

July/August 2017

The art of growing young[®]

Aloe Vera

Herbs and Supplements



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Love the Skin
You're In—and the
Soul That Lives
Within

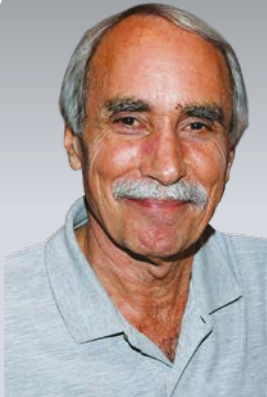
Protect Yourself
and Those
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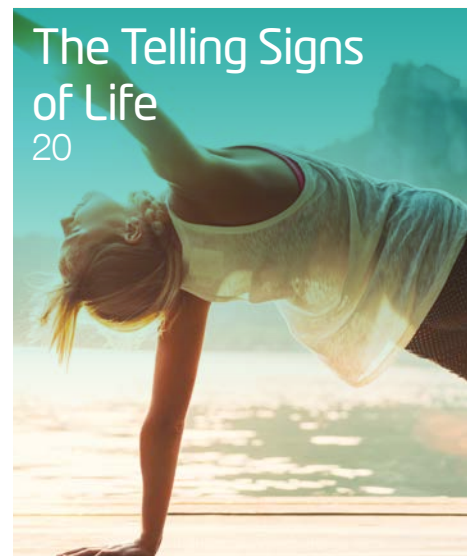
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Overcoming Challenges

We often use “path to wellness,” “journey toward health” and similar phrases when talking about the Art of Growing Young because living a healthy life is not a static goal. We are constantly learning, adapting and evolving as we strive to be as healthy as possible. It is a lifelong journey full of ups and downs.

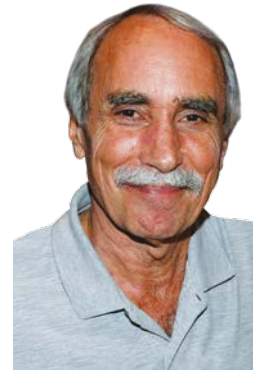
If you think of being healthy as a journey or, better yet, an adventure, it is easy to visualize the many ups and downs you will encounter as beautiful vistas to be enjoyed and temporary slowdowns that will be overcome.

We all take a wrong turn once in a while on our journeys. This is a natural part of human nature and a normal occurrence on the path to wellness. The real key to success is not learning not to fear these speed bumps but rather figuring out how to cope with them in healthy ways.

Let's say the wrong turn on your journey was skipping a few workouts. It's easy to feel bad about that and let negative feelings build up as you dwell on what you feel you should have done. This makes it even harder to get back on track. Focusing on these thoughts will only attract more negative thoughts that act as more speed bumps.

Instead of dwelling on the negative, change your focus to more positive thoughts, such as how good it will feel to get back into your normal exercise routine. Draw on memories of how good you feel mentally and physically after a workout. Let those feelings guide you back to the path you want to be on. Your focus is the most powerful tool you have at your disposal.

One of the most beautiful aspects of life is that it truly is a journey to be experienced. The more positive people, experiences and thoughts we encounter, the easier it is to continue seeing the amazing beauty that surrounds us on the journey.



Dwight L. McKee M.D.

Dwight L. McKee
Scientific Director

Nutritional News

Don't skip breakfast

Maintaining a healthy weight starts with breakfast. According to a recent statement released by the American Heart Association, people who skip breakfast most mornings rarely get enough vitamins and minerals, and they are 75 percent more likely to be overweight or obese than are people who regularly eat in the morning.



Want to live longer?

Eat more nuts. A study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found a link between increased nut consumption and a reduced risk of several chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes mellitus. Snacking on a handful of nuts provides a nutrient-dense pick-me-up rich in unsaturated fatty acids, fiber, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytosterols.

Take more naps

Napping might help protect heart health. After following over 23,000 people over more than six years, researchers found that regularly napping in the afternoon led to a reduction in risk for developing coronary mortality. The association was particularly evident among working men. Napping might help protect health because modern living is causing many people not to get enough sleep due to long hours at work, sleep-disrupting stress levels and a lifestyle of always trying to do more in a day than there is time for.

