

## Young Adulthood

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### Physical Development

- Most people reach physical peak in late-teens or early 20s and begin to gradually decline
  - Factors such as diet and exercise slow down declines
- Young adults outperform middle adults:
  - Stronger, faster, better able to recover from exercise
  - More muscle tissue
  - More bone calcium
  - More brain mass
  - Better eyesight, hearing, and smell
  - More efficient immune system

### Brain Development

- In late teens, brain attains a stable size and weight
- Brain begins to lose volume in early adulthood period
  - Results in slower responses
- A possible brain growth spurt in mid to late 20s
  - Regulates emotional responses; impulse control
- Intellectually challenging environments supports brain refreshment

### Health Care in Young Adulthood

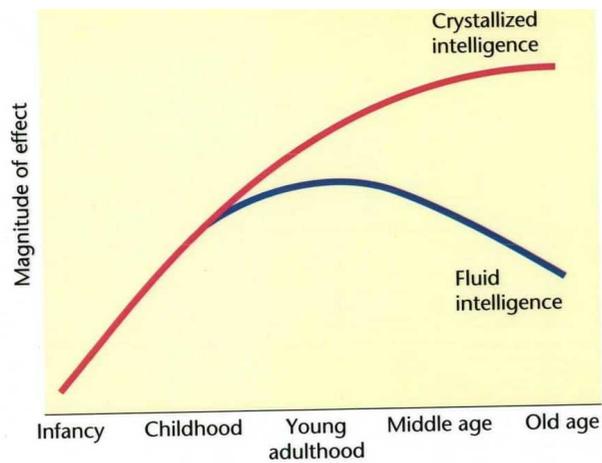
- Research has found that healthcare habits in young adulthood impact health long-term
  - Physical exercise
  - Not smoking
  - Eating breakfast
  - Getting regular sleep
  - Not over- or under-eating
- Adults with good social support have lower risk of disease, death, and depression

## Cognitive Development

- Intellectual processes reach peak in early adulthood
  - Peak lasts longer than previously thought
  - Rate of decline is quite slow
  - Rate and pattern of decline varies widely, likely caused by variety of environmental and lifestyle factors in addition to heredity

## Cognitive Development

- **Crystallized Intelligence:** Accumulation of knowledge and skill in familiar, culturally-relevant domains acquired through experience and education
  - Crystallized intelligence steadily increases through most of the life
- **Fluid intelligence:** Reason abstractly on new problems that is largely influenced by heredity
  - Fluid intelligence declines steadily from about 35 to 40 years



Source: J. L. Horn & Donaldson, 1980

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## Social Development

- Social developmental occurs in 5 domains: Academic, friendship, conduct, work, and romantic
  - Skills from first 3 domains transfer from adolescence
  - Work and romantic domains are qualitatively different from the adolescent stage
- Satisfying work is important for mental health and life satisfaction
- Married adults (in the West) are happier, healthier, live longer, and have lower rates of psychiatric problems