- Longevity

How you can boost your chances of reaching 100

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The nation's favourite broadcaster, natural historian and environmental advocate Sir David Attenborough celebrates his 100th birthday on May 8, marking a remarkable seven-decade career.



CENTENARY GOAL: Making it to 100 is a remarkable feat, as achieved by Sir David Attenborough, inset

While life expectancy has increased, reaching 100 still remains an extraordinary feat.
Here Dr Mohammed Enayat, GP and founder of the London-based longevity clinic HUM2N, suggests how to boost your own chances of becoming a centenarian.
"Movement is a very important pillar of health because we need to make sure we put our body through enough energy expenditure requirements so that it can stay metabolically healthy, but also maintain muscle mass and function of the musculoskeletal system," explains Dr Enayat.
The GP adds: "Try to break a sweat a couple of times a week, because if you're not breaking a sweat, you're not using your body to its capacity or training your cardiovascular system and metabolic system to draw on energy quickly.
"Try to work out your glutes, your hamstrings and your core to maintain muscle activation and muscle size. You could do some planks, squats or ball sits."
"Stress drives a massive inflammatory response in the body," says Dr Enayat. "It can dysregulate our blood sugar and make us insulin resistance, which causes downstream effects.
"Stress depletes our stress hormones, which then can cause thyroid and other hormone imbalances, and can also affect our digestive tract and stop us efficiently digesting and absorbing our nutrients."
He suggests developing tools to help with stress regulation.
"It's really important to try and develop some self-awareness about what drives you to mount a stress response and might cause you to be breathless, have racing thoughts and racing heartbeats," says Dr Enayat. "Develop tools – such as breath work, meditation, prayer or gratitude – to bring your nervous system back to balance."
"Lots of good things happen in our sleep that help us live longer and healthier," says Dr Enayat. "For example, we produce T-cells that help regulate our immune system and produce stem cells that stimulate regeneration and release of growth factors during the deep sleep phase."
He recommends implementing lifestyle changes to improve sleep.

“Try to avoid stimulation too late at night, particularly blue light,” says Dr Enayat. “Avoid eating too late and avoid alcohol because it keeps prevents you from getting into a deep sleep.”

“With bad diet comes inflammation, hormonal imbalance and metabolic dysfunction,” says Dr Enayat. “This becomes a melting pot for chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and stroke risk.

“Use food as fuel or as medicine rather than as comfort. I would also recommend eating whole foods rather than processed foods and make sure you have adequate protein in your diet, good vegetable intake, and some healthy fats.”

“David Attenborough is definitely someone who has a clear sense of purpose, a clear value system and really understands community,” says Dr Enayat. “Talking to each other and sharing experiences with neighbours, family and friends can help people stay active, regulate their nervous system, find purpose and find motivation to start their day. Having people to support you through difficult moments is really important for quality of life.”