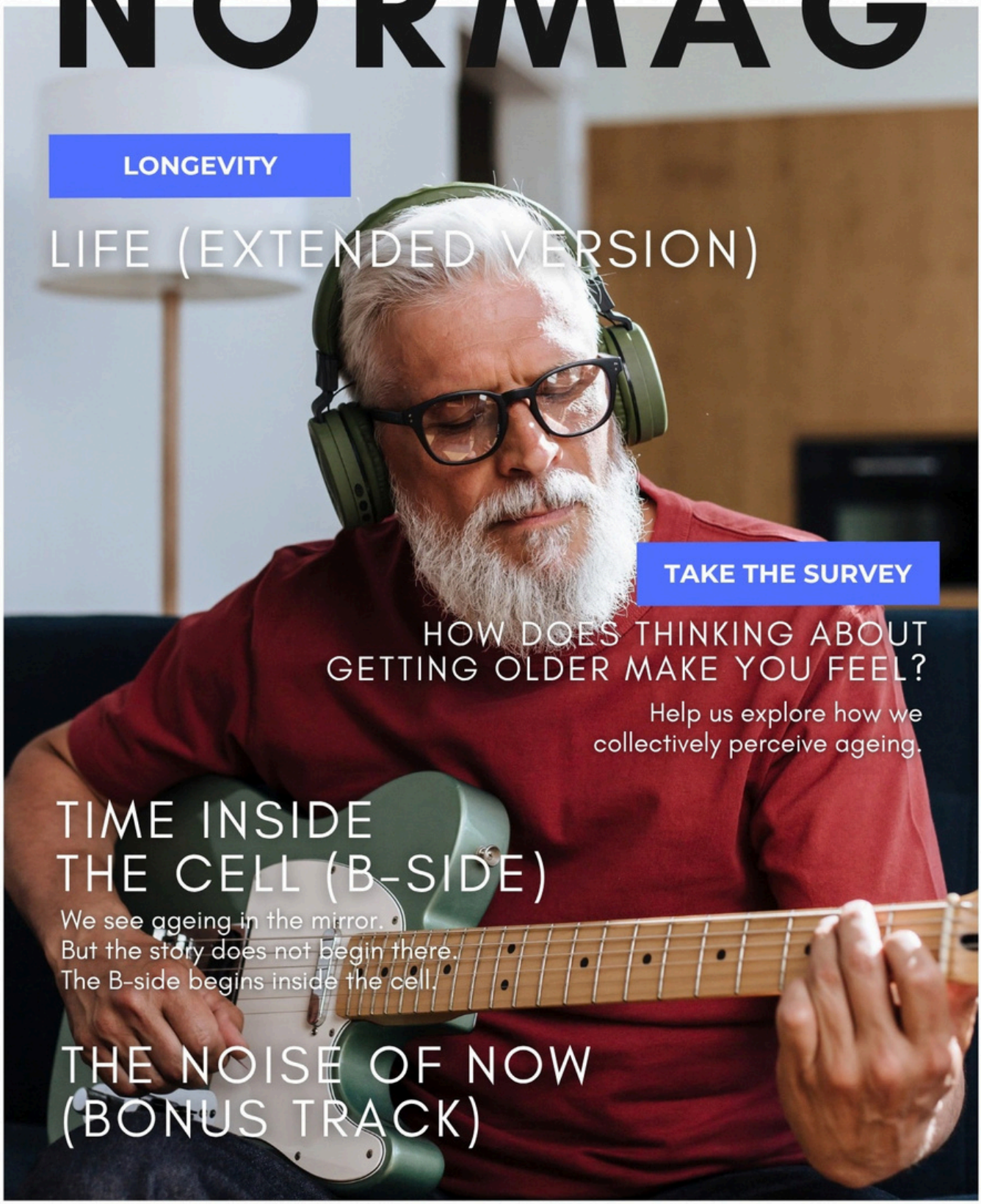
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NORMACTIVE

NORMAG



LONGEVITY

LIFE (EXTENDED VERSION)

TAKE THE SURVEY

HOW DOES THINKING ABOUT GETTING OLDER MAKE YOU FEEL?

Help us explore how we collectively perceive ageing.

TIME INSIDE THE CELL (B-SIDE)

We see ageing in the mirror.
But the story does not begin there.
The B-side begins inside the cell.

THE NOISE OF NOW (BONUS TRACK)



normactive's note

We make plans for our future selves almost every day. We imagine where they will live, what they will achieve, and who will be beside them. But how often do we imagine what condition they will be in? Will they still move with ease, remain curious, recover from difficulty, and recognise themselves in the lives we are building for them? Longevity brings these questions closer. Behind the fascination with living longer lies the deeply human wish to keep participating in our own lives.

In this edition of NORMAG, we explore that wish through three connected tracks. Life (Extended Version) asks what we hope to preserve in the years we want to gain. Time Inside the Cell (B-Side) turns our attention towards the biological systems that help cells respond, adapt, and recover.

The Noise of Now (Bonus Track) explores why caring for our future selves can feel so difficult when we already know how much it matters.

Together, these articles connect the science of ageing with the experience of being a person who ages. They also invite us to reconsider the place of cosmetics, nutricosmetics, and everyday care within that larger story. Before pressing play, take a moment to consider one question. What would your future self thank you for keeping in their life?

Welcome to this edition of NORMAG. We hope it gives you something to think about long after the final track.

Love,

NORMACTIVE


How
old
do
you
really
feel?



life (extended version)

If life were a song, most of us would not choose the radio edit. We would not ask for the verses to be shortened, the bridge removed, or the final note to arrive sooner. We would ask for the extended version. Yet what we want is not simply a song that plays for longer. A track could continue after losing its rhythm, clarity, or the qualities that made us want to listen in the first place. When it comes to life, the same distinction matters. We do not only want more time; we want to remain present within that time to recognise ourselves, preserve our independence, and continue doing the things that make life feel like our own. Perhaps this is why we rarely experience ageing first as a number. We notice it through small changes in how we look, move, recover, and relate to the world.

