

9 Ways to Look and Feel Younger



Aging may be inevitable, but *feeling* your age is not. While some factors of age are beyond our control, there's plenty we can do to help ourselves continue feeling younger, longer. Check out these nine tips for taking care of yourself and getting the most out of life.

Get Adequate Sleep

Did you know that inadequate sleep can show up in your skin? It's true. Levels of cortisol—the stress hormone—decrease when we sleep, but when a good night's sleep is interrupted or cut short, cortisol can linger at higher levels. That is bad news for your skin, as high levels of cortisol can contribute to the breakdown of collagen, making your skin age faster. Sleep issues can become more common as we age, so it's important to develop good sleep habits and stick to them. Establish a regular bedtime and wake-up time; avoid large meals, caffeine, or exercise late in the evening; and turn off your screens in the evening to spare yourself both their blue light (it can keep you awake!) and the stress and anxiety that fictional drama or current events can bring. Develop good sleep hygiene and reap the benefits!

Don't Forget the SPF

It's no secret that diligent sunscreen use helps protect your skin from the harmful rays that can be a contributing factor to skin cancer—but did you know it can also

keep you looking younger? Studies have found that daily, diligent sunscreen use can reduce photoaging (wrinkling, spotting, and loss of elasticity). In fact, daily sunscreen users were **24% less likely to show increased signs of aging over the duration of the four-year study**. Many daily moisturizers contain SPF, but it's important to remember that sunscreen needs to be reapplied after a few hours in the sun, and after swimming or heavy sweating. It's a good idea to keep a tube handy throughout the day. Studies have shown that **chemicals in sunscreen can be absorbed into your skin**, so it's recommended to choose a mineral sunscreen (zinc oxide or titanium dioxide based), which are generally recognized as safe and effective. The Environmental Working Group offers a **guide to choosing safe sunscreens**.

Take Up Yoga

We know that age can take a toll on things like flexibility, posture, and strength—which is why hitting the mat can be so beneficial to feeling younger! If you're daunted by the idea of twisting yourself into a pretzel when you have a hard enough time touching your toes, don't worry. There's a yoga practice for every level of experience—and you can even get started **right in your own living room**. If you have mobility limitations, many instructors will be able to work with you to modify poses to your abilities in a classroom setting. You can also find some **modified instructions online**.

Mind Your Nutrition

We are what we eat. Or rather, what we eat can have a huge impact on our overall health, and the way we feel on a daily basis. As we age, we face unique health challenges, such as bone loss, but incorporating calcium into our diets (**with adequate vitamin D3**) on a regular basis can help keep bones strong. Try starting the day with a breakfast of yogurt paired with a fruit like blueberries, which are high in cell-protecting antioxidants. However, nutrition goes beyond food alone. Did you know that oftentimes feelings of mild fatigue or headaches are **simple dehydration**? Make it a goal to consume about eight eight-ounce glasses, roughly two liters, per day. And don't forget to support your diet with supplements like a **daily multivitamin with cellular support**.

Be Social

When we talk about health, we often focus on the body and what we can do to stay *physically* healthy. But staying emotionally healthy is equally important! In fact, studies suggest that **loneliness can be an important predictor of aging**. Make a point to foster the important relationships in your life and set aside time to meet up with friends and family. If you can't be with them physically, make a date to catch up via phone or video chat. Nothing will make you feel quite as young as watching a kids' movie with a young family member or introducing them to a classic from your own childhood!

Laugh

While you're socializing, make sure to whip out a few good jokes! Laughter has been proven to have health benefits, especially for older adults. It can boost blood vessel function, relieve tension and stress, and increase your happiness overall. It also has emotional benefits, **bolstering social bonds and increasing social support between individuals**. We all love to share a good laugh! Now, in addition to the sheer joy of a good chuckle, you can take heart in the fact that cracking up is good for your health.

Learn Something New

They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks. They're wrong. Learning is a lifelong process, and it's never too late to pick up a new skill or study something you've always been curious about. In fact, learning is great mental exercise, and continuous lifelong learning has been shown to increase cognitive function. There's never been a better time to learn a new language, audit that Shakespeare class at your local university, or finally learn how to bake French pastries. Whatever it is you've always wanted to learn, dive in!

Turn on the Stereo

Learning isn't the only way to exercise your brain—something as simple as turning on your favorite record can give your brain a boost as well! According to a Johns Hopkins otolaryngologist, "Music is structural, mathematical and architectural. It's based on relationships between one note and the next. You may not be aware of it, but your brain has to do a lot of computing to make sense of it." The health benefits of listening to music are numerous: reduced anxiety and pain, as well as increases in quality of sleep, memory, mental alertness and mood. It can even temporarily lower blood pressure, or, in the case of music from your younger years, help trigger memory recall.

Be Positive

Last, but definitely not least: look on the bright side! Research has shown that people who have a positive outlook tend to live longer. In fact, keeping a positive attitude about aging can result in a greater likelihood of living past age 85, and an 11-15% longer lifespan overall. Those who make positivity a priority also tend to experience less stress, which leads to a lower likelihood of stress-induced ailments.

Incorporating these nine tips into your life can help you to live a longer, fuller life!

Allison Fingleton is Senior Editor for Nutritional Therapeutics, Inc. This article originally appeared on Nutritional Therapeutics' Health Blog, and contains links to products from one of our trusted sponsors.