Boost your cognitive function

Having trouble solving a problem at work? Go to the gym. Exercise might help boost cognitive function, including problem-solving skills. The next time a problem has you stumped, get some exercise and let your mind work on the problem while you are working out.

Ditch the scales

If your bathroom scale is weighing you down emotionally, it might be time to stop checking in so often. Shifting your focus away from your weight and to the benefits and joys of a healthy lifestyle is a more sustainable way to control your weight. Dwelling on the dreaded scale will attract negative consequences into your life, but following the positive thoughts and patterns of living healthy will attract success into your life.



Walk more

When concerns of staying mobile as you age set in, go for a walk. The immediate effect of exercise on the brain will help break negative thought patterns, and the cumulative effect helps protect mobility. A study of 1,635 sedentary seniors age 70 to 89 found that regular exercise helped preserve a sizable percentage's mobility. This proves once again that it's never too late to get active.



Working Up a Sweat

The benefits of a good workout are many. From weight control to stress reduction, heart health to happiness, working up a good sweat is good for your physical and mental health.

Aerobic activities are often the exercises that cause you to work up a sweat—running, biking, rowing, stair-stepping. Basketball, soccer and other sports also produce sweaty, aerobic workouts due to the running involved. All aerobic activities increase cardiovascular health, boost endurance and burn calories, meaning they help people lose weight.

One of the most often-cited reasons for working up a sweat is to look good. Sustained aerobic exercise is the absolute best activity for burning fat and managing weight. It might even help fight against cellulite, the lumpy, dimpled flesh on the thighs, hips and buttocks. If you're overweight or obese, exercising to lose weight can help improve the appearance of the dimpled skin.¹

That's on top of glowing, radiant skin from the increased blood flow that happens during a workout!

The benefits of working up a sweat go more than just skin deep.

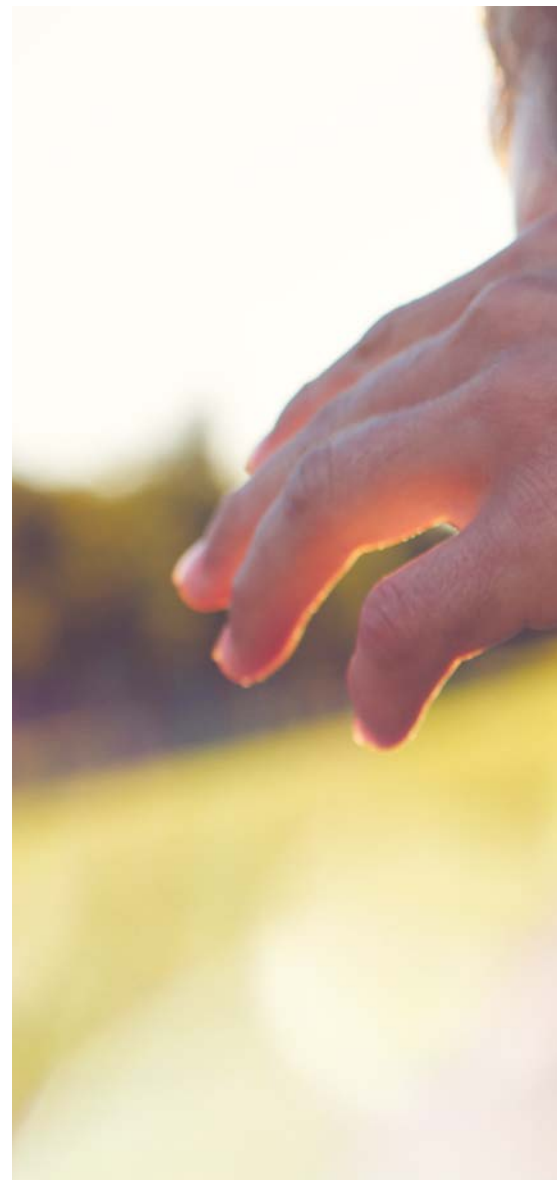
Exercise has even been shown to help protect your body from aging on a genetic level. A study done at McMaster University in Ontario found that a steady exercise regimen helps fight against and can even undo some of the early signs of aging by preventing mitochondrial DNA depletion and mutations.²

The cardiovascular condition from working up a sweat also offers protective benefits from stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attack and more.