Chronological age tells us exactly how much time has passed since the day we were born. What it cannot tell us is how that time has passed through us. Some people feel much younger than the age written on paper. Others may feel weary, unmotivated, or detached from life even at an age considered young. Age, after all, is not experienced only through the number of years we have lived. We also experience it through our capacity for movement, our curiosity, our independence, our social connections, and our ability to regain balance after difficulty.

This difference between the years we have lived and the age we experience is more than a personal impression. The World Health Organization emphasises that age-related changes are neither linear nor the same for everyone and that they are only loosely associated with chronological age. The physical and mental capacities of two people of the same age can differ enormously.

Some 80-year-olds may even have capacities comparable to those of people decades younger. In other words, there is no "typical" older person.

If there is no single way to grow older, then there can be no single answer to what being "old" means either. Before continuing, we therefore invite you to consider your own definition. How does thinking about getting older make you feel? How old do you feel? At what age does a person begin to be considered "old"? What truly makes someone old: their chronological age, changes in their appearance, reduced mobility, the loss of curiosity and the desire to learn, or a declining ability to recover after stress, illness, or fatigue? There are no right or wrong answers. Yet our responses may reveal what we understand by old age, and what we are actually afraid of losing. Please take the short survey to help us explore how we collectively perceive ageing and, perhaps, to reflect on your own relationship with it.



How does thinking about getting older make you feel?

TAKE THE SURVEY

to help us explore how we collectively perceive ageing and, perhaps, to reflect on your own relationship with it.



Jeanne Calment , 1915

Our possible answers point to a curious contradiction. We may feel uneasy about growing older, yet humanity has spent centuries searching for ways to live longer. We want more time, but we fear what time may take from us. Legends gave us elixirs of immortality and fairy tales gave us fountains of youth. Today, the same desire appears in genetic research, biotechnology ventures, dietary supplements, personalised health programmes, and studies focused on cellular ageing. The methods have changed, but the underlying wish remains familiar: to extend life without losing what makes that life worth extending. This desire has a real-world boundary, at least for now. Jeanne Calment remains the outermost verified example of human longevity.

When she died in France on 4 August 1997, she had lived for 122 years and 164 days—the longest fully authenticated human lifespan ever recorded. Her record still stands. One hundred and twenty-two years is an extraordinary length for a human life. Yet the number alone tells us little about the experience contained within it. How many of those years were lived independently? For how long was it possible to remain active, make decisions, and maintain social ties? How much of the final stage of life was spent in the shadow of illness and the need for care?

In other words, before asking whether people want to live to 120, we need to ask what kind of 120 years we are offering them. That condition changes the answer. In one study conducted in the United States, most participants said they would not want to live to the age of 120. In another study, however, the proportion of people who wanted to live to 120 or beyond rose significantly when continued good health was included in the scenario.

It seems that people do not necessarily reject a longer life. What they reject is the prospect of prolonging illness, dependency, and loss along with it. We want the extended version, but we want the qualities that make the original meaningful to remain intact. There is a scientific concept that captures this preference: compression of morbidity.

‘compression of morbidity’



Introduced by James Fries, it refers to delaying the onset of chronic illness, dependency, and functional decline so that the period spent in poor health is compressed into a shorter interval near the end of life. The ideal scenario is therefore not merely to postpone death, but to preserve health and independence for longer. Compression of morbidity tells us what we hope to postpone. The World Health Organization's definition of healthy ageing helps clarify what we hope to preserve.

According to the WHO, healthy ageing does not merely mean the absence of disease. It means developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables people to do the things they value. This includes the ability to meet basic needs, learn, make decisions, move, build relationships, and contribute to society. Seen from this perspective, the meaningful contrast may not be between old age and youth, but between losing function and preserving it. Likewise, healthy ageing does not require us to remain unchanged. It asks whether we can continue to act, choose, connect, adapt, and participate as change occurs.

This distinction also explains why longer lives can be understood as both an achievement and a challenge. The report Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and A Challenge, prepared by the United Nations Population Fund and HelpAge International, captures this duality in its title. Living longer than previous generations is a major achievement made possible by advances in medicine, science, nutrition, sanitation, and living conditions.

Yet spending those additional years without health, independence, or social participation presents an equally significant challenge for individuals and societies. What we celebrate is the years added to life. What we must address is whether those years can be lived while preserving resilience, independence, and functional capacity for as long as possible.

This is no longer a question concerning only the rare individuals who reach exceptionally advanced ages. It is becoming a shared demographic reality. The World Health Organization projects that by 2030, one in every six people globally will be aged 60 or older. By 2050, the global population aged 60 and above is expected to reach 2.1 billion. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a person reaching the age of 65 in an OECD country could expect to live for approximately another 20 years on average in 2023, but not all of those years would necessarily be spent in good health.

As more people live into advanced age, the question naturally shifts. It is no longer only "Can we live longer?" but "Can the character those additional years change?". This is the more serious question behind an optimistic slogan such as "Could 90 become the new 50?" We are not suggesting that a 90-year-old body could simply become biologically identical to a 50-year-old one. We are asking whether a person at 90 could preserve much of the mobility, mental vitality, relationships, decision-making ability, and independence that we currently associate with younger ages. Science may help determine how possible this future is. Whether we prepare for it, however, may depend on how real that future feels to us today.

In psychology, **future-self continuity** describes how strongly a person experiences a sense of connection between their present and future selves. When we perceive our future self as close, familiar, and genuinely "us," it may become easier to make decisions today for that person's benefit. When our future self appears to be a stranger, investing effort in their health can feel less urgent. The choices we make today can therefore be understood as a legacy left to a version of ourselves we have not yet met.





