £250 and £900 will yield a body map showing in red, green and amber which areas are ageing well and which are not.

The premise is that, internally, you could be years younger than your birth date suggests. Conversely, of course, you could also be rather older than you think.

The 'real age' test involves feeding detailed information on health, lifestyle, fitness and family medical history into a computer. It is considered so accurate (and improving all the time) that a British expert has suggested it could be used to calculate a fairer retirement age.

Professor Robert Weale, of the Institute of Gerontology at King's College London, said it could also prove useful to insurance companies or employers.

'Most employers take account of a person's calendar years, rather than biological age,' he said. 'But the two may differ by many years and it is the latter which is crucial in the performance of any task.'

dating agencies, who it is felt might be able to find partners better suited on biological than calendar age.

Those who don't fare too well are advised to change their diet and fitness regime to slow the march of time inside the body. They are

never varied in biological from calendar age.

The main factors used to establish 'real age' include weight, cholesterol levels, blood pressure, waist-to-hip ratio, hair loss or greying and strength of hand-grip. Others are flexibility, balance, alertness, sense of smell, lung capacity and skin elasticity.

The computer assesses the information, measures it against averages and creates the traffic light coded body map. Organs that are ageing more quickly than the patient's years are highlighted in red, while those that are healthier than average are green. Amber denotes areas that have aged in line with the body.

■ Are you only as old as you feel? Tell us your view at:

of time inside the body. They are re-assessed during a return visit.

The 'real age' concept has spawned a multi-million dollar industry in the U.S.

Among those offering the tests in the UK are some private health clinics and health insurer Bupa. Dr Lynette Yong, of HB Health, a clinic in West London, said: 'The whole purpose of these tests is to motivate people to improve their health. It is really only useful if you are going to do something about it.'

What the tests would reveal about Sophia Loren, who is still stunning at 70, remains to be seen. The actress puts her own flawless appearance down to 'spaghetti, a love of life and the odd bath in virgin olive oil' - suggesting she's a health-conscious