

## What's my age again? Older Canadians feel younger than their age; overall population feels older than it did in 2015

Majority (57%) want to live to be 90 or older; 26 per cent say they want to live to be 100

**November 19, 2024** – Are Canadians feeling young at heart or long in the tooth?

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians more likely to say they feel older than their age mentally and physically than they did a decade ago. In 2015, long before the COVID-19 pandemic and burgeoning social, political, and financial challenges, two-in-five (38%) said they felt younger physically than their age. That has since declined to 31 per cent with more saying they feel their age (39% in 2015 to 43% now) or older than their age (23% to 25% now).

The same story is seen when Canadians are asked to assess their mental age. A majority (53%) in 2015 said they felt younger than their age mentally. Now fewer (47%) say the same.

It is younger Canadians who are now feeling older both mentally and physically. Men younger than 55 are more likely to report feeling older mentally (18-34s +7%, 35-54s +11%) than nine years ago while women of that age are more likely to feel older physically (18-34s +12%, 35-54s +6%).

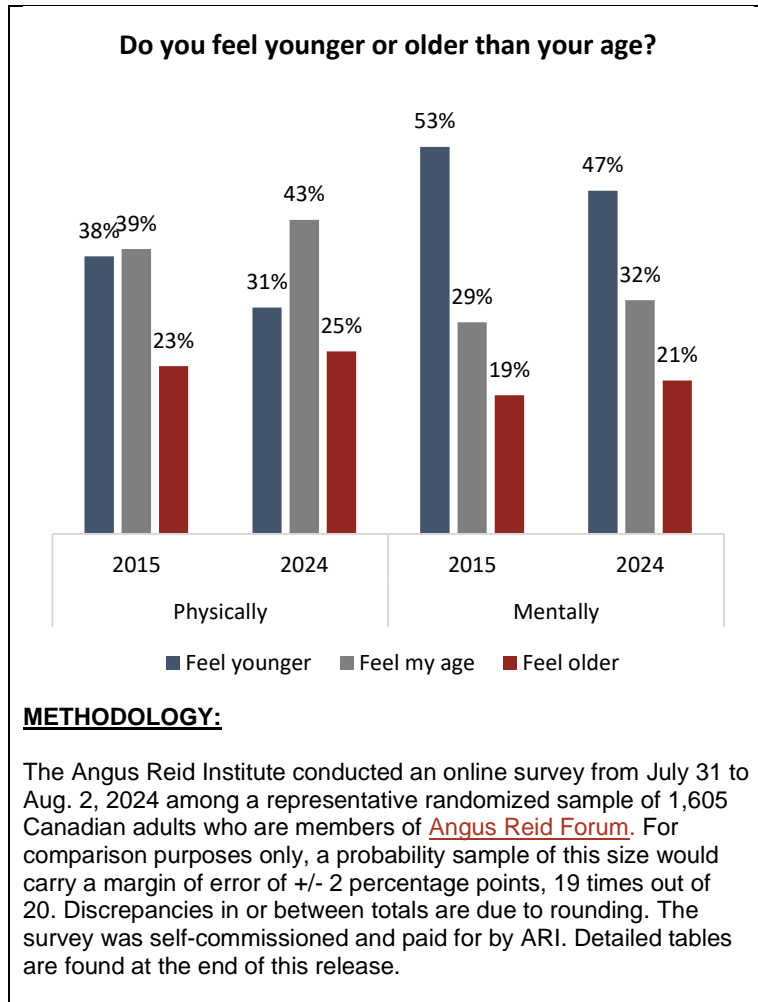
Notably, those age groups also [reported higher dissatisfaction with their stress levels](#) than in 2015.

**Related:** [Most Canadians are happy, but life outlooks have worsened over past decade](#)

Regardless of how old they feel, a majority (57%) of Canadians want to live to be 90 or older. However, living into their 100s is only appealing to one-quarter (26%) of Canadians.

### About ARI

The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and



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*impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

## INDEX

### Part One: How Canadians feel physically

- Older Canadians more likely to feel younger physically

### Part Two: How Canadians feel mentally

- The young feel old and the old feel young
- Which province feels youngest?