> **“More time, preserved function, and the connection between our present and future selves all converge in one concept: longevity.**

Longevity is not simply the desire to keep the song playing. It is the scientific and practical pursuit of extending the period in which health, independence, resilience, and functional capacity remain intact and, where possible, extending the total duration of life itself. In its simplest terms, lifespan is the total length of life from birth to death. Healthspan is the portion of that life spent in good health, with independence and functional capacity. A meaningful longevity approach seeks to expand healthspan so that it keeps pace as closely as possible with lifespan, while also investigating whether lifespan itself can be extended. As this idea has moved from a specialist scientific field into wider culture, investment and consumer interest have followed.

One commercial analysis estimates that the global longevity market will reach USD 31.63 billion in 2026 and USD 46.86 billion by 2031. According to the 2024 Annual Longevity Investment Report, financing received by longevity-focused companies reached USD 8.49 billion across 331 deals in 2024, more than double the previous year’s level. The same interest can be seen in adjacent markets. The global dietary supplements market is estimated at USD 228.2 billion in 2026 and projected to reach USD 431.7 billion by 2033. The global nutricosmetics market is projected to grow from USD 8.32 billion in 2026 to USD 15.98 billion by 2034.



Longevity and cosmetics meet. Not because a cosmetic product can extend human life, but because longevity changes what we expect from care.



The conventional question, “How can we make a line less visible?” does not disappear. It is joined by other questions: How can we help the skin preserve its functions for longer? How can we support its balance in the face of environmental and biological stressors? How can we sustain its capacity to adapt and recover after being challenged? These questions become meaningful because the skin is more than a surface on which age becomes visible. It is a living boundary between the body and the outside world. Its ability to function depends on its barrier integrity, moisture balance, renewal processes, and capacity to respond to changing conditions. Longevity-focused cosmetics therefore seek not only to address visible signs of ageing but also to understand the loss of capacity that may lie beneath them.

Yet the skin does not age in isolation from the rest of the body. This is where the perspective expands from topical cosmetics to nutricosmetics. Nutrition, oxidative balance, inflammatory processes, metabolic health, and the body’s overall response to stress can all influence the environment in which the skin functions. Cosmetics and nutricosmetics are therefore not alternatives to one another. They approach the same question from different directions:

‘How can we support the functional capacity of the skin and body over time?’

Once the outside-in and inside-out perspectives are brought together, a shared concept emerges: resilience. At Normactive, we do not see longevity as a quest for immortality or a promise to erase every trace of age. For us, longevity is not about preventing time from moving through the body. It is about preserving the body’s capacity to respond, adapt, and recover from the changes that time brings for as long as possible. Resilience does not mean remaining untouched. It means maintaining balance under challenging conditions, adapting when necessary, and recovering after strain.

This perspective guides Normactive's development of cosmetic and nutricosmetic active ingredients. With AST-4™, we focus on cellular resilience. With CLOUDIN+™, we focus on the skin barrier's capacity to adapt to changing conditions and recover. With A4V™, we approach healthy ageing from the inside out through nutricosmetics.

These approaches are not intended to offer a single "miracle" that claims to stop time. Longevity cannot be reduced to one molecule, one product, or one habit. It is a practice of continuity built over time through sleep, movement, nutrition, social connection, stress management, regular care, and scientifically meaningful interventions. A skincare product alone cannot create longevity. A dietary supplement cannot rewrite the entire story of ageing. Yet approaches developed around relevant biological targets can accompany the body in its effort to preserve its existing capacities.

Life (Extended Version) is therefore not a promise that the final note will never arrive. It expresses a more human desire: that when life becomes longer, the qualities that make it recognisably ours can remain with us for as much of that time as possible. But resilience and functional continuity do not begin with what we see in the mirror. They depend on processes taking place beneath the visible surface. To understand why the body gradually loses its ability to adapt and recover, we need to ask what happens within its most fundamental living units. Why does function decline over time? Why do tissues that once recovered easily begin to respond more slowly? How do the skin's barrier capacity, cellular defence systems, and ability to adapt change as we age?



We see ageing in the mirror. But the story does not begin there.

To hear what is happening beneath the surface, we need to turn the record over. The B-side begins inside the cell.



time inside the cell (B-side)

In the first track of this series, we asked why we want life's extended version. The answer was not simply more time. We want added years in which we can continue to move, choose, connect, recover, and remain recognisably ourselves. Yet these abilities are outcomes of the side of ageing we can see and feel. Beneath them lies another story, which is the quieter biological processes that determine how long our cells and tissues can continue to function.

We ended the first article by turning the record over: We see ageing in the mirror. But the story does not begin there. The B-side begins inside the cell. So how does a cell know how old it is?

A cell has no calendar. It does not count birthdays or remember passing years as we do. It carries time differently. In the stresses it has encountered, the damage it has accumulated, the balance it has struggled to maintain, and the responses it can no longer produce as efficiently as before. What ages a cell, therefore, is not only what happens to it. It is also how well it can respond to what happens.

Throughout life, our cells encounter oxidative stress, metabolic changes, environmental factors, ultraviolet radiation, and many other biological challenges. A young cell can also be damaged. What often distinguishes it is its ability to detect that damage, organise an appropriate defence, repair or remove compromised structures, and return to balance. As we age, stress does not suddenly become part of life; it has been there all along. What changes is the efficiency and coordination of the response. Basically, time does not move faster inside an ageing cell. Recovery becomes more difficult.

