

How YOUNG are YOU?

Age. If it matters at all it at least gives us a gauge against how we 'stack up' to our peers. Or does it? Our 2nd Annual "How Young Are You?" issue challenges seven of our readers to take the RealAge.com test which calculates your 'real age' based on how you answer certain questions relating to your lifestyle. The test itself certainly can't capture every aspect of you, but it does give you a lot of food for thought. More importantly, it gives us a chance to get to know some of our readers a little better and see how and why they live an endurance lifestyle.



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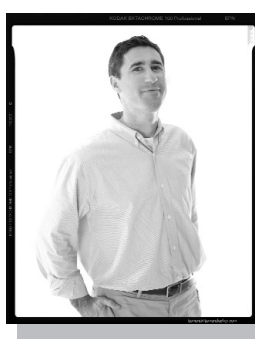
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Dr. Karl
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Sam
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Sallie
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Biologist
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[21]



Sallie
Whitmore
Carrboro, NC
Age 59
"Real Age"
51

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I am a fifteen-year-old African American male. I was born in Chapel Hill, North Carolina on May 11, 1990.

Growing up, I was always around sports. My dad was a high school All-American, and Mom was a cheerleader, which gave me an automatic athlete trait. Being the youngest in the family gave me a shove into being athletic because I was always around athletes. When I was about eight years old I joined my first football team, the Chapel Hill/Carrboro football team, and I was a lineman. I first started off with the Peeewe team but weighed over 100 pounds! So they moved me up to the Mite team (the big guys) with my brother. Practice was harsh at first because I was out of shape. I was pretty decent, but didn't like it as much as the other kids seemed to. After about one or two seasons I stopped playing, because I was not feeling comfortable with it.

The next few years I was very laid back, not exercising or really doing anything. I just stayed at home, ate, and played video games all the time. In my fifth-grade year at Estes Hills Elementary School, my brother and cousin made jokes about me, saying "You're scared to play sports" and "You're lazy." After that I got back into sports.

I got back into football in seventh grade at Phillips Middle School. The same year I tried out for the basketball team and made it. I played small forward, which I liked. In eighth grade, I did the same and I joined the track team. I ran the 4 x 100, 200, and hurdles (my favorite!). After that I had to get ready for high school. I played football in ninth grade and enjoyed it! Then I met my best friend, Scott Elkins. He is involved in endurance sports. After doing his first triathlon he shared his experience with me. But I thought it was crazy! Too much for me! After a while he introduced me

to his friend Ivan Almekinders. They both told me I should try one. But I was not interested in it until I found out that my friend's mom, Diane Belden, was doing one.

One night after having dinner with the UNC Wellness Center trainers, I decided to go ahead and do one. I entered the Mission Man Triathlon (July 30, 2005). I knew it would be a challenge because it is a tough tri to do for a first one. And there was one problem: I needed to learn how to swim.

Joe DeBlasio trained me for about four months on swimming, biking, and running. Again, I stopped playing football because I did not enjoy it as much and could not do that, Scouts, and train. I picked up the job of babysitting to get money for equipment, and I borrowed my trainer's bike for the race. Managing all this training and work actually improved my grades. I had a 2.6 GPA and brought it to a 3.7 GPA by the end of the year. It forced me to manage my time, which made me want to get my schoolwork done and still be able to train and workout. I loved my first tri and decided to make it a hobby.

I recently competed in the UNC Wellness Center Triathlon, which was my second. It was awesome! This school year I am doing cross-country and maybe swimming. But in the spring I am debating if I should do track or lacrosse. These sports will help me with my triathlon training.

Overall, sports have been a major element in my life. Without the opportunity to train and compete I would not survive. It has helped me tremendously with health and fitness. I turned my fat into muscle, and now I'm your average teen athlete. I think that all teens should be involved in some kind of sport because it's healthy and fun at the same time!

If I were a dog, I'd be some sort of terrier, small, sturdy, officious, determined, earnest, opinionated and pig-headed. If I could choose what kind, I'd be an elegant, gracie, languid Borzoi. I've always thought of myself as big and strong and, of course, very intelligent. It's taken me almost sixty years to begin to accept that on the female scale, I'm at best medium-sized, and on the human-being scale not very big at all.