### Part Three: Changes since 2015

- Population feeling older now compared to 2015
- Women 18 to 54 feeling older physically
- Men 18 to 54 feeling older mentally

### Part Four: What's the best age and how long would you want to live?

- 'Twenties' and 'thirties' top choice for best stage in life
- Majority want to live to be 90 or older; one-quarter want to cross century mark

### Part One: How Canadians feel physically

The old adage is that "[age is just a number](#)", arguing that a lot of what determines how old you feel is more about your mindset than how many years on you are from your date of birth. To explore Canadian perspectives on aging, the Angus Reid Institute asked respondents whether they feel like they are younger or older than their age mentally or physically.

#### **Older Canadians more likely to feel younger physically**

A plurality (43%) of Canadians say they feel their age physically, while overall, Canadians are more likely to feel younger (32%) than their years than older (25%).

Canada's aging population will pose a significant challenge to the country's social safety net and health care infrastructure in the coming years. It is at least one positive sign that half (48%) of those older than 64 feel younger physically than their age.

Canadians younger than 35 are the most likely to say they feel their exact age physically:

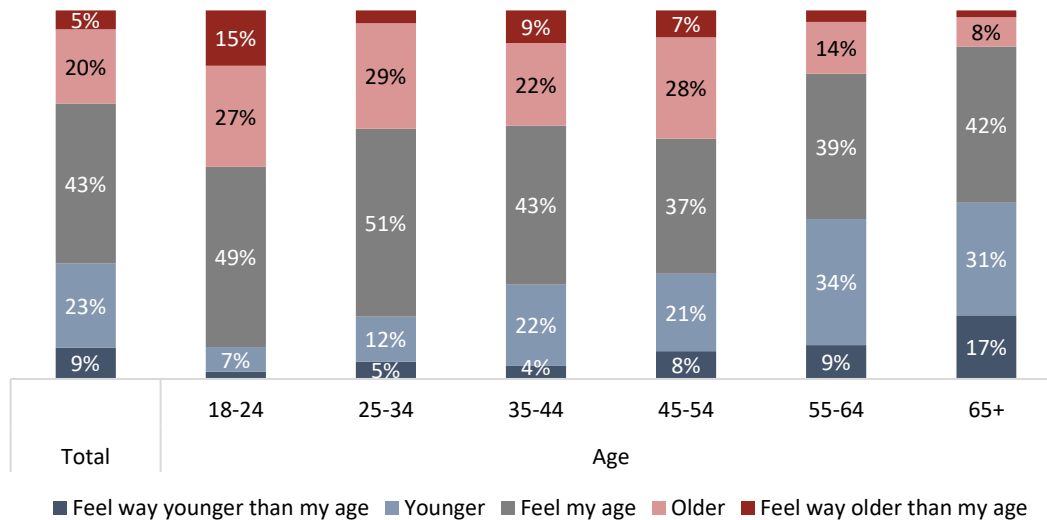
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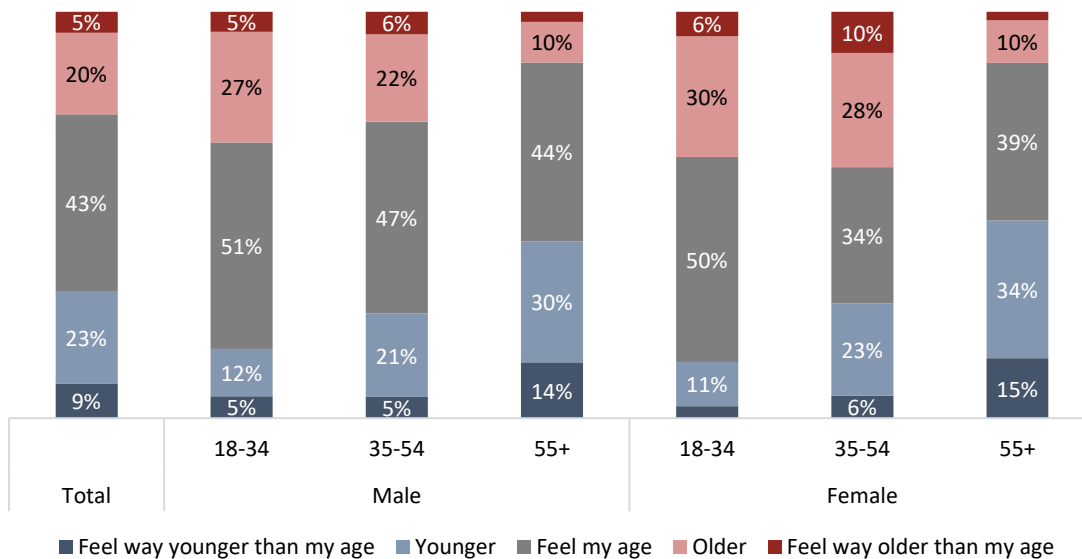
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**Do you feel younger or older than your age - Physically**