Exercise will also make you feel good. Working up a sweat at the gym causes the body to release endorphins, your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters, which helps improve your mood.



Regular exercise can lower the symptoms associated with mild depression and anxiety. Getting active during the day can also help improve sleep. Better mood, less stress and increased sleep quality all equate to a healthier, happier body with no bags under the eyes, hunched shoulders or other physical symptoms of stress. All these benefits make it even easier to focus on all the positive aspects in your life.



To maximize your workout, be prepared. Think about your body and its needs ahead of time so you don't have to stop a workout early. Before you even lace up your shoes, think about what you are wearing. Is it appropriate for your activity? What about the weather? In a study at Osaka International University and Kobe University, researchers looked at the differences between men's and women's sweating response to changes in exercise intensity and found women tend to be less effective sweaters. Women need to take a little more care than men do to protect themselves in hot conditions.³

Comfortable, breathable, sweat-wicking clothing can help keep a woman's temperature in check, as can proper fluid intake.

¹ "Cellulite." Mayo Clinic. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 08 Nov. 2016. Web. 27 Apr. 2017.
² Adeel Safdar, Jacqueline M. Bourgeois, Daniel I. Ogborn, et al. "Endurance exercise rescues progeroid aging and induces systemic mitochondrial rejuvenation in mtDNA mutator mice." PNAS 2011 108 (10) 4135-4140; published ahead of print February 22, 2011, doi:10.1073/pnas.1019581108.

³ Tomoko Ichinose-Kuwahara, Yoshimitsu Inoue, Yoshiko Iseki, et al. "Sex differences in the effects of physical training on sweat gland responses during a graded exercise." Exp Physiol 95.10 1026-1032.



Don't let thirst be your guide to water intake. By the time you feel thirsty, your body is already becoming dehydrated.

Start to hydrate 30 minutes before exercising by drinking 10 ounces of water. Don't waste your money or calories on sugary sports drinks. You will have to work even harder to burn off the calories in your beverage! Your body requires only fresh, pure water to stay hydrated.⁴ That said, key amino acids and electrolytes can play important roles in developing endurance and muscle strength in response to exercise.



Every athlete has unique hydration needs. You can gauge whether or not you are meeting your unique needs by weighing yourself before and after exercise. This will give you a rough estimate of the volume of fluid your body requires to remain hydrated during exercise.

For each pound lost during your aerobic activity, you need to consume an additional 16 ounces of water. For example, if you drank 8 ounces of water while exercising for 60 minutes and lost 1 pound, you should aim to drink an additional 16 ounces (24 ounces total) during your next workout. That is just 6 ounces of water every 15 minutes.

After your workout, drink to quench your thirst and then drink a little more. Staying properly hydrated before, during and after a workout will help ensure you are able to work up a sweat for as long as you want in order to feel and look great!

⁴Cohen Deborah. "The truth about sports drinks." BMJ 2012; 345:e4737.

Finding a Solution to the Effects of Pollution

It's an unfortunate fact of life that we are surrounded by pollution every day. From automobile exhaust and secondhand smoke to pesticides and contaminated soil, we are constantly exposed to unnatural pollutants that were not as abundant (or even invented) when our ancestors lived thousands of years ago or even just a few hundred years ago.





According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 90 percent of the world's population live in areas where air pollution exceeds safety guidelines. Air pollution is a major environmental risk to health linked to stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and both chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma.