All my life I've done the hardest things that I could find—both mentally and physically demanding: hiking, camping, whitewater kayaking, and lots of motorcycle wrenching and riding. I'm lucky that my body is very sturdy, and able to do near 'bout anything I ask it to. For almost twenty years I've run, and in the last couple of years bicycled, too. I appreciate everything I can do even more after a life-threatening illness last year involving a couple of major surgeries.

I've worked for thirty-eight years, first managing breeding colonies of rodents used in cancer research and now overseeing genetic monitoring of research rodents. Did you know the ancient Greeks had a god of mice?

My husband, Alan, and I met through work as well as motorcycles. He wanted a motorcycle and I was the resident expert in our lab. He's my boon companion and best everlovin' blue-eyed sweetie.

I have loads of friends whom I've met through running, and I meet more and more people who say that I've encouraged or inspired them to take up running or walking and have made them feel like they could do it, too. It makes me feel that I've contributed something useful to my part of the world, even during those years when I didn't know I was being a role model. So now I try to always sit

up straight and behave nicely like my mother taught me.

Things I've learned along the way:

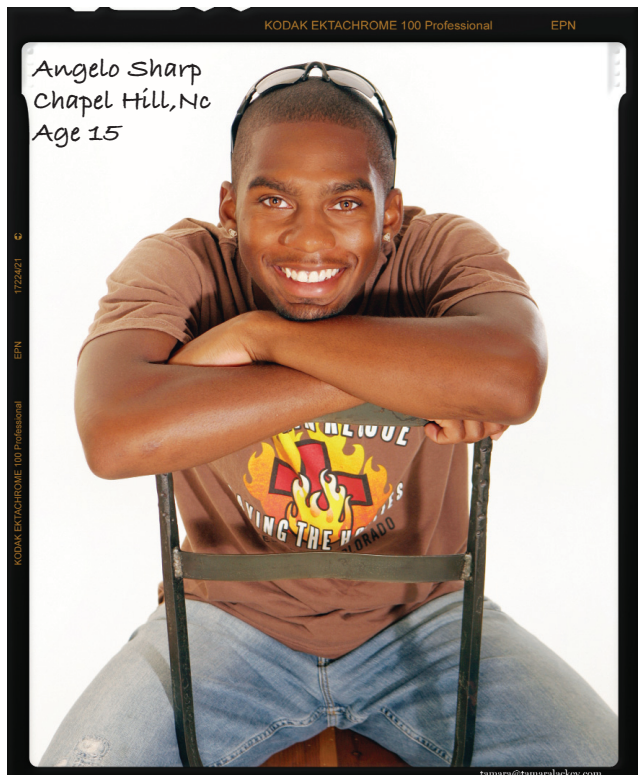
You can do a lot more than you think you can. Of course you can't conceive of running for twelve hours straight! You have to get your mind around half an hour first. I started out thinking it would be nice to be able to run maybe three miles several times a week, mainly to keep from gaining weight after I stopped smoking. I thought those people running marathons were barking mad.

Running doesn't necessarily come naturally. You might need to practice the different facets of it—how to breathe, how to focus, how to avoid getting wiggy with nerves. When I started and couldn't do everything I thought I should be able to, I thought it was because I was totally devoid of character, moral fiber, and mental fortitude; in fact, all I really needed was concentration and carbs, and some patience.

Knowing you have given it everything you have is even better than winning. And it's very hard to put every bit of your experience and ability on the line. Yeah, you might fail, but, you know, stuff happens. After I went as far and as fast as I could on my own, I got a coach and ran PRs for marathon and 50K distances.

Figure out how you can run, not why you can't. What are your strong points? I learned that I'd never be fast, but I'm strong, excellent at race strategy, and superb on rough technical stuff. So trail ultramarathons have become my favorites.

By now I'm closer to the end of my life now than the beginning, so I'm more aware of the shape of my life and my approach to living. And I think the same thing as always, "In which life were you planning to do that? When did you try?"



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Over the last several years, fitness has played an increasingly important role in my life, both personally and professionally. My workouts provide stress relief and sharpen my mental agility and endurance—two benefits I counted on heavily when I was going through a divorce and while serving as an executive for four Triangle technology start-ups.

