

TABLE 2 PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES CAUSED BY AGEING

Body system	Change	Impact
Respiratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diminished vital capacity and increased physiological dead space (the volume of air inhaled that does not take part in gas exchange) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lower vital capacity ● Increased susceptibility to infections, pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome
Cardiovascular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) ● Maximal heart rate; cardiac output diminishes ● Atheroma may develop; clots may form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stiffening of the blood vessels tends to increase blood pressure ● Atheroma may rupture or block arteries causing heart attack, stroke or deep-vein thrombosis
Eyesight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced tear production ● Ciliary body stiffness ● Long-sightedness and losses in motion perception ● Changes in colour perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Blurring of text ● Reduced clarity of colours and impaired hazard perception ● Alterations in gaze patterns – affects everyday activities and mobility
Brain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forgetfulness and 'senior moments' ● Slower reaction time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to drive more cautiously, for example leave longer distances to car in front
Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Difficulty following conversations in noisy environments ● Loss of acuity especially with high-pitched sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impaired ability to distinguish sound against background noise
Taste, touch and smell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced sensitivity to touch and smell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loss of sense of smell and/or ability to discriminate between smells
Urinary system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced ability to concentrate urine and deal with fluid stress, for example dehydration ● Increased frequency of urination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Waking at night to go to the toilet ● Feelings of urgency to urinate ● Stress incontinence
Skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skin may become thinner, lose elasticity and become wrinkled ● Melanocytes lose ability to produce melanin ● Changes to distribution of adipose tissue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wound healing is slowed
Musculoskeletal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Muscle mass may reduce or lose strength and power ● Increased bone resorption and loss of bone density 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced ability to carry out activities of everyday living; impaired mobility and increased risk of falls ● Loss of minerals and increased risk of osteoporosis
Sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Women experience menopause ● Sperm production may diminish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cessation of menstrual cycle ● Prostate may enlarge
Liver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some changes in enzyme systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prescription medication may need to be reviewed