There is a significant gender difference on this question when it comes to one cohort – 35- to 54-year-olds. This age group is the most likely to have children in the household, and women that age are much more likely to report feeling older physically than their age (38%) than men (28%):

**Do you feel younger or older than your age - Physically**



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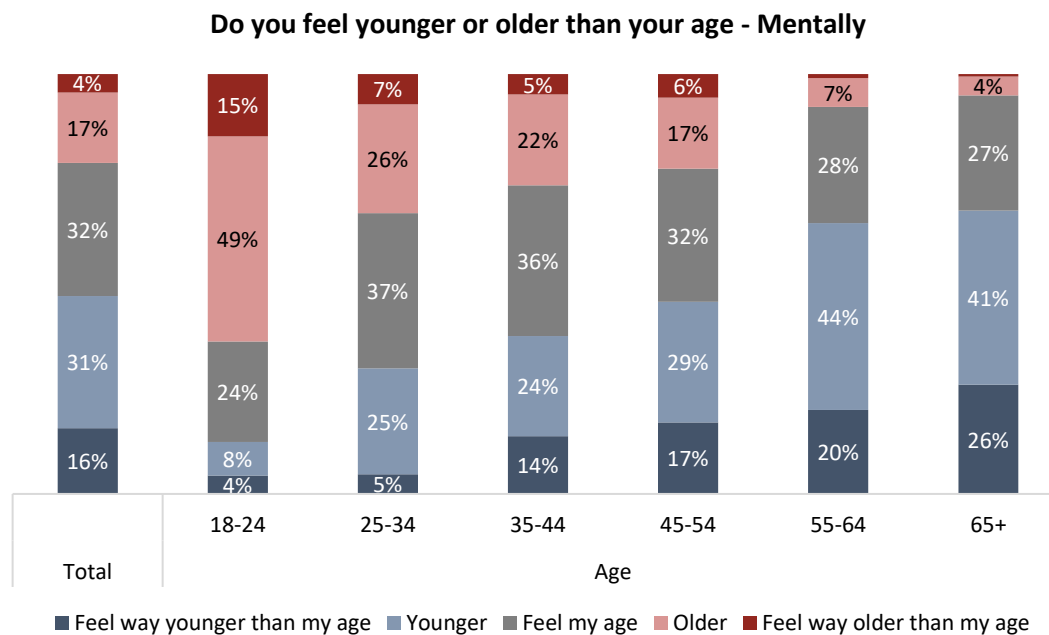
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**Part Two: How Canadians feel mentally**

**The young feel old and the old feel young**

On the balance, Canadians feel younger mentally than they do physically. Approaching half (47%) of Canadians say they feel younger than their age mentally, while one-in-five (21%) say they feel older. Those under 25 are the most likely to say the latter as they try to establish themselves in adulthood. Meanwhile, approaching two-thirds of those 55 and older say they feel mentally younger than their true age. With age, evidently, comes wisdom and a certain amount of youth in mind:



Once again it is 35- to 54-year-old men and women who offer differing perspectives on the issue. Two-in-five (38%) women that age say they feel their age mentally, men aged 35 to 54 are more likely to say they feel younger (43%).