Prior to 2001, my exposure to fitness was pretty average. Like many people, I had completed a handful of 5Ks, but my athletic activities were not what I would call a serious endurance career. The turning point was joining the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team in Training and completing the Walt Disney Marathon. I found that I really enjoyed the camaraderie and the physical challenges, so I decided to give triathlons a whirl. But first I had to learn to ride a bike.

Unlike most kids in this country, I did not ride a bike growing up. A few early attempts ended in painful failure. So it was very scary just getting on a bike and trying to remember not to clench the brakes while going 30 miles an hour downhill—all without training wheels! But I got through it. Last year, I participated in four sprint triathlons and the MS 150 bike tour. Now, to celebrate my fortieth birthday, I've signed up with Backroads for a weeklong cycling expedition to one of their favorite destinations—the Napa region. I hear there are a few hills in the area: more endurance challenges!

To handle the rigors of biking, running, and swimming, I find that it's very important to build a foundation of endurance through strength training and keeping the body limber. I am a regular at the Cary YMCA and I enjoy yoga classes at Triangle Pilates. I'm also reviving another love of mine from the past—rock climbing. Years ago, I got certified at Vertical Edge. Climbing can be a dangerous sport, so you have to know what you are doing. I've climbed in Arizona and Utah, and I plan to revive this interest in the coming year. My favorite vacations involve a lot of physical activity—preferably with challenging hikes in the beauty of nature.

My eight-year-old son—a workout himself—has taken a strong liking to baseball and tennis, so Mom is now swinging a bat and racket, too! The cool thing is that he is interested in doing a triathlon. We are planning to form a team at an upcoming event. It's so important to instill an interest in healthy physical activity in our kids, and I enjoy serving as a role model for my son. We often go swimming at the Cary YMCA and bike riding around our neighborhood together. There is no better quality time for me.

I'm at the point now where fitness is a natural, regular part of my life. I hate to miss a day. On those rare occasions when I'm forced to go several days or a week without some form of exercise—well, let's just say you don't want to be around me! I am much happier when I get my 5 or 6 workouts a week. Regular fitness plays an important part of both my mental and my physical well-being. This makes me a better friend and mom. I highly recommend it.

Business is an endurance sport, too. I'm president of my own firm, which I started two years ago: www.savvymarketinggroup.com. My company really keeps me going. I provide advisory services to CEOs and executives on their business and marketing strategies in the categories of consumer products, health care, and technology/business-to-business services. I've had the pleasure of working with leading and emerging growth companies in the Triangle from John Deere and Cherokee Funds to Raindrop Geomagic and First Research. My clients may not realize it, but they also benefit from my workouts, since I often develop some of my best ideas while training for my endurance events! Looks like those triathlons just might pay off in more ways than one.



[23]

I'm forty-four, married with three kids under the age of nine, and I live in Chapel Hill, NC. My professional career has been in banking for twenty years, and I am currently a commercial banker/senior market officer with RBC Centura Bank for Orange County. My hobbies include running, cycling, golf, and gardening. I have finished four marathons, all about ten years ago (before kids), with a PR of 3:00:58. I am an aspiring triathlete having finished my first triathlon (super sprint) on August 14, finishing second in my age group and truly enjoying the inaugural experience. My goal now is to work up toward a standard sprint, international, and then perhaps to a Half Ironman. Improving my swimming technique and endurance will be the key factor for accomplishing these goals.

The RealAge results indicate that I should feel like a thirty-nine-year-old. But honestly, I feel even younger than that when I am in good physical health. The quiz results primarily reiterated the well-known fact that I should be taking vitamins daily, including calcium, potassium, folic acid, and vitamins C and E. I do realize taking daily supplements is beneficial to my health and should be a higher priority. I simply have to just do it!

Aside from feeling younger and hopefully looking younger, I have chosen an active lifestyle for many reasons. Professionally, getting out either early in the morning before work, at lunchtime, or after work, depending on the heat index for that day or my work schedule, helps me sharpen my mind for the

day's work. It helps me clear up my mind by solving a problem or accepting a differing opinion about something. This reduces work-related stress. Reducing this unhealthy stress is one of the primary motivators for staying in good physical shape. Overall, maintaining a healthy lifestyle helps me gain better control of my work life and thus helps me become more productive, which keeps me happy, and my employer happy as well.