Pollution affects even our state of mind. A massive cohort study of over 70,000 women ages 57 to 85 found a significant association between higher than average exposure to air pollution and anxiety symptoms.¹

The WHO states there is a close relationship between exposure to high concentrations of air pollution and increased mortality rates. Conversely, when concentrations of small and fine particulates in the air are reduced, related mortality rates drop.²

If all of that sounds scary, don't worry. Worrying will only attract more worries into your life. Focus instead on all the positive changes you can make to protect yourself from the negative effects of pollution. From personal diet to large-scale social changes, there are lots of ways to combat pollution and its effects.

There is new evidence that B vitamins may offer significant help in protecting people from air pollution. In an initial study, researchers found that supplementing with vitamin B for four weeks limited the negative effects of air pollution by 28 percent to 76 percent at 10 gene locations. They also saw a reduction in the impact on mitochondria, the parts of cells that generate energy. Although more studies are needed to confirm these findings, this exciting study showed vitamin B complex may limit the ways in which air pollution harms humans on a genetic level.³

One major way pollution can enter the body is through contaminated water. Lead is a highly poisonous heavy metal that can negatively affect almost every area in the body, including the nervous system. Lead can enter our drinking water by leaching out of old pipes.

To help prevent toxins such as lead and other heavy metals from entering our bodies through our drinking water, we can use high-quality water filters.



Many municipal areas offer free or low-cost testing for lead in your water. If you are unable to have a test done, simply running the tap for a few minutes (until the water temperature changes) before filling your glass can dramatically decrease water lead levels.

Free radicals often enter the body through pollution sources such as smog. These microscopic pollutants cause oxidative stress that damages the body and can cause premature signs of aging. To safeguard against free radical damage from pollution, we need to consume ample amounts of antioxidants. People who live in heavily polluted urban areas may benefit from ingesting even higher quantities of antioxidants.

A diet rich in fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs will supply many antioxidant compounds. Virtually everyone who has heard of antioxidants knows that vitamins A, C and E can help stop free radical attacks. But not everybody has heard of the lesser-known yet vastly more powerful oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs). In terms of antioxidant capabilities, OPCs are 20 times more potent than vitamin C and 50 times more potent than vitamin E.

¹ Power MC, Kioumourtzoglou M, Hart JE, Okereke OI, Laden F, Weisskopf MG. (2015). The relation between past exposure to fine particulate air pollution and prevalent anxiety: observational cohort study. *BMJ*; 350:h1111.

² "Ambient (outdoor) air quality and health." World Health Organization. World Health Organization, n.d. Web. 28 Apr. 2017.

³ McGrath, Matt. "B vitamins may have 'protective effect' against air pollution." *BBC News*. BBC, 14 Mar. 2017. Web. 28 Apr. 2017.





OPCs are a class of nutrients called polyphenols that act as extremely powerful antioxidants, attacking and neutralizing free radicals in the body. They are found in hundreds of plants and are more highly concentrated in the fibrous parts of plants, such as the seeds and bark. Two of the best sources are grape seeds and pine bark. Due to OPCs' high concentration in grape seeds, red wine is a good source of these nutrients. Moderate consumption of red wine may help protect against free radicals entering the body through pollution.

Another group of pollution fighters in your diet should be foods that help detoxify your body.

For example, lentils, kidney beans, mung beans and chickpeas are all known for their detoxifying ability, and they make delicious additions to almost any soup. It's a good idea to soak them overnight and then simmer them for a long time (or even pressure cook them) both to make the nutrients more available and to denature potentially problematic proteins in them called lectins.

⁴ Zhang, Ning, Caihuan Huang, and Shiyi Ou. "In Vitro Binding Capacities of Three Dietary Fibers and Their Mixture for Four Toxic Elements, Cholesterol, and Bile Acid." *Journal of Hazardous Materials* 186.1 (2011): 236-239. doi: 10.1016/j.jhazmat.2010.10.120.

High-fiber diets also help remove toxins from your body. Fiber binds with certain chemicals and toxins during digestion. Because it cannot be absorbed by the body, fiber collects these pollutants and prevents their absorption as well.⁴ In this way, fiber helps protect against ingestion of pesticides, herbicides and fungicides that may be left over on fruits and vegetables.

