

Health Secrets of the World's Oldest People  
How to live to 102 by Jenna Goudreau, Forbes staff

Healthy Choices-Exercise



Pictured Daisy McFadden, 101. Doctors say that healthy habits will help get you to age 85, but how to live beyond that remains a medical mystery. Forbes interviewed people in their 100s to find out how they did it.

## Healthy Choices-Eat Grains, Veggies and Fish



The largest concentration of healthy 100-year-olds is in Okinawa, Japan. The people there eat a diet high in grains, vegetables and fish, and low in eggs, meat and dairy.

In the U.S., Daisy McFadden, who is 101, follows suit. She regularly eats oatmeal and fruit for breakfast, a salad with chicken or fish for lunch, and steamed vegetables and lean meat for dinner.

## Healthy Choices-Avoid Soda—Even Diet



Medical professionals warn against sodas, even diet sodas, and suggest you drink water or juice. McFadden, 101, rarely drank soda throughout her life and doesn't touch it today, she says. Instead, she drinks water, cranberry juice, milk or iced tea. Coffee and alcoholic beverages are also healthy when not consumed in excess. David Prince, M.D., says drinking two to three alcoholic drinks per week will keep you healthy longer.

### Healthy Choices-Get Up and Get Going Everyday



Pictured: Viola Crowson, 101, has gotten up and dressed almost every day during her 41-year retirement. She keeps busy by going to church, getting her hair and nails done, cooking three meals a day and cleaning her house and yard. She also does stretching exercises daily to keep her arms, legs and back strong.

### Healthy Choices-Indulge, a Little



Doctors do not only tolerate a treat here and there, they encourage it. McFadden, 101, eats chocolate chip cookies and likes red wine and Bloody Marys. Viola Crowson, 101, sometimes bakes brownies or grabs a hamburger from Hardee's. David Prince, M.D., says sugar and red meat should be limited to once or twice a week but can be eaten if portions are small.



## Healthy Choices-Take a Walk



Doctors say exercise doesn't have to involve high-octane workouts or expensive gym memberships. Walking more, taking the stairs and making an effort to carry your groceries, laundry or garbage will keep you strong. Elmer Easton, who will be 102 in December, has taken a walk every day of his retirement, weather permitting. In a recent survey of centenarians by health-care provider Evercare, 41% said they still take walks to keep up their stamina.

## Healthy Choices-Do Puzzles



Eric Rackow, MD, says staying physically and mentally fit will help you live to be 100. Puzzles are an easy way to activate the brain, and if you start doing one weekly when you're young, you'll be in a much better position when you're older. Crossword puzzles, trivia shows like Jeopardy and math games like Sudoku are all good brainteasers, experts say. Studies also show that playing a musical instrument will help preserve mental processing.

## Healthy Choices-Get Outside



After retirement or loss of some physical function, many older people spend most of their days indoors. That means they're not getting Vitamin D, and studies have linked Vitamin D deficiency to a number of serious health problems, including heart disease, several types of cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and some autoimmune disorders. Moreover, elder-care specialist Claudia Fine says a little bit of sunlight goes a long way towards improving mood and a positive outlook.

## Healthy Choices-Stay Married, and Connected



Studies show that married people live longer, perhaps because spouses insist on doctor's visits and keep your spirits up. Opal Prater, 100, last year celebrated her 75th wedding anniversary. She's still living life to the fullest, and loves to play Wii with her friends. According to a study by Evercare, close friendships are just as important as romantic relationships. It found that 82% of centenarians talk to friends and family every day, and 79% believe an active social life is good for your health.



### Healthy Choices-Maintain Spirituality



Crowson, 101, has gone to church every week for most of her life; Easton, 102, took up fishing so that he could "stand still and contemplate;" and Mary Malecha, 104, has prayed every day and night for as long as she can remember. The Evercare survey found that 62% of the 100-plus crowd prays, meditates or engages in a spiritual activity every day. Doctors believe that taking restful time for yourself will help you live longer.

### Healthy Choices-Love What You Do



Now that we're spending a third of our time at work, it's especially important to love what you do. Geriatric psychiatrist Gary Kennedy says seeking novel pursuits and being engaged in your life will keep you healthier for longer. Easton, 102, taught at Harvard University before becoming the dean of engineering at Rutgers in 1948. He spent 25 years growing the program from 200 students to over 2,000, and says today that his work was "deeply satisfying."

## Healthy Choices-Keep Busy



Easton, 102, says the secret to living long is keeping busy--and to "just keep on breathing." Not only was he active throughout his life--boxing, fishing, joining fraternities and doing amateur radio--he continued staying active after his retirement from academia in 1974. He joined the Rotary Club, volunteered with the Boy Scouts, and did fund-raising for the United Way of Central Jersey.

## Healthy Choices-Floss



Your mom was right: Flossing is more important than you may have known. Elder-care specialist Fine says, "Your mouth is one of the dirtiest places in your body. Periodontal disease [can cause] bacteria from your mouth to penetrate your blood stream and can get into your heart, causing heart disease and even mini-strokes which can cause dementia."



## Healthy Choices-Avoid Negativity



McFadden, 101, says: "I stay away from negative people, places and things. I always look positive, and am thankful for what I have." Psychiatrist Kennedy agrees that optimistic people tend to be healthier, and says that depression, negativity and avoidant behaviors are often lead to premature decline.

## Healthy Choices-Give Back



Psychiatrist Kennedy says when older people interact with or mentor younger generations it helps them feel valued and gives more meaning to their lives. McFadden, 101, says she has friends a couple of generations behind her to keep her young. Easton, 102, volunteered with the boy scouts so that he could give back