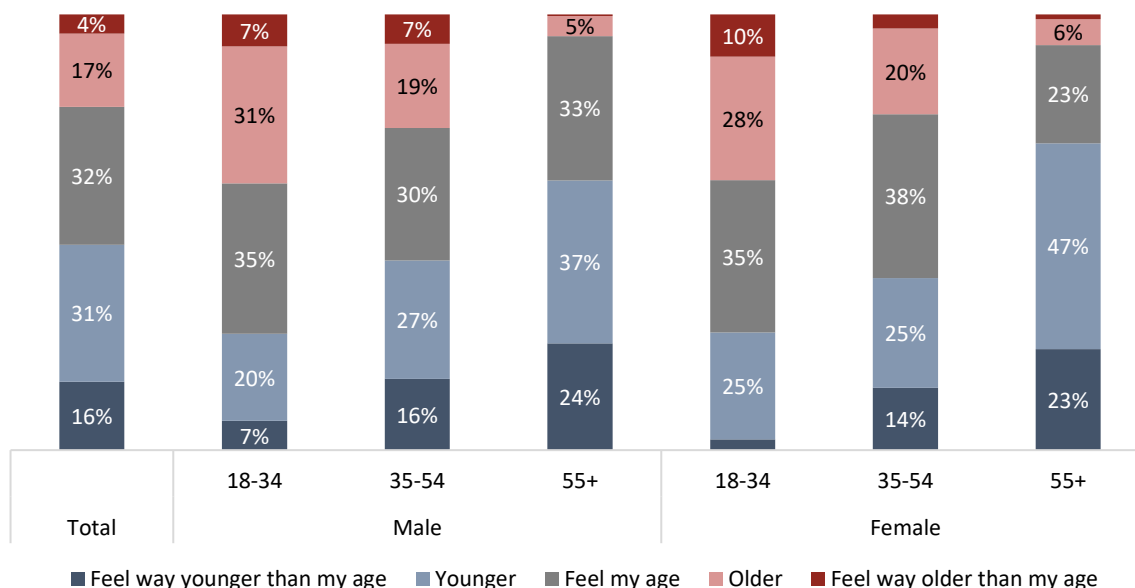
Meanwhile, the outlook by gender changes among those older than 54. Seven-in-ten (70%) women of that age say they feel younger than their age mentally. A smaller majority (61%) of men older than 54 say the same:

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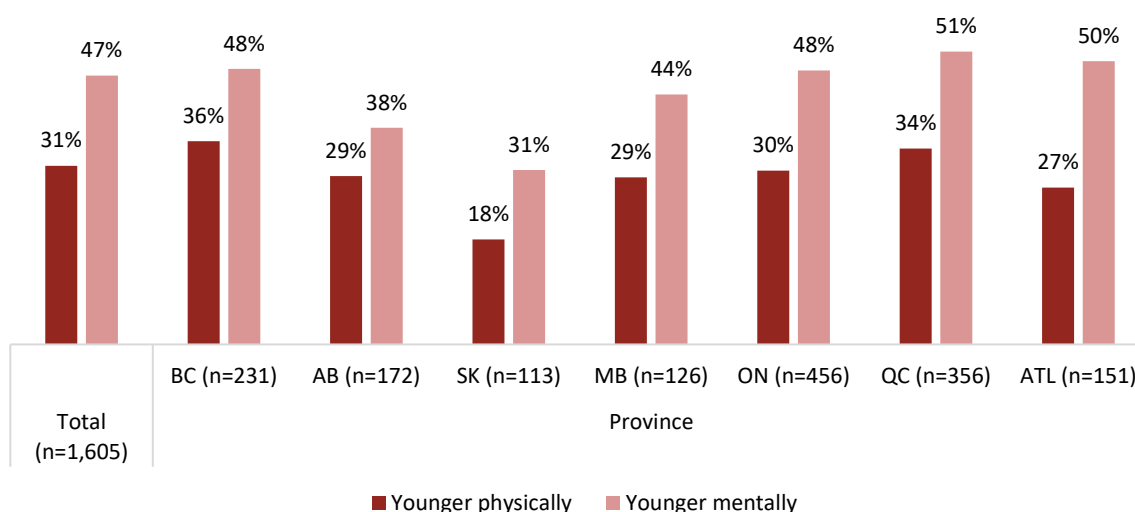
### Do you feel younger or older than your age - Mentally



### Which province feels youngest?

Where is Canada's metaphorical fountain of youth located? Evidently, not the Prairies, where the fewest people say they feel younger than their age physical or mentally, bottoming out in Saskatchewan (18% feel younger physically, 31% mentally). Quebec is home to the most residents who say they feel younger physically (34%) or mentally (51%), while B.C. is close behind (36%, 48% respectively):