You can fight air pollution in your home with houseplants, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

A joint study between NASA and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America found that ordinary houseplants were capable of filtering many harmful toxins out of the air, specifically benzene, formaldehyde and trichloroethylene.⁵

The original study and others since have found aloe vera, bamboo palm, Chinese evergreen, English ivy, ficus, gerbera daisy, Janet Craig (also known as Warnecke), marginata, mass cane/corn cane, mother-in-law's tongue, peace lily and pot mum to be particularly helpful for maintaining clean air in the home.

⁵ BC Wolverton, WL Douglas, K Bounds (July 1989). A study of interior landscape plants for indoor air pollution abatement (Report). NASA. NASA-TM-108061.

The study recommends homeowners try to have at least one plant for every 100 square feet of living space. If that number is too daunting, you may wish to focus more on the rooms you spend the most time in, such as bedrooms, living rooms and home offices.

Large-scale sociological changes and even geo-engineering projects are needed for lasting change and protection from pollution. Reducing emissions from coal energy systems, agricultural waste incineration, forest fires and certain agroforestry activities (e.g., charcoal production) will help reduce key rural and peri-urban air pollution sources in developing regions. Many countries are investing in clean technologies that reduce industrial smokestack emissions and shifting to clean modes of power generation.

These changes take time. You can facilitate the changes by getting politically active. Or simply "vote" with your money by purchasing low-emission vehicles, utilizing public transportation, purchasing local and sustainable fruits and vegetables, biking to work, and making other choices that support industries that fight pollution.⁶

Until social paradigms and industries are shifted to cleaner, sustainable methods, we must deal with pollution on an individual level by taking extra care of our own bodies and living environments.

⁶ "Ambient (outdoor) air quality and health." World Health Organization. World Health Organization, n.d. Web. 28 Apr. 2017.

Yummies

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Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a varied diet.

Love the Skin You're In—and the Soul That Lives Within

There are many kinds of love to be experienced in life. All of them bring their own special kind of joy.

The way a mother loves her baby is not the same as the way a husband loves his wife. Both of these are different from the way friends love one another or the way siblings love one another. One thing every form of love has in common is that the intensity and capacity are directly affected by a person's ability to love himself or herself.

When you look in a mirror, do you see a beautiful human being with the capacity to love and be loved?

Or do you see every tiny flaw? We all have flaws, both physical and emotional. Old wounds must be healed in order to improve your quality of life and experience true love.

Many of us struggle to face our weaknesses and flaws because we feel judged by them—and we ourselves judge our flaws the most harshly. The first step of loving the skin you are in and the soul within is to recognize that we all have flaws. They are what make us human. We have to learn to let them go. We must deal with old wounds and forgive our pasts so that we can focus on the happiness and possibilities of the future.

Think about the things you say to yourself when you look in the mirror. Would you say those same things to a friend or partner? Probably not. Why, then, are we so critical of ourselves?

When you find yourself thinking unloving things in front of a mirror, think about what you would say to a person you love in the same situation. Now say these things to yourself. Be gentle and kind to yourself. Would you pick on your friend for his or her minute flaws? Then don't do it to yourself either.

Believe that you are a beautiful human being. Every wound, every scar, every bad memory has helped shape you into this person. Release the anger and sorrow.

Embrace the happiness and positive thoughts that make you the wonderful person you are. Follow these thoughts to even more happiness and love.

It is nearly impossible to truly love yourself if you are constantly comparing yourself to other people. We all have successes and failures in our lives: ups and downs. Recognize this. When you are in a slump, it is unhealthy to compare yourself to those you view as being successful. When you are in the midst of success, it is equally unhealthy to feel superior to people who are not as fortunate.



Regular physical activity will also help you love the skin you are in.



Though the effects of exercise may help you love your outward appearance, there are deeper benefits as well. Exercise helps us get in better touch with our bodies. It gives us a better understanding of what we are capable of. The better we know our bodies, the more deeply we can love them, inside and out.



