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More information:

<https://academic.oup.com/gerontologist/article/53/6/939/634197?login=false>

<https://time.com/collection/guide-to-happiness/4464811/aging-happiness-stress-anxiety-depression/>

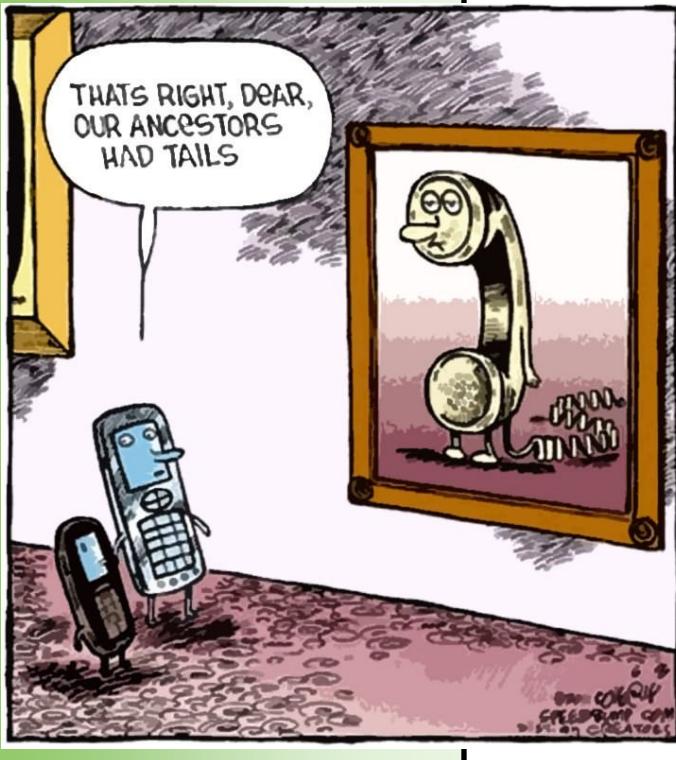
## Six keys to happiness for older adults

What do scientists have to say about what makes older adults happy and contributes to their well-being?

### Paradox of successful aging

Researchers have found that seniors in their 80s and 90s, and older adults generally, report higher levels of contentment and well-being than teenagers and young adults, according to the *New York Times*. Gerontologists call this the paradox of old age. Older people who have lived through and coped with many challenges and losses in their lives are resilient. Even though older adults may be experiencing declines in their physical or cognitive abilities, they feel better about their lives rather than worse, compared to younger adults.

### Pathways to happy lives



**1. Focus on abilities.** Older adults who focus on what they *can* do and find rewarding, rather than any decline in abilities, are happier. According to a study in *The Gerontologist*, accepting aging and adapting to age-related changes is vital to successful aging and well-being.

**2. Stay socially connected.** Frequent social participation, interactions and support contribute strongly to the mental health and well-being of Canadian seniors, according to a Statistic Canada study on healthy aging.

**3. Be actively engaged in life.** Active engagement in life through physical, mental and social activities is a key component of successful aging and life satisfaction, according to researchers from Toronto's York University. Their study found that physically active Canadian older adults, for example, were more than twice as likely to successfully age and maintain optimal health and well-being.

**4. Accentuate the positive.** As people get older, they become better at regulating their emotional health, and looking at experiences and challenges with a positive attitude, according to a Stanford Center on Longevity study. In memory tests, older adults recalled more positive images than negative images than younger adults. When shown photos of people smiling or scowling, older adults also recalled the smiling faces more quickly.

A-A-R-P! I wanna join the A-A-R-P!



The Retirement Village People

**5. Volunteer to feel good.** University of Toronto researchers found that formal volunteer-ing reduced depression and increased psychoso-cial well-being in older adults. Seniors said feeling appreciated or needed as a volunteer boosted their well-being and those with chronic conditions seemed to benefit most.

**6. Learn each day.** Ongoing, lifelong learning boosts the life satisfaction and happiness of older adults, while also improving their physical and mental health, according to a University of Manitoba study.

## FIGHT BACK WITH JOY

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BLESSED  
BRIGHTENING  
JOY  
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EXULTING  
DANCING  
GLADNESS  
LAUGHING  
PLEASURE  
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MERRIMENT  
REJOICING  
PLAYING  
DELIGHTING