Personally, staying active and in good physical shape helps me be a better husband, father and overall healthy "younger-feeling" guy. Understanding and feeling the benefits of maintaining a weekly fitness regimen keeps my whole personal life in clearer perspective. The weekends give me the greatest excitement knowing that I can extend my normal weekday workout by either running longer or cycling farther. I have recently included swimming in my workout routine while training for my first triathlon.

My family also stays active, with my wife playing tennis and my kids active in various seasonal sports throughout the year. I am very fortunate and grateful to say that I would not be able to enjoy an active lifestyle without the support, understanding, and especially the encouragement of my wife, Lynne, who makes all of this happen for me. She understands why this is important for me and she benefits from it, too. I just need to remember to take my vitamins!



My calendar age is 30 years and my "real age" is 25.6 years. Who would have known that flossing your teeth only five times per week may cause needless aging? In addition to eating more cauliflower, cabbage, and kale, I also need to own a dog for stress reduction and reduce my exposure to allergens. Apparently, the RealAge indicator did not electronically sense that I live in a ragweed and pollen-infested haze. I now know why I crave the beach and the particle-free breeze. My resting heart rate of 46 was a positive. My new RealAge plan suggests that I should cut back on my exercise regime. Maybe the five-hour long run on Sundays tipped the scale? I will ponder these suggestions on my next long run.

I have never been unmotivated to exercise. Since water-baby swimming lessons at age two, I have always been active. I swam competitively in high school and college, and then started competing in triathlons after moving to the Bay Area in

late 2000. Upon moving to North Carolina in the summer of 2004, I was eager for a change and began to focus on trail running. I learned quickly: I must keep my eyes on the trail or else I crash. If anything, trail running has brought me peace and showed me how to stay focused, while increasing my appreciation for the simple things that this earth offers us. OK, it's a little dramatic, but you get the point. Luckily, those long runs paid off and I completed my first fifty-mile ultramarathon in 2004 (the JFK 50). Goal setting leads me to my next statement—I will complete a 100-mile run in 2006!

Fitness is a large part of my life, and in 2004, I decided to also make it my career.

I am currently a second-year Ph.D. student in Exercise and Sport Psychology at UNC-Greensboro. My research interests include cogni-

tive function, anxiety, and behaviors associated with exercise. My active lifestyle contributes to my professional career as a teaching assistant and doctoral student. While studying full time at UNC-G, I am also teaching beginning jogging and weight training UNC-G courses, as well as cycle classes at the YMCA. I am motivated and driven by helping others reach their full potential. Upon completing my dissertation requirements, I hope to teach and conduct research at the university level, while also working with special populations to improve their quality of life through exercise and nutrition.

"An Ironman? Sure, no problem." Yeah, right, thinking to myself at the same time, this is going to hurt. It is race day and my wave is about to start. The adrenaline is flowing!

Joe Steiner is next to me, which helps me feel less nervous. It is a short-lived thought. The gun goes off, and I'm head-down, avoiding kicking legs and bumping elbows. I find myself swimming alongside a green-goggled German. It's all about expectations of what my body and mind will have to go through, so right now I'm telling myself that this race will last forever, so just relax.

With that relaxed feeling, I see the take-out ramp 2.4 miles later. I am well ahead of the green-goggled German who started next to me. I've been racing for just over an hour, and I'm feeling surprisingly good. That is, until I try and walk. I feel so lightheaded that my arms need to go out to steady my jog into the transition tent.

The lightheadedness goes away after two miles on the bike. It is about 8 a.m. when we fly through Roth, where people are toasting us with beer and cheering us on. On the far side of the bike loop, we come into a small town

surrounded by fans. They are literally in the road, blocking the bike path, cheering, yelling, and having the best time of their lives. There are so many people—it is so energizing.

After 100 miles on the bike I still feel relatively comfortable, but more than ready to get off. With another twenty minutes to go, I keep telling myself that a 26-mile run is not so far—if it were a 100-mile run . . . wow, now that would be far.