Similar to exercise, caring about your appearance can help you love yourself more—as long as you do so in a healthy way. Vanity and superficiality are shallow emotions that will not allow you to truly and deeply love yourself. These emotions often lead to negative thought patterns that spiral into desire and negative comparisons.

Taking pride in the way you look and taking time to make yourself look good before stepping out of the house can help boost confidence in yourself.



To love yourself, spend time with other positive-focused people.

Step away from social media, where everyone tends to post only their “best selves.” Spend time in the real world with friends and family who lift you up. These enriching experiences will attract more positive feelings and emotions into your life, which will ultimately make loving yourself and the skin you are in even easier.

Your ability to love and be loved is directly proportional to your ability to love yourself—mind, body and spirit. Developing loving relations with others and with yourself will bring a richness to your life that you may not have ever dreamed possible.



Eat Well, Feel Well, Look Well

There is a definite connection between what we eat and how we look and feel. The old saying “You are what you eat” is more relevant than ever in the age of modern processed foods. Do you eat mostly natural, organic whole foods or do you eat mostly processed, refined foods? When you think about it, which would you rather eat?

Whole foods are foods in their natural state that have not been processed or refined. They do not contain synthetic ingredients and have not been exposed to the unnatural processing techniques of modern convenience foods. Organically grown fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fresh, wild-caught fish are all examples of whole foods that will help you look and feel well after consuming them.

Eating well helps us feel and look well by providing the body with the nutritional support it needs to function at optimum levels (feel well) while rejuvenating skin from the inside out (look well). A large-scale study of 4,025 women age 40 to 74 found that women with higher essential fatty acid intakes tended to have younger-looking skin. Younger-looking skin was defined as having less wrinkles, dryness and atrophy.¹

Omega-3 fatty acids found in fresh, cold-water fish have also been shown to help boost cognitive function and mood.



These healthy fats benefit your brain as much as your skin, making them an essential nutrient if you want to feel and look well.

A recent study published in the journal *Dermato-Endocrinology* concluded that consuming a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables may be the best way to help preserve youthful-appearing skin.² This is due, in large part, to the antioxidant content of fruits and vegetables. Therefore, one delicious and natural strategy for protecting skin from the damages associated with aging is to increase your antioxidant intake.

Whether you consume them in fruits and vegetables or properly formulated supplements, antioxidants protect the skin from oxidative stress caused by free radicals.³ Along with fresh fruits and vegetables, a few other potent sources of antioxidants are green tea, herbs, spices, dark chocolate and red wine.

Polyphenols are micronutrients found in fresh fruits and vegetables that antiaging researchers believe may help reduce the risk of developing certain cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases associated with oxidative stress.⁴ Several thousand polyphenols found in plants have been linked to the body's ability to guard against UV radiation from excessive sun exposure. This is simply more evidence that consuming a healthy diet of fresh foods can make the body look and feel well.⁵

Spicy foods such as curries may also help you look and feel well. Curcumin, the principal curcuminoid in turmeric, has been shown to protect against the deleterious effects of injury by reducing oxidative stress and suppressing damaging inflammation.⁶

Kimchi, a traditional Korean dish, is another spicy food shown to have beneficial health effects that can leave you looking and feeling well.



The vegetables in kimchi provide a good source of dietary fiber, and the fermentation process used to make it provides the body with healthy bacteria that not only help keep the digestive tract functioning optimally but also help maintain a healthy balance between bacteria and yeasts in the body.

Modern grocery stores are filled with foods full of chemicals and synthetic substances used to make these foods taste and look the best they can for as long as possible. These packaged foods often lack the nutrients your body needs for optimum health, and even worse, they contain levels of fats, sugars and salt that are too high for your lifestyle. Sticking to the outside walls of the grocery store, where the refrigerated sections are located, helps you avoid packaged and synthetic foods (which generally don't require refrigeration). Fill your shopping cart with foods purchased in their whole, natural states that are prepared at home to leave you eating, feeling and looking well.

¹ Cosgrove MC, Franco OH, Granger SP, Murray PG, Mayes AE. Dietary nutrient intakes and skin-aging appearance among middle-aged American women. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2007;86:1225-31.