This is why science no longer explains ageing through a single mechanism. The updated Hallmarks of Aging framework describes a network of interconnected processes: genomic instability, telomere attrition, epigenetic alterations, loss of proteostasis, disabled macroautophagy, deregulated nutrient sensing, mitochondrial dysfunction, cellular senescence, stem cell exhaustion, altered intercellular communication, chronic inflammation, and dysbiosis .

These processes do not operate as isolated tracks. A disruption in cellular energy production can increase oxidative stress. Excess oxidative stress can damage DNA, proteins, and membrane lipids. If compromised structures are not removed efficiently, cellular balance can deteriorate further. Prolonged stress can interfere with a cell's capacity to divide and renew. The accumulation of senescent cells can, in turn, contribute to inflammatory signalling that changes the behaviour of surrounding cells. Ageing is therefore not the moment when a single switch turns off. It is what happens when systems that once compensated for one another can no longer perform in the same coordination.





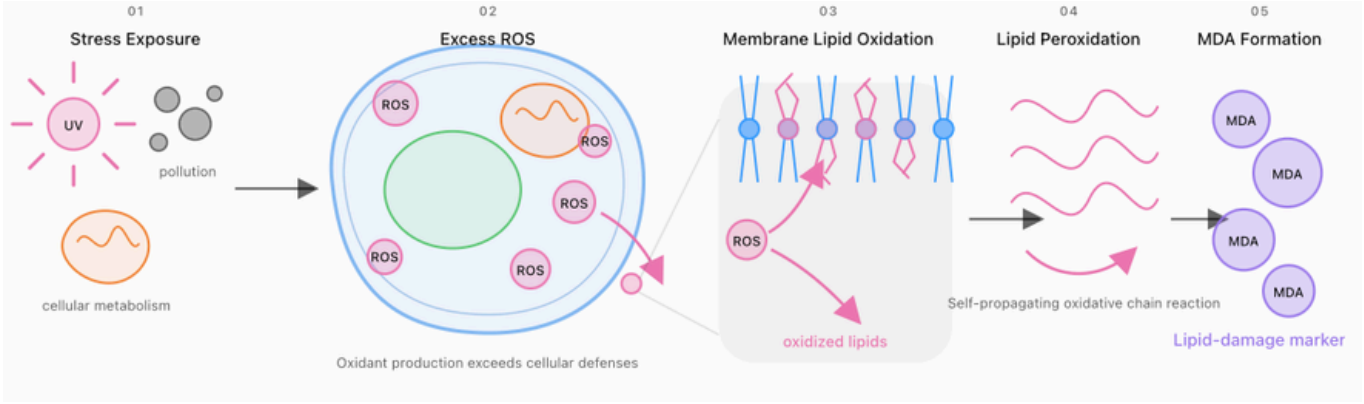
Imagine a house in which small faults appear every day. A tap begins to leak. A crack forms in a wall. The electrical system occasionally struggles under pressure. As long as the repair team responds quickly, replaces damaged components, and prevents minor problems from spreading, the house remains functional. The situation changes when faults accumulate faster than they can be repaired. A problem that begins in one room eventually affects the stability of the entire structure.

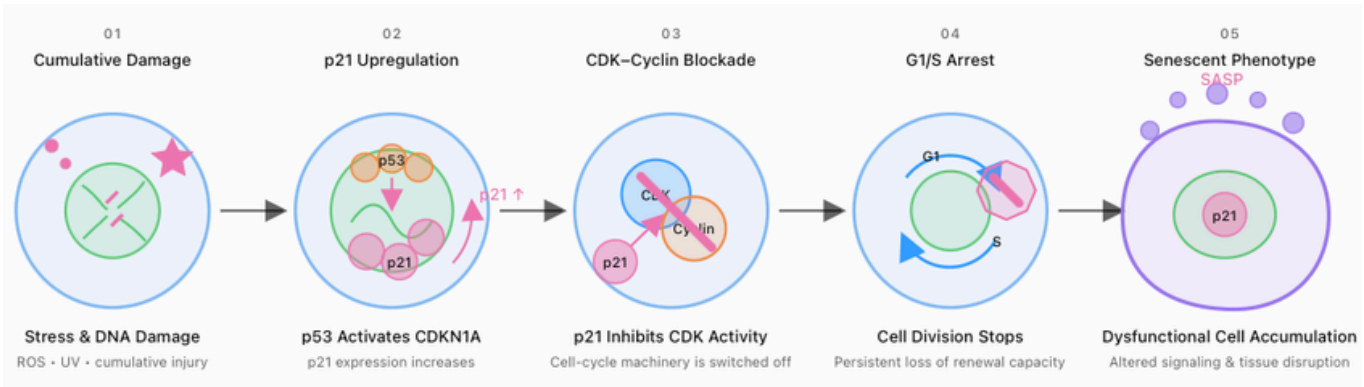
A cell operates through a similarly coordinated system. DNA repair, antioxidant defence, protein quality control, autophagy, energy production, and cell-cycle regulation work together to maintain cellular homeostasis, which is its internal balance. None of these systems can prevent every form of damage. Nor do they need to. Biological resilience is not the ability to remain permanently untouched.

‘Resilience is the capacity to detect stress, organise an appropriate response, manage damage, adapt, and return to balance.’

One of the most prominent characters in this story is oxidative stress. Reactive oxygen species are naturally generated during cellular metabolism and also arise in response to environmental exposure. Their presence is not inherently abnormal. The problem begins when their production exceeds the capacity of antioxidant defence systems to maintain balance. Under these conditions, lipids, proteins, and genetic material can become vulnerable to oxidative damage. When lipids in cellular membranes undergo oxidation, one of the resulting products is malondialdehyde, or MDA. MDA is therefore used as one indicator of lipid peroxidation. An increase in MDA is not simply a number on a laboratory report; it suggests that membrane lipids, which help separate and organise the cell's internal environment, have been exposed to oxidative stress. When that stress persists, the cell may be forced to redirect resources away from its usual functions and towards the control of accumulating damage.