### Percentage who say they feel younger than their age physically and mentally



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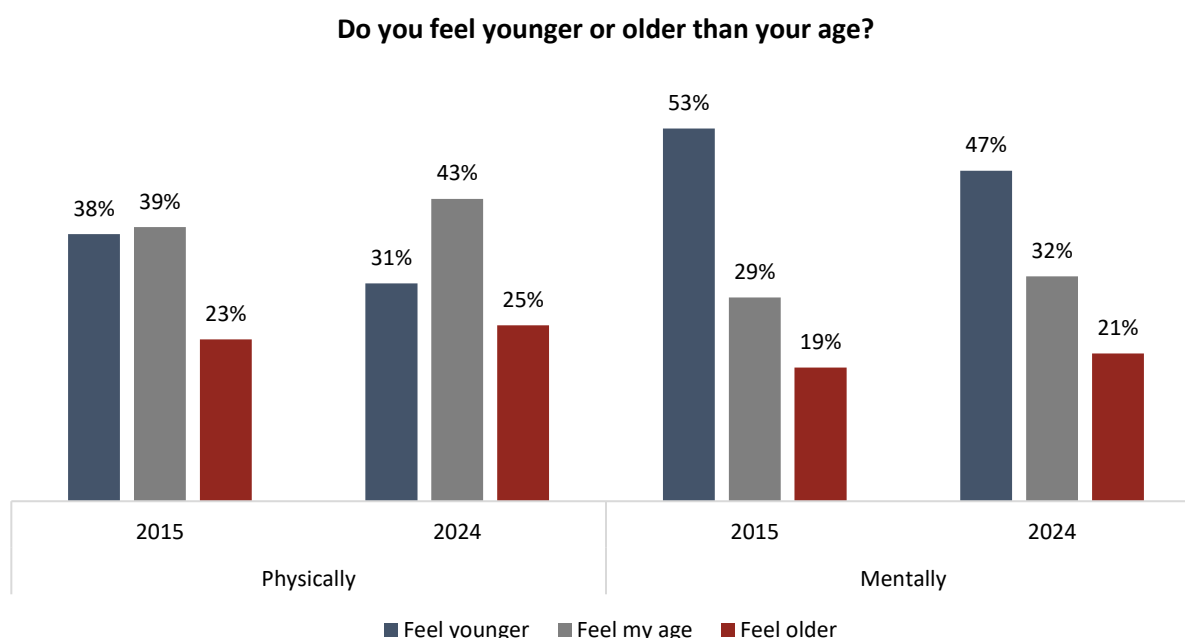
### Part Three: Changes since 2015

It had been nearly a decade since ARI last asked Canadians to assess their relative mental and physical age. In the meantime, there has been a [four-year Presidential term from the disruptive Donald Trump](#), and just since 2020, [wars overseas](#), [a pandemic](#), and [economic instability caused by sky-high inflation](#).

#### Population feeling older now compared to 2015

Overall, there are fewer Canadians who say they feel younger than their age physically (31%) than there were in 2015 (38%). Instead, there are slightly more who say they feel their age (39% to 43%) or older (23% to 25%).

Mentally, a similar story emerges. Fewer feel younger (53% to 47%) and more say they feel their age (29% to 32%) or older (19% to 21%):



#### Women 18 to 54 most likely to feel older physically

Previous ARI data found women aged 35- to 54-years-old [are now more likely to be dissatisfied with their health, stress levels and financial situation than they were in 2015](#).

**Related:** [Great Expectations or Bleak House? Most Canadians are happy, but life outlooks have worsened](#)

Young women now are also more likely to report feeling older physically than they did in 2015. There are also fewer men who say they feel physically younger than their age than in 2015:

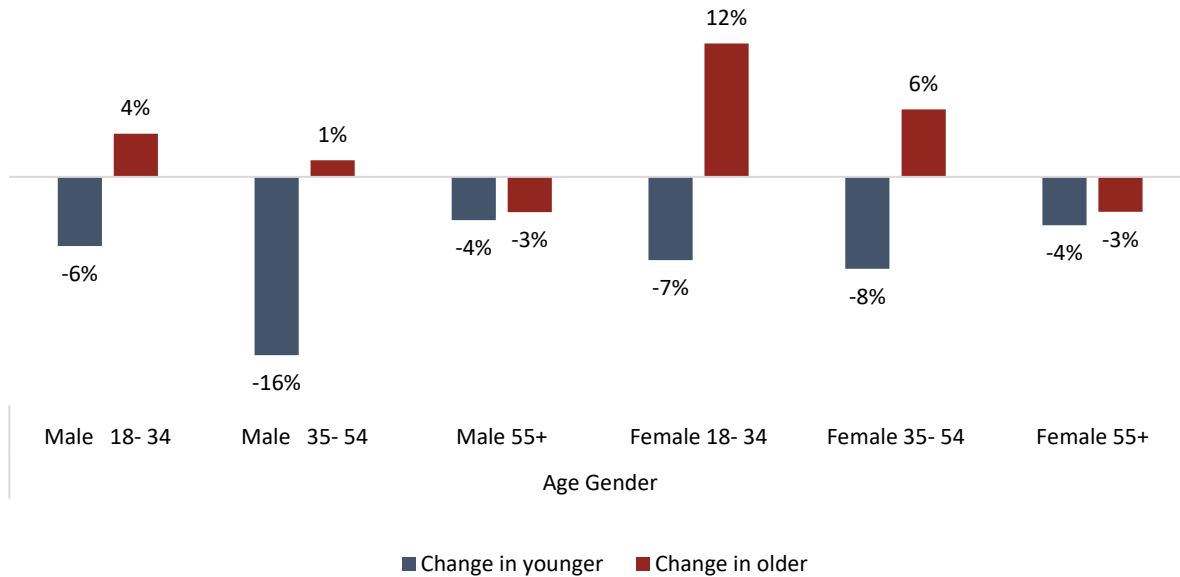
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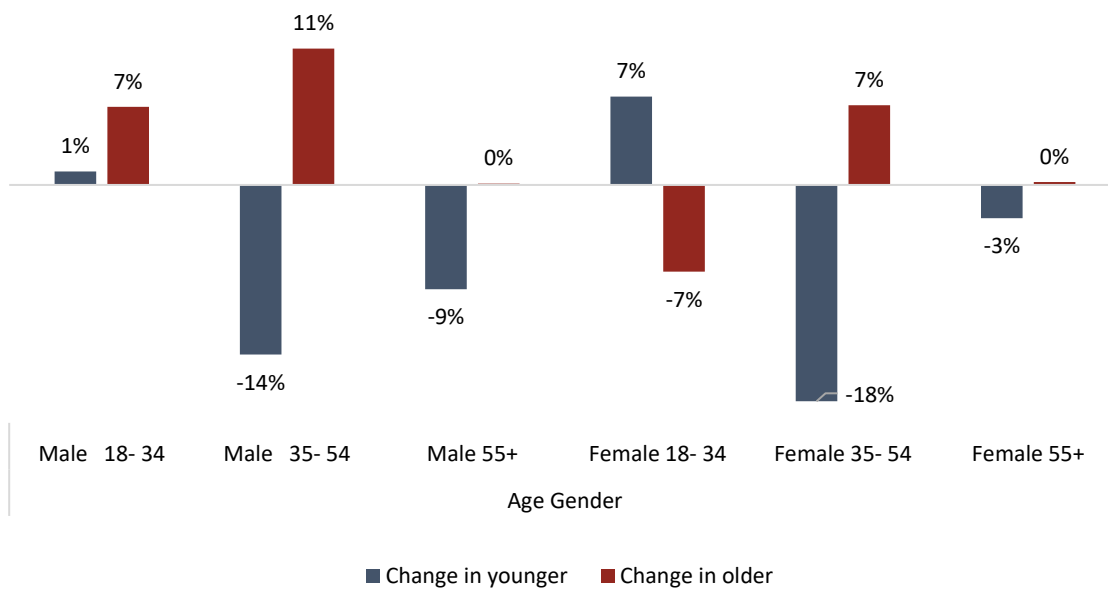
How Canadians feel Physically, change from 2015 to 2024



**Men 18-54 feeling older mentally**

More men aged 35 to 54 say they are feeling older mentally. Meanwhile, women that age have shown the largest decline in the proportion who say they feel mentally younger than their age:

How Canadians feel Mentally, change from 2015 to 2024



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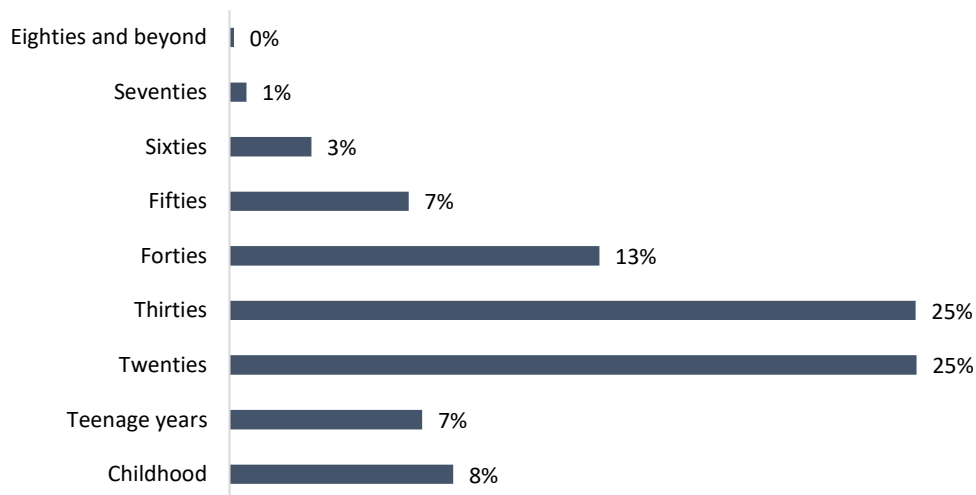
**Part Four: What’s the best age and how long would you want to live?**

**‘Twenties’ and ‘thirties’ top choice for best stage in life**

Regardless of how old Canadians feel mentally and physically, they may feel there is a certain age that is the “best”. Half say either someone’s 20s (25%) or 30s (25%), while more believe the years over 40 are better (24%) than the years 19 and younger (15%).

Canadians under 25 are the most likely to believe childhood is the best stage in life (26%), while 45- to 54-year-olds are more likely to believe it’s one’s 30s (31%, [see detailed tables](#)).

**If you had to choose, what would you say is the best stage in life?  
(All respondents, n=1,605)**



**Majority want to live to be 90 or older; two-in-five want to cross century mark**

With no guarantees on their health, most Canadians (57%) would still want to live to be 90 or older, but half that (27%) would want to live to be 100 or older:

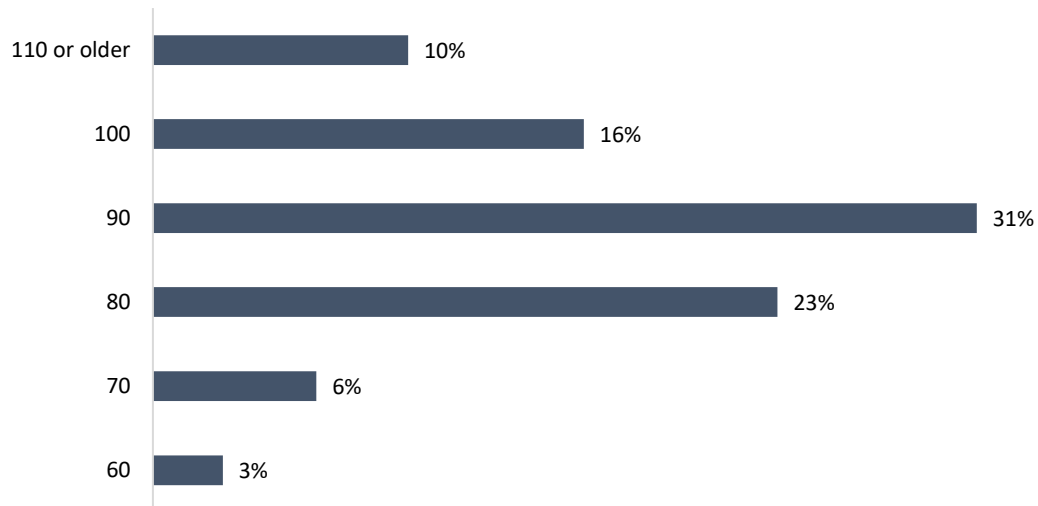
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**Not knowing and with no guarantees about how healthy you would be,  
if you could choose, what age would you want to live to?  
(All respondents, n=1,605)**



*For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).*

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