² Schagen, Silke K. et al. "Discovering the Link between Nutrition and Skin Aging." *Dermato-Endocrinology* 4.3 (2012): 298-307. PMC. Web. 18 Apr. 2017.

³ Gašperlin M, Gosenca M. Main approaches for delivering antioxidant vitamins through the skin to prevent skin ageing. *Expert Opin Drug Deliv.* 2011;8:905-19. doi: 10.1517/17425247.2011.581657.

⁴ Manach C, Scalbert A, Morand C, Rémésy C, Jiménez L. Polyphenols: food sources and bioavailability. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2004;79:727-47.

⁵ Manach C, Scalbert A, Morand C, Rémésy C, Jiménez L. Polyphenols: food sources and bioavailability. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2004;79:727-47.

⁶ Heng MC. Curcumin targeted signaling pathways: basis for anti-photoaging and anti-carcinogenic therapy. *Int J Dermatol.* 2010;49:608-22. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-4632.2010.04468.x.

Protect Yourself and Those Around You

Negativity and toxic emotions are harmful not just to us but also those around us. Even when you create a sanctuary at home, how can you protect yourself from negativity in your workplace or while out in public?





Protecting yourself from negativity starts by understanding how your emotions are affected by the world AND how the world is affected by your emotions.

New research shows that a variety of good and bad habits and feelings, including happiness, sadness, joy, anxiety, obesity and smoking, appear to be contagious. The myriad social networks within populations directly impact the spread of diseases. The countless interactions within these networks also impact the spread of behaviors and ideas. Scientific research is showing that within these networks, negativity is just as contagious as a cold or the flu. When compared to epidemiological models of disease, feelings circulate in nearly identical patterns.¹

When cold season comes around, the more friends you have who suffer from a runny nose, the more likely you are to catch a cold. The same is true for negativity and negative thought patterns. The more time you spend with people who are negative, the more likely you are to focus on negative thoughts and ideas too.

There is one major difference: Once you have a cold, your body must fight it off. Spending time with healthy people will not help cure your cold.

When you become “infected” with negativity, spending time with positive-focused people can help “cure” your negativity by bringing a positive focus back into your life.



¹ Hill, Alison L., et al. “Emotions as Infectious Diseases in a Large Social Network: The SISa Model.” *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 277.1701 (2010): 3827–3835. PMC. Web. 3 May 2017.

² Hill, Alison L., et al. “Emotions as Infectious Diseases in a Large Social Network: The SISa Model.” *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 277.1701 (2010): 3827–3835. PMC. Web. 3 May 2017.

³ James H. Fowler and Nicholas A. Christakis. “Cooperative behavior cascades in human social networks.” *PNAS* 2010 107 (12) 5334–5338; published ahead of print March 8, 2010, doi:10.1073/pnas.0913149107.

Better still, research shows that people can “recover” faster from a negative state of mind. When returning from either a positive (labeled “content” in studies) or negative (labeled “discontent” in studies) focus to a neutral state of mind, study participants took twice as long to lose their positive focus.

Though it may be faster to recover from, negativity is also easier to catch than positivity. Researchers found a person’s chances of being unhappy doubled when he or she had just one negative contact. A person’s chances of becoming happier rose by only 11 percent when he or she had one positive contact. However, happiness was also found to be more likely than sadness to arise spontaneously.²

Other research has shown acts of kindness and cooperation spread outward through social networks at an amazing rate. One act of kindness by an individual can produce a measurable tripling effect (from person to person to person to person).³

It appears that although negativity is easier to catch, positivity branches outward into the lives of many people. This ripple effect means you have the power to transform the lives of people you may never meet.

It’s clear that we are affected by the emotions around us.⁴ When we are surrounded by people who are negative, we are more likely to align our thoughts with negative patterns. When we spend time with people who maintain a positive focus, we are much more likely to align our own thoughts and ideas with positive patterns.

In our personal lives, this can be easily harnessed to help attract even more positive things, people, experiences, ideas and concepts into our lives. But what about outside of our personal lives, in places where we can’t choose whom we spend our time with?