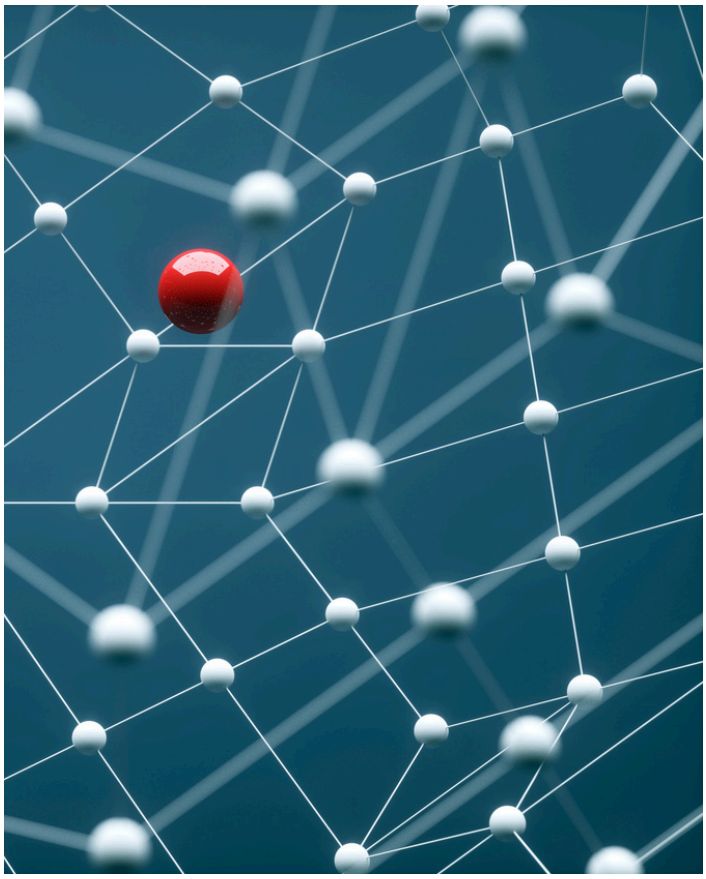
Another important part of this response is cellular senescence. When a cell encounters serious damage, it can stop progressing through the cell cycle to prevent uncontrolled proliferation. In the short term, this can be protective. The difficulty arises when cells that have entered a persistent senescent state accumulate within tissues. Their presence can impair renewal and alter communication with neighbouring cells, including through inflammatory signals. This is where cell-cycle regulators such as p21 become relevant. p21 contributes to cell-cycle arrest in response to DNA damage and other forms of stress. Its role cannot be described as simply good or bad: it helps protect the cell from uncontrolled division, yet persistently elevated senescence-associated signalling can place long-term pressure on tissue renewal and homeostasis.





Resilience is what makes longevity possible.





The same caution applies to p21. It is not merely an “ageing protein,” just as MDA is not the entire story of oxidative stress.

‘To understand the story of a cell, we cannot read a single word. We have to examine how the sentences relate to one another.’

The cell also has a system for recycling its own components: autophagy. Through autophagy, damaged or unnecessary cellular structures can be broken down and some of their building blocks reused. It is not merely a waste-disposal mechanism. It also contributes to adaptation under changing energy conditions and helps maintain cellular quality. The weakening of autophagic processes is now considered one of the hallmarks of ageing. Yet this is also where biological interpretation requires caution. A rise or fall in a single marker does not automatically mean that the entire process has improved or deteriorated. LC3-II, for example, can provide information about a particular stage of autophagic regulation, but its level alone cannot establish the direction or efficiency of the complete autophagic flux.

One of the important regulators connecting several of these sentences is FOXO3. FOXO3 is a transcription factor that helps regulate the activity of different genes according to signals from the cell’s environment and metabolic state. It can participate in oxidative stress responses, metabolic adaptation, cell-cycle regulation, autophagy, and cellular quality control. Alongside evidence from cellular and animal models, human genetic studies have identified associations between certain FOXO3 variants and exceptional longevity. This relationship was first demonstrated strongly among long-lived Japanese-American men and was subsequently investigated in other long-lived populations. That does not make FOXO3 an “immortality gene.”

It does not instruct a cell to stop time. Instead, it participates in the decision-making network that helps determine how a cell allocates its resources: what it attempts to repair, what it recycles, how it responds to oxidative pressure, and when it prioritises protection over growth. Experimental studies have also demonstrated roles for FOXO3 in autophagy-related processes and stem-cell homeostasis. FOXO3 can be imagined as a conductor. It does not create the music alone, but it helps different sections of the orchestra enter at the appropriate moment and respond to one another. The performance depends not on one instrument playing as loudly as possible, but on coordination across the whole system.

This relationship formed the starting point for Normactive's development of AST-4™. Rather than focusing solely on a visible consequence of ageing, we wanted to examine the response and recovery capacity of skin cells under stress. In our in vitro studies with Astragalus membranaceus-derived AST-4™, we evaluated FOXO3 alongside complementary indicators associated with oxidative stress, cellular senescence, autophagic regulation, and the extracellular matrix. An increase in FOXO3 was observed together with reductions in MDA, an indicator of lipid peroxidation, and p21, a cell-cycle signal associated with senescence. A change in the autophagy-related marker LC3-II and an increase in COL1A1 expression, which is associated with Type I collagen production, formed other parts of this biological picture. None of these findings, alone or together, mean that a cell was "rejuvenated" or that lifespan was extended. An in vitro study cannot provide a direct conclusion about human longevity.





