

What happens as we get older?

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With hormone levels changing, immune systems weakening, and bodies that become more susceptible to certain injuries or conditions, for men, some of these changes can be fairly gradual.

They may find that they have less energy or that their memory isn't as good as it once was. They may notice that it takes longer to recover from an illness or injury, or they may even experience fluctuations in their mood.

These are natural changes that happen as testosterone levels become lower and muscles, bones, and joints weaken over time. As an individual gets older, it becomes more and more important to manage their health, adapt their exercise routine and take time to maintain good mental health.

What changes and health issues could affect males as they get older?

Muscles, bones and joints

Bones may become weaker with age. They often lose density and can even shrink in size, making them more likely to fracture or break. Likewise, muscles and joint ligaments tend to become weaker and less flexible, which means there's an increased risk of injury, pain or a loss of stability.

Prostate

As men get older, the risk of experiencing complications with their prostate will increase. An enlarged prostate can lead to issues with urination, while prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men in the UK.¹

Mental health

Depression, mood swings, stress and mental fatigue are all common in older men, and can lead to a loss of sex drive or impotence, further impacting the mood.

There are multiple cause for mental health challenges, from hormonal changes to difficulty dealing with physical limitations or lifestyle shifts. It's important not to ignore these feelings and seek help if struggling.

¹ Prostate cancer statistics – [Cancer Research UK](#)

How to look after yourself as you get older

Sleep

When we sleep, our bodies can recharge. Our muscles and cells repair themselves and our minds relax. Aim for around seven to nine hours of sleep per night, ideally going to bed and waking up at the same time each day.

Healthy habits

Whatever an individual's age, one of the best ways to look after their older self is to cut out the bad habits now, and then replace them with healthy habits, like eating well and only drinking in moderation. By managing their lifestyle, the member can help prevent health conditions and stay healthy as they get older.

Exercise

Regular exercise is always important. But as a member gets older, they may need to adjust their routine to avoid injury or focus on the kinds of movement that will benefit them the most.

By swimming, instead of running, for example, the member will aid their mobility and flexibility without risking damage to important muscles and joints.

Hydration

Drinking plenty of water is important for the immune system, energy levels, digestion, maintaining a healthy weight, organ function and healthy skin. So, it is essential to stay hydrated.

Keeping your mind active

It's not just our bodies that can weaken with age. It is important to maintain a healthy mind too. Brain training can help improve memory and keep the mind alert. This can include doing puzzles, reading and socialising. Physical activity is also very important for mind health.

Ageing can also affect mood, so mindfulness exercises, therapy and taking time for yourself is important when it comes to easing stress levels and understanding emotions.

PHC'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING SERVICES

When you decide it's the right time for you to take the next steps, we're here for you. We offer a range of health and wellbeing services, including additional care pathways that may be available to you as part of your healthcare cover with PHC. Find out more about what these services entail and how to access them.

Muscles, bones and joints support service

If you are tired of putting up with aches and pains, and long GP waiting times, you can get telephone or video access to our expert physiotherapy service without the need for a GP referral. You can benefit from hassle-free phone or video consultations in a location that suits, and reassurance in having all the follow-up support needed.

This service is available to members aged 18 and over only.

How to access

Call the PHC claims line on **0800 068 7111** or email **claims@thephc.co.uk**.

They'll check you're covered and provide you with a link to the service.

Please have your membership number ready when you call - this can be found on your Certificate of Cover.

Fitness offers

Are you finding it difficult to commit to the gym? Do you struggle with finding time to work out? Everyone's route to better health and fitness is different.

You and your partner or spouse will receive a 40% discount on a variety of health and wellbeing facilities such as spas, gyms, and more, via Hussle and Nuffield Health (terms and conditions apply).

How to access

To redeem or to see the latest offers, visit **thephc.co.uk/gym-discount/**

Health assessments

It can be difficult to find your route to wellbeing. Our assessments make it easy for you to see where to focus your efforts, and how even small steps can add up to great strides, making it easier to keep going and aim further. As part of your healthcare cover, you are entitled to 25% off, on a range of Nuffield Health or Circle Health Group health assessments (terms and conditions apply).

How to access

To get started, please visit **thephc.co.uk/health-assessments/**

Mental health assessments and support service

If you are suffering from stress, anxiety, or depression and aren't sure where to turn, we provide quick access to support and treatment for mental health conditions via our clinically led, telephone-based service, without the need for a GP referral.

This service is available to members aged 18 and over and only if Mental Health is a core benefit on your plan.

How to access

Call the PHC claims line on **0800 068 7111** or email **claims@thephc.co.uk**.

They'll check you're covered and advise you of the next steps to get in touch with the Mental health assessments and support service team.

Prostate cancer self-referral service

We know how worrying a cancer diagnosis is, and how the stress of needing more invasive diagnostic procedures is likely to add to this worry.

We've teamed up with Check4Cancer to develop a prostate cancer diagnostic pathway which may help you avoid unnecessary invasive procedures such as a biopsy. All without the need for a GP referral.

This service is available to members aged 40 and over only, and with a raised PSA test.

How to access

Call the PHC claims line on **0800 068 7111** or email **claims@thephc.co.uk**.

24/7 health support line

Online and telephone access 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to a team of health professionals to answer your health questions. Here, you can get clear health information that you can trust, supported by clinical evidence, to point you to services where you can get the care you need.

Our team of experienced health professionals include nurses, counsellors, midwives* and pharmacists*.

*24/7 health support line midwife and pharmacist services available 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm Saturdays and 8am to 12pm on Sundays.

How to access

Contact **0800 027 1393** to get started today.

