BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English
Never too old

NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Alice

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Alice…

Rob

And I'm Rob… Now, Alice – how old are you?

Alice

I'm 21, Rob – not a day older!

Rob

Come on, don't be coy about your age, Alice! – **Coy**, by the way, means not wanting to give away information about yourself.

Alice

I'm not being coy, Rob. I just… don't feel like telling everyone how old I am. Some people think it's rude to ask.

Rob

I don't mean to be rude of course but … well, you are being coy. I'm asking because today we're talking about age and whether you can be too old for some things. What do you think?

Alice

I'm too old to order off children's menus in restaurants – but I still do it.

Rob

Anything else?

Alice

Well, I couldn't **pull an all-nighter** anymore.

Rob

OK. That's another way of saying stay up all night to finish something. That's what students do to get their work done.

Alice

I used to be able to do it, and now I couldn't. I struggle to stay up on New Year's Eve until midnight. But let's move on to today's quiz question. What percentage of people aged over 65 surveyed in the UK described themselves as old? Is it …
a) 6%?
b) 16%?
Or c) 60%?

Rob

Well, I think it's just a) 6%. People don't like to think of themselves as old.

Alice

Well, we'll find out if you got the answer right or wrong later on in the show. First, let's explore the subject of aging more. Tell me, Rob, do you think you can be too old to take up a new hobby?

Rob

I might be, I mean, depends on the hobby of course. I went for a run the other day, and it nearly killed me.

Alice

That just means you're unfit, Rob! Let's listen to Ernestine Shepherd who didn't think she was too old to take up an interesting new hobby. At the age of 71 she started bodybuilding and is currently listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the oldest female bodybuilder in the world.

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Ernestine Shepherd, bodybuilder
If ever there were an anti-aging pill, I would call it exercise. I enjoy working out with the people who come to the church. Sometimes they say, "Oh, this hurts!" But I tell people, "Age is nothing but a number!" I am 75 years of age. This morning I awakened at 2.30. I have a group of four other people who run with me in the mornings. We run about ten miles. Every day.

Rob

Wow! That was Ernestine Shepherd. What an example to us all!

Alice

Work out, by the way, means taking exercise to make yourself fit. I think it's true that if we did more exercise every day, we would all look and feel much better.

Rob

Ernestine is all for exercise but I'm afraid I'd take some anti-aging pill if one existed.

Alice
If something is advertised as being **anti-aging** it means it's designed to stop you looking older.

Rob
And you can find hundreds of products these days that claim to have anti-aging properties. Lots of lotions and potions for women in particular!

Alice
Yes. That's because women feel pressurized to look younger than their age. It's an example of ageism and it isn't fair.

Rob
Ageism means discrimination against people because of their age. And sometimes people can be discriminated against in the workplace for being 'too old'. Now, do you think you could be too old to take up a new job, Alice?

Alice
No, I don't get the concept of too old at all. My grandparents both still work and they have more enthusiasm and energy than I do. They hate being called **senior citizens** and **old-age pensioners** - or by the initials of these words, **OAP**. And they are right: who wants to be defined by their age?

Rob
You just said: "Don't get this concept". And to **get something** means to understand it. So I suppose you stay the same inside – it's just the outside that changes! We have to be young at heart at least. And age is no reason for some people to stop working if they are in good health. Let's listen to Trisha Cusden who started a new business at 65 supplying beauty products for older women. Her age actually inspired her choice of work.

INSERT
Trisha Cusden, founder of Look Fabulous Forever
I've had an idea, I've seen a problem and an opportunity, and I've done something about it – And created a business which I'm very happy to say is very successful. I mean [when] I started it, it was going to be a hobby, you know, something to keep me out of trouble, give me something to do.

Rob
Trisha Cusden there. She started a new hobby and it turned into a successful business enterprise. Now, before we finish, I'd just like to put the case for older men. My dad, my

granddad, Sean Connery, Michael Caine, Harrison Ford – they're all fantastic role models for us younger guys.

Alice
And a **role model** is somebody people admire and want to copy.

Rob
Well, that brings us round to the matter of today's quiz question, Alice.

Alice
Yes, it does. I asked: What percentage of people aged over 65 surveyed in the UK described themselves as old in a survey? Is it … a) 6%, b) 16% or c) 60%?

Rob
Yeap. And I said a) 6%. Was I right?

Alice
Yes, you were! You were right! Well done! More than 2,000 people aged between 65 and 93 were surveyed by UK market research firm YouGov. Now here are the words we learned today, Rob.

Rob
They are:
coy
pull an all-nighter
work out
anti-aging
ageism
senior citizen
old-age pensioner (or OAP)
get something
role model

Alice
Well, that's the end of today's 6 Minute English. Don't forget to join us again soon!

Both
Bye.

Vocabulary

coy
not wanting to give away information about yourself

pull an all-nighter
stay up all night to finish something

work out
take exercise

anti-aging
designed to stop you looking older

ageism
discrimination against people because of their age

senior citizen
an elderly person

old-age pensioner (OAP)
an elderly person

get something
understand

role model
somebody people admire and want to copy