A change in LC3-II alone also cannot demonstrate increased autophagic flux, just as a reduction in p21 alone cannot prove the reversal of senescence. What these endpoints offer is a broader window through which to examine cellular resilience. Considered together, they describe responses relevant to oxidative balance, senescence-associated signalling, autophagic regulation, extracellular matrix support, and the wider cellular stress response. To investigate whether this cellular perspective could be connected with measurable changes in skin appearance, a clinical study evaluated parameters including skin radiance, melanin index, crow's feet, and the appearance of nasolabial lines. In this way, a bridge was created between biological signals observed in the laboratory and changes that could be measured on the skin.

Yet a cell does not experience stress in isolation. Its behaviour is influenced by the tissue environment in which it lives. For skin cells, that environment also depends on the condition of the barrier separating the body from the outside world. Imagine a fortress. The defence systems inside may be highly organised, but if its outer walls cannot respond to changing conditions or recover their integrity after every challenge, the entire structure gradually becomes more vulnerable. The skin barrier is not a static wall. It continually adjusts to temperature, humidity, friction, cleansing, chemical contact, and other environmental changes. Barrier resilience is therefore not only about blocking external factors. It is also about adapting to change and restoring function after disruption.

CLOUDIN+™ emerged from this perspective. Rather than focusing only on the skin's moisture level at a single moment, it reflects an adaptive body care approach centred on barrier integrity, comfort, and the capacity to respond to changing conditions. In a 28-day split-hand clinical study with CLOUDIN+™, moisturisation, elasticity, and sensitivity were evaluated. Compared with the control area, the area treated with the active showed greater improvements in moisturisation and elasticity and a more pronounced reduction in sensitivity.

AST-4™ and CLOUDIN+™ therefore approach resilience at different but connected levels. AST-4™ focuses on the cellular response to stress. CLOUDIN+™ focuses on the skin barrier's capacity to adapt and recover under changing external conditions. One examines balance within the cell; the other considers the continuity of the wider barrier system in which those cells function. Because resilience is never created in only one layer.

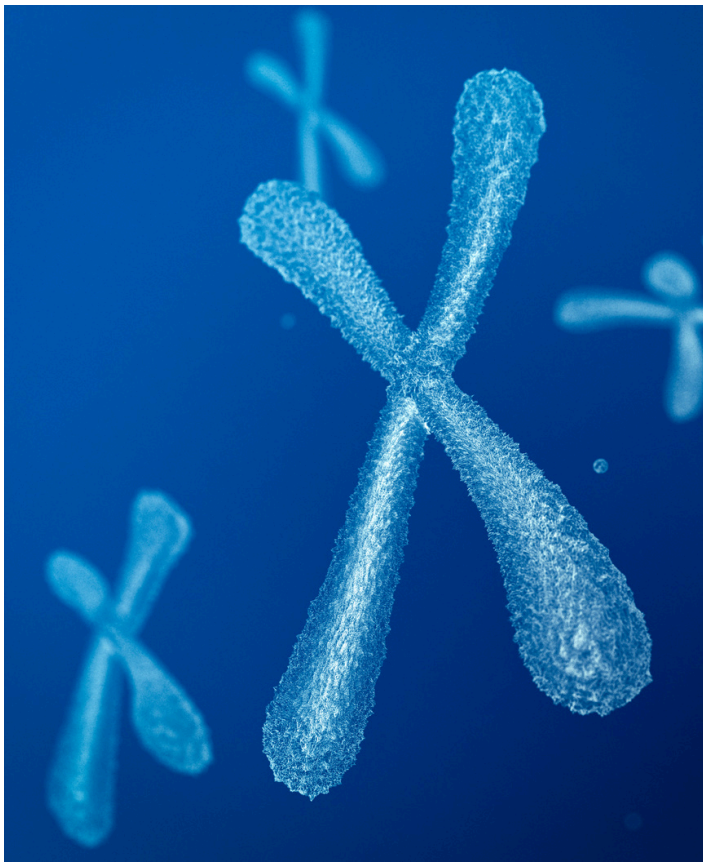
'When cellular response and barrier integrity support one another, the skin is not merely protected; it is better prepared to respond to change.'



Adaptive Body Care: Beyond Hydration



FLUFFY CLOUD OF SERENITY FOR
ADVANCED BODY CARE
with **CLOUDIN+™**



Even this, however, is not the whole composition. The biology of ageing neither begins nor ends at the skin's surface. Oxidative stress, chronic low-grade inflammation, antioxidant defence, and telomere dynamics are associated with ageing across the body.

Telomeres are structures located at the ends of chromosomes that contribute to the protection of genetic material. Their length can change over repeated cell divisions and under different forms of biological stress. Yet telomere length is not a perfect standalone measure of biological age. It is one part of the ageing process, not the complete score.

The same principle applies to other systemic indicators. Inflammatory signals such as TNF-α and IL-6, oxidative stress markers such as MDA, and antioxidant defence components such as SOD provide different perspectives on how the body maintains—or struggles to maintain—balance under challenging conditions.

Normactive's nutricosmetic approach with A4V™ was developed as a hypothesis-building, multi-marker research framework. In silico analyses were used to explore potential relationships between Astragalus-derived constituents and molecular networks associated with telomere biology, inflammatory signalling, oxidative stress, and antioxidant defence. Within this framework, biological contexts represented by TNF-α, IL-6, MDA, and SOD were examined and interpreted alongside a targeted review of the published literature on Astragalus and healthy ageing.

These analyses do not demonstrate that A4V™ changes telomere length or the levels of TNF-α, IL-6, MDA, or SOD in humans. Nor do they provide evidence that the ingredient extends lifespan. In silico findings can identify potentially relevant targets, pathways, and biological relationships, but they remain hypothesis-generating until confirmed through experimental and clinical studies. A4V™ should therefore be understood as an inside-out concept built on computational analysis and literature-based scientific rationale. It brings a systemic perspective to the longevity discussion by exploring how multiple biological processes may intersect, while leaving their direct effects in humans as questions for future research.

