



# Healthy You

## Bring on the BIRTHDAYS!



You know that getting older sure beats the alternative, but here's what you may *not* know: There's a lot more to look forward to than previously understood. Learn more about the new science of aging, and *Feel healthy and happy for the rest of your long life.*

SPECIAL SECTION

Turn the page for more

# Your BRIGHT FUTURE

*Starts Now*

Remember when a birthday was cause for a big, streamer-strewn blowout? Turns out it still is. There's mounting evidence that midlife—and the decades beyond—are just as satisfying as the first half of life, if not more so. Here, five reasons to enjoy the present and look forward to what's ahead.

## 1 With midlife comes PEACE.

The midlife crisis is a common theme in movies, but it is rarely a woman's reality. In fact, only 10% to 20% of Americans report having a crisis at midlife. Research from the ongoing Midlife in the United States (MIDUS) study shows that most middle-aged people are very satisfied with how their lives are going, and many envision even better days to come.

And here's more good news: "Happiness actually increases as you inch closer to later life," says MIDUS researcher Margie Lachman, PhD, director of the Lifespan Initiative on Healthy Aging and Lifespan Lab at Brandeis University. "Midlife is seen as the halfway point, so there's still a lot of time to make progress toward your goals."

TIME'S GIFT TO ME

**I'M MORE TOLERANT OF DIFFERENCES**

*I can look at things that are outside the norm, things that I might once have judged, and say, "So what?"*

Connie McClendon, 72 • Atlanta



## 2

Life has meaning, finally.

When you were younger, you probably spent a lot of time uneasy about your place in the world. What should you do? Who would you be? Reaching midlife often puts these questions to rest, according to new data collected by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Experts found that people ages 40 to 60 are more apt than younger ones to say they'd found meaning and were no longer searching for it. That's not to say you'll never have moments of doubt, but trust that with all your accrued experience, you're on your way.

## 3 STRESS ISN'T SO STRESSFUL ANYMORE.

Even though the number of stressors at midlife is at an all-time high, you get much better at coping, according to findings from the National Study of Daily Experiences (NSDE).

The result? You *feel* less stressed. "Certain people, no matter their age, are like Velcro: Something stresses them out and it sticks to them all day," says researcher David Almeida, PhD, professor of human development and family studies at Penn State University. "Others are like Teflon—stress just slides off them." Once you hit midlife, the study found, you're more apt to be Teflon-like, even if you used to be closer to Velcro.

## FIRSTS AFTER 50

Draw second-act inspiration from these late achievers.

BY GILLIAN ALDRICH



Broke through at 50

**Ursula Burns**

*At Xerox, she started as an intern and worked her way up. In 2009, she became CEO and the first African-American woman at the helm of a Fortune 500 company.*

SPREAD, COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY OF CONNIE MCCLENDON; ERIC PIERMONT/GETTY; IRON GALLELLA; LTD./GETTY; ROGER BRESSEYER/CORBIS; STEVE GRANITZ/GETTY; SLADE PINKU/GETTY; COURTESY OF WILLIAM TORIUN PHOTOGRAPHY.

# 4

## Your FUTURE HEALTH really is yours to shape.

While genetics plays a role in whether you'll be sharp at 90, what you do now may determine just how golden your later years turn out to be.

Research published in the *Journals of Gerontology* found that middle-aged people who regularly exercise, keep their body mass index in a healthy range and maintain a social circle are most apt to have aged "successfully" four years down the line. What's more, these factors—which are entirely within your control—influence the external measures your doctor uses to assess your health, as well as how you feel about aging.

### EXPERT ADVICE

#### BE A PEOPLE PERSON

"The best predictor of longevity is, surprisingly, your social ties. Every day, reach out to someone, whether it's calling your neighbor or saying hello to your coffee barista. Research has found that people who chat with a friend or a stranger report being happier."

CHRISTINE CARTER, PhD, author, *The Sweet Spot: How to Find Your Groove at Home and Work*, and sociologist, Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley

#### TIME'S GIFT TO ME

##### I TRUST MY GUT

*After a half-century of experience—fires and misfires, learning lessons and seeing great change—I finally go with my instincts!*

Barbara Heisler, 55 • East Orange, NJ

# 5

## You're a font of knowledge.

Researchers at the University of Tübingen in Germany created computer models to simulate younger and older brains and came to this conclusion: Older brains are just as good as younger ones. They are also more jam-packed with knowledge, simply because they have absorbed so much information over the years. While it takes

extra time to sort through that information—sort of like the way your computer moves more slowly when you're working on a large file—you are as sharp as you were when you were younger.

So when random facts or people's names are caught on the tip of your tongue, don't assume that you're starting to lose it. These

little lapse bubbles are likely a sign that you know more (and are vastly more popular) than ever. "If you look after yourself, getting older simply means getting smarter," says lead author Michael Ramscar, PhD. Your kids may take a few more years to recognize that, but you can celebrate now.

BY BARBARA BRODY



Broke through at  
**52**

**Dr. Ruth Westheimer**  
In 1980, she started a radio show, *Sexually Speaking*. Dr. Ruth became the first person in the U.S. to speak candidly about sex in a public forum.



Broke through at  
**54**

**Sister Marlon Irvine**  
The Dominican nun (called "the flying nun") started running in her late 40s. At 54, she was the oldest person ever to qualify for the Olympic trials.



Broke through at  
**58**

**Kathryn Bigelow**  
She was the first woman to win the Academy Award for Best Director for her landmark 2008 film, *The Hurt Locker*, which also won Best Picture.



Broke through at  
**78**

**Grandma Moses**  
At 76, Anna Mary Robertson Moses took up painting. In 1939, her works were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art.