



Yvonne: This is 6 Minute English, I'm Yvonne Archer - and thanks to Alice for joining me today.

Alice: Hi, Yvonne!

Yvonne: Hi! Now, when people in the UK reach **the ripe old age of** 100, something rather special usually arrives in the post for them.

Alice: Yes, they get a congratulatory card from the Queen.

Yvonne: Exactly. But it seems that the Queen will have to send out lots more cards in the future. But before we hear why, are you ready to answer today's question, Alice?

Alice: Yes, ready and waiting!

Yvonne: Grand! The oldest female to complete **a marathon** was from the United States - but how old was she?

a) 92

b) 97 or

c) 101 years old

Alice: Oh, that's difficult. They're all quite old. Because we're talking about people over the age of 100, I'll guess 101 years old.

Yvonne: Good answer, but as usual you'll have to wait until the end of today's "6 Minute English" to find out if you're right or wrong. Now, reaching the age of 100 used to be quite rare - unusual. But government figures show that in 2009, there were 11,600 people over that age here in the UK.

Alice: That's quite a lot!

Yvonne: Exactly. Well, that number is set to rise because it's expected that more than three million of today's under-16s will live to be **centenarians**. Alice, explain what 'a centenarian' is for us, please?

Alice: A centenarian is someone who has reached 100 years old - or older.

Yvonne: Wow. Let's hear more on that from Fran Cartwright of Age UK, who's at an exercise class for the over 70s.

Insert 1: Fran Cartwright, Age UK

Well, people are living longer. We have wonderful clients here who are approaching a hundred; they're still exercising. So by mental and physical activity, they can achieve that.

Yvonne: In that class, there are clients who are approaching - are almost - a hundred years old and they're still exercising.

Alice: Yes, and Fran Cartwright from Age UK says they can achieve the age of a hundred through **mental activity** and **physical activity** - by exercising both mind and body.

Yvonne: Right, well, here's how one woman in the exercise class compares herself and her friends with her own **great grandmother**.

Insert 2: Woman at exercise class for over 70s

My great grandma, you know, she was, you know - I thought they were ancient. We're not today, are we? You know, we're reasonably healthy.

Yvonne: The woman and her friends are all over the age of 70. Some of them are great grandparents too, but she wouldn't describe them in the same way that she'd describe her own great grandmother, would she?

Alice: No, she describes her own great grandmother as '**ancient**' - so old, that she was almost an antique, or even prehistoric!

Yvonne: Oh dear. And in contrast, at a similar age, the woman says that she and her friends are reasonably healthy - they're in fairly good health. But here's how two young people feel about the possibility of an **extended** old age - living longer than they'd expect to.

Insert 3 – Two young men

Young man 1: It would be an achievement living that long, but I wouldn't be able to do much then. I'd just probably be sitting around in a chair.

Young man 2: I don't think it would be fun because you've got to live with strangers which you don't know.

Yvonne: Well, they don't seem too enthusiastic about living until one hundred - and possibly beyond - do they?

- Alice:** No, they don't. Although the first young man said that he thought it would be an achievement to live that long. He doesn't think he'll be able to do much by then - except sit around in a chair.
- Yvonne:** And the second young man thinks that being old won't be any fun because he'll have to live with **strangers** - people he doesn't know - rather than with friends and family.
- Alice:** But government figures seem to say otherwise, predicting that one in four children in Britain will live until they are 100 years old.
- Yvonne:** So hopefully, both young men are wrong about what will happen to them when they're old. Alice, did I tell you that I've got a friend who's now 102 years old?
- Alice:** You did. What an achievement! And she's still very active, isn't she?
- Yvonne:** Definitely. She was dancing at her sister's 100th birthday party just last weekend! And what about your **spirightly**, lovely grandfather, Alice?
- Alice:** Yeah, my grandpa's over 90 and he does lots of crosswords. I think it keeps his mind very active.
- Yvonne:** Excellent! And to keep your mind active Alice, back to today's quiz. Earlier, I told you that the oldest female to complete a marathon was from the United States. But was she 92, 97 or 101 years old?
- Alice:** I guessed 101 years old.

Yvonne: And, unfortunately, you were wrong. She was actually 92 years old and it only took her nine hours and almost a minute.

Alice: Fantastic! I hope we'll be able to do that when we get into our 90s.

Yvonne: Let's hope so - and more importantly, that we're really healthy too. But that's all for "6 Minute English" from BBC Learning English. Do join us again soon.

Both: Goodbye!

Vocabulary and definitions

the ripe old age of	an informal expression emphasising that someone has lived for more years than most people
a marathon	a race of about 26 miles or 45 kilometres which takes place on public roads
centenarians	people who are 100 years of age or older
mental activity	things that people do to make or keep the mind healthy
physical activity	things that people do to make or keep the body healthy
great grandmother	the mother of someone's grandmother
ancient	extremely old, from a time in the distant past
extended	lengthened, extra long, lasting longer than usual
strangers	people who you don't know or are familiar with
sprightly	energetic, lively, active

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