Resilience is never built in just one layer.

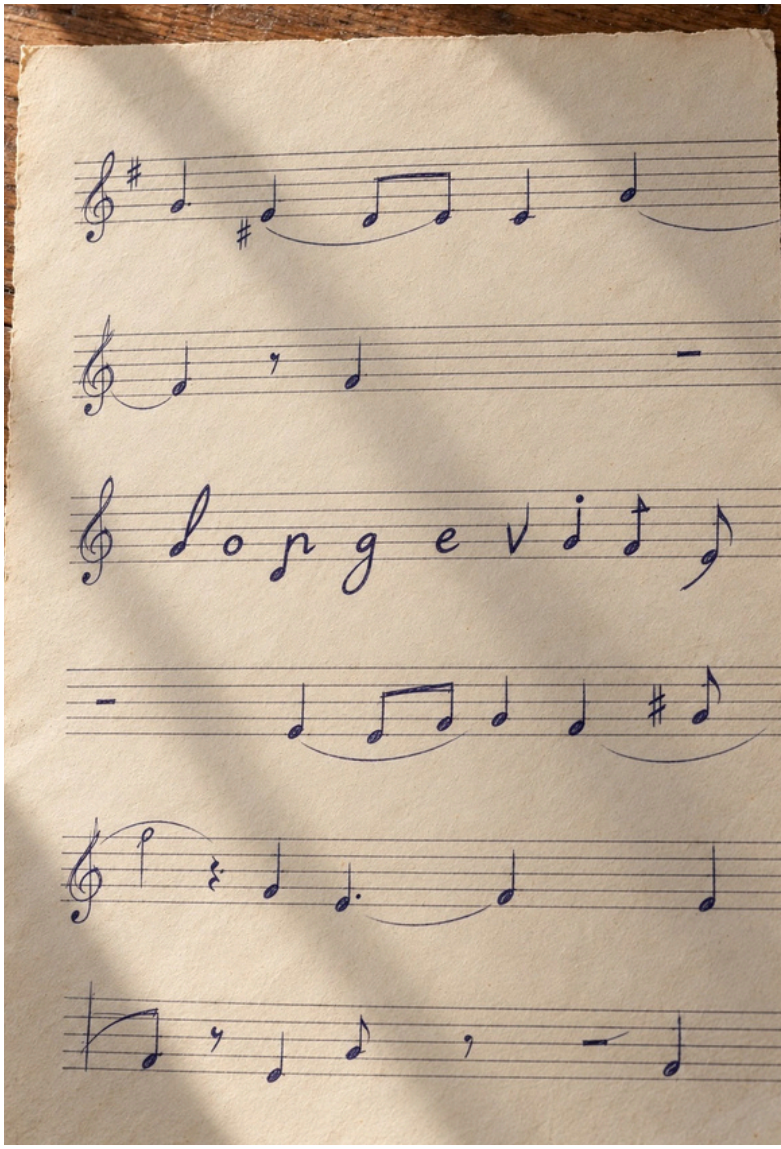


AST-4™, CLOUDIN+™, and A4V™ are not three products playing the same note. They approach different layers of the longevity journey—and they currently do so through different levels of evidence. AST-4™ focuses on the stress response of skin cells, CLOUDIN+™ on the adaptive capacity of the skin barrier, and A4V™ on an in silico- and literature-informed exploration of systemic biological pathways.

What connects these approaches is not a claim that they produce identical or clinically equivalent effects. It is the scientific question they share: how might we support the capacity of cells, tissues, and the body to respond, adapt, recover, and preserve function over time? Longevity does not mean making a cell incapable of ageing or preventing every form of damage. It means maintaining the biological systems that allow us to cope with change for as long as possible. The B-side has taken us beneath the visible signs of ageing and into those systems. Yet biology is only one half of the longevity story. The other half is behaviour. We already know many of the actions associated with healthy ageing: sleep, movement, nutrition, stress management, social connection, and consistent care. The difficulty is rarely a complete lack of information. It is turning what we know into something we continue to do. Most longevity behaviours ask us to make an effort today for a benefit we may not see for years. Immediate rewards work differently. They are visible, available, and emotionally louder. This creates a gap between intention and action: between the future we say we want and the choices that repeatedly shape it.

Why does short-term comfort so often outweigh long-term intention? Why can our future self feel less urgent than what is directly in front of us? And what role do motivation, anticipation, reward prediction, and dopamine play in an environment that offers us an almost endless stream of immediate stimulation?

The B-side showed us what happens inside the cell. The bonus track will ask why knowing what the cell needs is still not always enough




Our
future body
is
quiet.
Today's
rewards
are
loud.



the noise of now (bonus track)

The B-side took us beneath the visible surface of ageing. We looked at oxidative stress, cellular senescence, autophagy, barrier integrity, and the systems that help cells respond, adapt, and recover. Biology can explain why these mechanisms matter. It cannot, however, decide what time we go to bed, whether we move our bodies, what we eat, or whether a care ritual survives beyond its first enthusiastic week. That is where the story moves from the cell to behaviour.

Most of us are not short of information. We know that sleep, movement, nutrition, stress management, social connection, and regular care can contribute to long-term health. We save articles, follow experts, buy products, and promise ourselves that we will begin on Monday. Sometimes we do begin. What proves more difficult is continuing.

Behavioural science describes the distance between what we intend to do and what we actually do as the intention–behaviour gap. Intention matters, but it does not always produce sustained action. Research on physical activity, for example, shows that wanting to become more active and consistently doing so are related but far from identical outcomes.

