

Sports Medicine

AGEING

Reading comprehension

1. In the passage there are a number of sentences missing. Read it through and decide where the sentences below should go.
 - a) But it is important to make a distinction between calmly relaxed and passively lazy.
 - b) Puritanical arguments about smoking and drinking have little to support them.
 - c) People who want a long life with an alert old age should never retire.
 - d) But, in gaining success, individuals should not overstress themselves.
 - e) A sense of humour, a feeling that life is fun, are strong weapons against ageing.
 - f) Such activities as walking and gardening prolong life enormously because they are 'non-intensive' forms of all-over bodily movement.
 - g) That does not imply a military-style masochism but the ordering of life and the imposition of a pattern on the events of the day.

For adults who remain vivaciously childlike in old age, there has to be a sustained enthusiasm for some aspect of life. (1)..... If they are forcibly retired they should immerse themselves in some new, absorbing activity.

Some people are naturally physically more active than others, and are at a considerable advantage providing their activities are not result of stress. (2)..... The more earnest ageing exercisers display a conscious or unconscious anxiety about their health. If they take exercise too seriously it will work against them. Older individuals who take up intensive athletic activity are usually people who fear declining health. Yet it is crucial that physical exercise - as we grow old – should be extensive rather than intensive and, above all, fun.

A calm temperament favours longevity. Those who are sharply aggressive, emotionally explosive or anxious are at a grave disadvantage. (3)..... Relaxation does not contradict the idea of passionate interest. Indeed, zest for living, eagerness to pursue chosen subjects are vital in long life.

Thinking about 'the good old days', complaining about how the world is deteriorating, criticising the younger generations, are sure signs of *an early funeral*.

Being successful is *a great life-stretcher*, and can even override such life-shorteners as obesity and fondness for drink. (4)..... And success must always be measured in personal terms. A hill-shepherd may feel just as successful in their own way as a Nobel Laureate.

In personal habits, the long-lived are generally moderate. Extremes of diet are not common. A mixed diet seems to favour longevity. (5)..... Many long-lived individuals enjoy nicotine and alcohol – in moderation.

Most long-lived people have a sense of self-discipline. (6)..... The person who lives long because they walk a mile a day does so because they do it everyday, as part of an organised exercise.

Over and over, during my researches, it emerged that long life goes with a "*twinkle in the eye*". (7)..... *The sour-faced puritan* and the solemn bore soon begin to lose ground, leaving their more amused contemporaries to enjoy the last laugh.

Finally, nothing is to be gained by *a head-in-the-sand avoidance* of the facts of life and death. The healthiest solution is to accept that one's span on Earth is limited and then to live every day, in the present, and to the full.

(Adapted from Desmond Morris: The Book of Ages).

Dealing with unfamiliar words

The writer uses a number of images to describe particular characteristics or attitudes:

- a) “an early funeral”
- b) “a great life stretcher”
- c) “a twinkle in the eye”
- d) “the sour-faced puritan”
- e) “a head-in-the-sand avoidance”

Choose their probable meanings from the list below.

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| (i) enthusiasm and youthful spirits | (vi) a good way of living longer |
| (ii) a shortened life | (vii) ignorance and narrow-mindedness |
| (iii) a refusal to face reality | (viii) fondness for practical jokes |
| (iv) a love of alcohol and food | (ix) shyness and nervousness |
| (v) someone who is morally very strict | |

Writing summaries

1. Make a list of things which the writer recommends as important for a long life.

Example: You should: have enthusiasm for some aspect of life

2. Now think of examples of the kinds of things which the writer might recommend you to do or not to do. Join the notes you made in 1 into connected sentences using phrases to signal examples, such as *for example, an example of this is, such as...*

Further work

Do you think that your present life style will allow you to live a long life? In groups of three or four discuss what you should change in your life styles in order to live longer.