Around mile 10 of the marathon, I begin to calculate just how much farther the run is; unfortunately all the markers are in kilometers. I know it's about 0.6 K to every mile, but trying to do the math is impossible for my water/gel/wind/bike-soaked brain. My math arrives at 60 kilometers—about twelve miles too far. Oh, well, I say, at least it's not raining . . .

The shower lasts for about forty minutes and makes my shoes heavy, like cement blocks. I've been running for three hours now, with over ten hours into the race. My legs are completely worn.

With six miles left, my whole world changes. Suddenly: lots of energy, my eyes can see past the guy in front of me, my feet seem

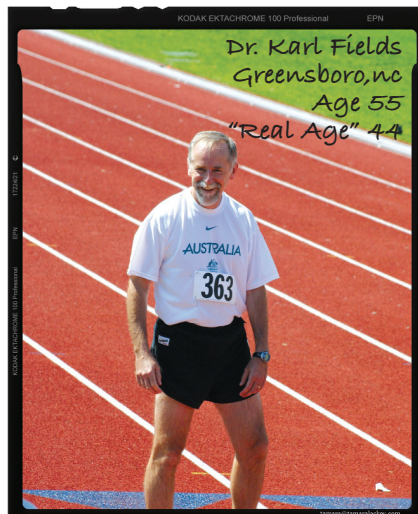
back within my control, even math seems possible. I start to speed up, holding nothing back, catching up from miles of playing it safe. The feeling hits a high when I hear the stadium cheering. I'm running on air into the stadium, looking for the North Carolina representation of spectators. There's no way I can find them with thousands of people cheering away. The feeling that washes over me is that I don't have to worry about having to do more—I've made it!

During my training I was often asked: Why do an Ironman? My answer was confirmed about two-thirds of the way through the run: the Ironman is a difficult thing to achieve, but with the right amount of preparation, a mental resolve, and a focused effort, it is eminently possible. When I saw the blind woman in the race I nodded my head, mostly out of respect, but also out of confir-



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Age 34
"Real Age" 32.3

mation that you can do pretty much anything you set your mind to. Call it experiential preparation or whatever you like, but I've proved to myself that it's possible for me to do what I set my mind to.



I am a fifty-five-year-old sports medicine physician. I've always felt that to be a better sports medicine specialist I should also practice what I preach. I ran my first mile race in May of 1962 when I was in the eighth grade and ran 5:30. This May, I won the Southeastern Master's Mile championship in a time of 5:20. While this is far off the PR that I ran in college, and I am disappointed to be moving back to my starting times, I do feel that forty-three years of running have allowed me to stay active, fit and enjoy life more.

I like to get about ten hours of exercise a week, most of which is running and tennis. As I've gotten older I found that I've had to cut my running miles to about thirty miles a week after keeping it in the fifty-mile-per-week range for approximately twenty years. However, the cross-training with tennis has helped me maintain some speed. In addition, I'll occasionally cross-train on a stationary bicycle or mountain bike. I do some light weight lifting and try to do one to two hours of yoga per week. The yoga in particular has been beneficial, for as I've gotten older I have become one of the least flexible people that I know.

I found the RealAge test probably does closely predict the benefits of exercise and in general is a good screening tool. For example, on my test my "real age" was eleven years younger than

my chronological age. From the medical literature that I've read, I suspect this is consistent with the benefit from aerobic exercise. While most of the test information provides sound preventive health advice, some factors on the test are inaccurate. For example, the test projected that I had a low-fiber diet because I do not eat a lot of breads or pastas. In reality, I have a high-fiber diet as analyzed by a nutritionist, primarily because my intake of fruit is extremely high. In any test like this, there are areas that are difficult to calculate without a more extensive evaluation.

My other disappointment in the test is that it seems to have a marketing bias. There is little evidence, for example, that someone who has a well-balanced diet needs any supplements of vitamins, minerals, or commercial fiber products. The test recommended that I take all three. The test recommended taking aspirin even though I have reasons to avoid this and would receive few potential benefits from its use.

The medical literature shows that those individuals who are in the highest level of fitness have approximately one-quarter the risk of heart disease and one-eighth the risk of cancer compared to individuals who are in the lowest quartile of fitness. This alone should be incentive to use aerobic exercise as the best preventive medicine we have.