This gap does not necessarily mean that we are careless or lacking in discipline. It may partly reflect a difficulty built into longevity itself: the effort is experienced now, while many of the benefits belong to the future. Going to bed earlier means leaving the screen today. Exercising requires time and energy today. Balanced nutrition demands preparation today. Regular skin and body care depends on repetition today. Their potential benefits, meanwhile, accumulate gradually and often remain invisible while they are being built.

Behavioural economics uses concepts such as present bias and temporal discounting to describe our tendency to give greater weight to immediate outcomes and less weight to those further away. A small reward available now can therefore feel more compelling than a larger benefit that may arrive years later.

Choosing the sofa over a walk is not simply a contest between knowledge and ignorance. It is a contest between two timelines. One offers comfort immediately. The other offers the possibility of preserved capacity at an age we cannot yet see.

This imbalance becomes even more pronounced in an environment built around rapid feedback. A notification appears. A package is on its way. A video begins before we have decided whether we want to watch it. Another product, protocol, trend, or promise waits behind the next scroll.





We sometimes call this the age of unlimited dopamine. The phrase captures something recognisable about modern life, but it is not biologically precise.

Dopamine is not simply a “pleasure hormone,” nor is it only released when we receive a reward. It is primarily a neurotransmitter involved in movement, motivation, learning, and reward-related prediction. Classic studies have shown that activity in certain dopamine neurons can reflect the difference between an expected outcome and the outcome actually received; a mechanism known as reward prediction error. As learning develops, cues that predict a reward can themselves acquire motivational significance.

> “ **We collect beginnings instead of building continuity.**

Dopamine, then, is not merely the applause after the chorus. It is also part of the system that learns which sound means the chorus may be about to begin.

Much of contemporary life is composed of such cues. A notification promises a message. The feed promises novelty. The shopping basket promises arrival. A new wellness protocol promises a more disciplined future self. Sometimes anticipation alone is enough to keep us checking, scrolling, searching, or beginning again.

That may be one reason novelty feels more exciting than continuity. A new supplement, training method, skincare sequence, or longevity metric carries the energy of a fresh start. Repeating the same routine for the fiftieth time rarely produces the same excitement, even though biology is influenced less by how enthusiastically we begin than by what we are able to sustain.

The concept of fear of missing out, or FOMO, describes the unease that rewarding experiences may be taking place elsewhere and the desire to remain continually connected to them.

Within longevity culture, a similar feeling may keep us moving from one possibility to another. The essential answer can appear to be waiting in the next molecule, device, biomarker, or routine.

Curiosity is not the problem. It drives science, and new knowledge can genuinely change what is possible. The problem begins when searching for the next possibility repeatedly replaces acting on what we already know.

The challenge is therefore not to eliminate reward or turn daily life into an exercise in self-denial. It is to make the interests of our future body meaningful in the present.

This brings us back to future-self continuity, which appeared in the first track of this series. The concept describes how strongly we experience our future self as a continuation of who we are today. When that person feels close, familiar, and genuinely "us," making decisions for their benefit may become easier. When they feel abstract or unrelated to us, caring for them can resemble caring for a stranger.

The difficulty is that our future self cannot send us a notification. They cannot immediately thank us for sleeping, moving, caring for a relationship, or maintaining a health and care routine. Their response may arrive years later, and even then, we may never know which decision contributed to which outcome.





If longevity depends only on a distant promise, the present will usually have the stronger voice. Sustainable behaviour therefore needs something closer: a stable cue, a sense of completion, an enjoyable experience, or the feeling that the action already belongs to who we are.

This is where routine becomes important. A routine reduces the number of times a behaviour must be renegotiated. Research on habit formation suggests that repeating a behaviour within a consistent context can gradually increase its automaticity. There is no universal number of days after which a behaviour suddenly becomes effortless. What matters is not a mythical deadline but the ability to return.

Repetition does not have to feel mechanical. A routine tells us what we do; a ritual can remind us why we do it. A walk can be both movement and a transition out of the working day. Preparing for sleep can be both biological maintenance and permission to withdraw from the noise. Skin and body care can support a functional purpose while also creating a brief moment of attention toward the body carrying us into the future. This gives care an interesting place in the longevity conversation. Its long-term meaning depends on continuity, but the ritual can also offer something in the present: a pause, a sensory experience, a moment of comfort, or the feeling of having kept a small promise to oneself.

An enjoyable ritual does not automatically produce a biological benefit, and pleasure is not evidence of efficacy. Scientific evidence and sensory experience answer different questions. Yet when a scientifically meaningful approach can become part of something people are genuinely able and willing to repeat, knowledge has a better chance of entering daily life. The most sustainable longevity routine may therefore not be the most complex or ambitious one. It may simply be the one that can survive an ordinary Tuesday: low motivation, busy schedules, imperfect sleep, travel, changing seasons, and the days when the future feels too distant to influence the present.

Missing one day does not destroy continuity. Resilience, after all, is not only the ability to remain stable. It is also the ability to return after disruption. This perspective shapes how we think about care at Normactive. An active ingredient is not a substitute for sleep, movement, nutrition, social connection, or medical care. It cannot create longevity on its own. It is one component that may become part of a broader, repeatable approach to supporting the skin and body over time. The scientific question remains essential: Which biological mechanisms are we addressing, and what level of evidence supports the approach? But it is followed by another: Can this knowledge become part of a practice that people can realistically sustain?





The first track of this series asked what kind of extended life we actually want. The B-side listened to what happens inside the cell as its capacity to respond and recover changes with time. This bonus track brings the question back into everyday life—to the ordinary moments in which we choose, postpone, repeat, forget, and begin again.

A longer life may be the extended version. Cellular resilience may be its B-side. But what allows the record to keep its rhythm is neither a single dramatic intervention nor the excitement of pressing play.

It is what we are willing to return to after the excitement fades.

‘Longevity is not the loudest promise. It is the rhythm we are willing to repeat.’

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