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The Better Man '06: What's Your BQ?

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Typically, men think about their health at one time: during a crisis. Your heart speeds up, your penis slows down, a steak knife is lodged in your hamstring. But the problem with that wait-and-treat approach is that you're constantly responding to health emergencies rather than preventing them. So what we did is come up with a concept that lets you know exactly how happy your body is right now—and how to make it happier by doing simple things like having more sex and eating more tomato sauce. While it's nice to know how close (or far) you really are to a date with an ER or an OR, what we're talking about is your ability to knock the cover off the ball of life—to have the strength, the stamina, and the focus to perform at the peak of your potential.

We call the concept the Body Quotient (BQ), and it measures your whole-body health—not relative to your uncle the marathoner or your nephew the ultramarathoner, but relative to you: Are you doing as well as your genes will allow? A score of 100 probably means you've just finished shining your gold medal from Turin. A score of zero means they must have a good magazine rack in the afterlife. You? You probably live somewhere in the middle.

Most people think the process of getting healthier is linear: One effort gets you one potential benefit. It's not. When you're sick as a dog—when you're in the bottom tenth percentile on the BQ curve—it takes a lot of effort to get better. When you're near the top of the scale—when you're a world class athlete—it also takes a ton of extra effort to keep moving up. But most of us live between 20 and 80. And the good thing about the middle is that a little effort goes a long way. When you live in the middle, just four weeks of healthy living can move you 20 points up the curve, and twelve weeks can give you as much as a 40-point bump (depending on where you started). Of course, the reverse is also true—a month of bad choices can easily cost you 20 points, and a three-month spiral can grind you down to nothing. You have these rapid swings—a return on investment that's much greater than it "should" be. It's not linear; it's exponential.

As you take the quiz and read the advice that follows, keep in mind that we're aiming to give you not knowledge but understanding. Understanding of how your body's circulatory and immune systems interact with your diet, your behavior, and your genes, and what you can do to ensure that they're all in peak condition. It's a holistic approach that incorporates aspects of both Western and Eastern medicine. Think of it this way: If your body is a car, Western doctors are the mechanics; we fix the engine when it's broken. Alternative medicine is all the things you can do on your own to keep your car in good shape and out of the shop: checking the fluids, replacing the filters, changing the oil. Reducing your risk factors—that's the big predictor of how long (and how young) you'll live.

Most men think that in order to get healthy, they have to make a series of drastic changes—no more nachos, many more soy burgers, and never-ending workouts. But the truth is that to move up the BQ curve, all you have to do is make some small adjustments that will allow your body to go on autopilot—so it can start taking care of itself. That's what this article is all about.

*Drs. Mehmet C. Oz, a heart surgeon at New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center, and Michael F. Roizen, an internist and anesthesiologist at the Cleveland Clinic, are the authors of *You: The Owner's Manual* and *You: The Smart Patient*.*

Better Man '06: Contents

On a scale of 0 to 100, how healthy are you right now? Wait, don't answer that—we're gonna ask your body. And then we're gonna tell you how to improve by at least 20 points in no time flat.

Take the Body Quotient Quiz

The First Thing That Ages You: Your ARTERIES (which will rust if you let them)

Things a Man Should Know About Fats

The Mediterranean Miracle: Tomato Sauce

The Second Thing That Ages You: Your IMMUNE SYSTEM (which will weaken if you let it)

How to Cure (or at Least Shorten) A Cold

The Future of Medicine: SNPs

The Third Thing That Ages You: Your WORLD (which will grind you down if you let it)

Portion Control: Why You Should Buy Smaller Plates

Find Out How Old You *Really* Are--Take the Free RealAge Test