In the workplace, we can’t always choose whether we are working next to someone healthy or sick, or someone who is aligned with positive or negative thought patterns. Studies examining these concepts found a significant influence of emotional contagion on individual-level attitudes and group processes. In other words, when people are aligned with positive thought processes, they infect their coworkers with the same positivity, which leads to improved cooperation, decreased conflict and increased perceived task performance.⁵

⁴ Larson R. W., Almeida D. M. 1999. Emotional transmission in the daily lives of families: a new paradigm for studying family process. *J. Marriage Fam.* 61, 5–2010.2307/353879 (doi:10.2307/353879).

⁵ Barsade S. G. 2002. The ripple effect: emotional contagion and its influence on group behavior. *Admin. Sci. Q.* 47, 644–675.10.2307/3094912 (doi:10.2307/3094912).



If you're encountering a negative presence at work, it may be helpful to find a mentor. Mentors often help people see a larger, positive vision for the future. Mentors also have the experience needed to help guide you through the complex relationships at work in order to maximize the time you spend with positive-minded coworkers and avoid negative ones.

Also remember that you don't need to engage every time a negative-focused person irritates you or tries to pull you into his or her negativity. Doing so can make you seem argumentative (which you do not want in the workplace) and will bring more toxic emotions into your workspace.

Instead, try to ignore negative comments, focus on your own inner positivity and remove yourself from the situation as soon as possible.

The next time a coworker starts complaining and tries to get you to join in, say that you have work to do instead of pretending to agree with that person or trying to change his or her mind.

When we surround ourselves with happy people who intentionally align their thoughts with positive frequencies, we are much more likely to be happy ourselves. If your friends are happy, then you are more likely to be happy.

Happiness can be thought of as a form of social infection, according to researchers.⁶

Infectious happiness may be especially beneficial for teenagers, who are prone to moodiness. When researchers looked at teenagers specifically, they found that teens who have mainly peers with healthy moods experience a significantly reduced risk of developing depression and an increased chance of recovering from it if they already suffer from depression.⁷

It's not possible to completely rid yourself of negative thoughts, people and situations. That's okay. It's part of life. What's more important than trying to completely rid ourselves of every single negative influence is to maintain a generally positive outlook. When we feel negativity creeping in, it is important to acknowledge the feeling and understand where it came from. But then we must shift our thoughts to a positive frame of mind. It's important to do this quickly. Dwelling on negative people and experiences will only attract more negativity into your life.

Don't wait for toxic people and emotions to bring you so far down that it's hard to get back up. Surrounding yourself with people who inspire you, encourage you and help you realize your full potential will help with this process.

Focus on what you want (versus what you don't want). Whatever your mind focuses on is what you'll attract, so focus on your wants.

For example, think, "I want to find a job that's meaningful and fun" instead of "I hate my job because it's boring and doesn't mean anything to me."

Emotions can be thought of as infectious diseases spreading across the networks of your life—friends, family, coworkers and acquaintances. Align yourself with the right emotions and there is no telling how much more happiness, joy and positivity you can create, not just in your own life but also in the lives of all those around you.

⁶ Fowler J. H., Christakis N. A. 2008 Dynamic spread of happiness in a large social network: longitudinal analysis over 20 years in the Framingham Heart Study. *Br. Med. J.* 337, a2338.10.1136/bmj.a2338 (doi:10.1136/bmj.a2338).

⁷ E. M. Hill, F. E. Griffiths, T. House. "Spreading of Healthy Mood In Adolescent Social Networks." *Proc. R. Soc. B* 2015 282 20151180; DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2015.1180. Published 19 August 2015.

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Aloe Vera

Over the centuries, aloe has been reported to help heal wounds, treat burns, protect skin, promote heart health, regulate blood sugar and more. Today, modern science has shown just how truly powerful the “lily of the desert,” aloe vera, is.

The aloe plant has a long and well-documented history of medicinal use. The ancient Greek and Roman healers used aloe vera to treat wounds. In the Middle Ages, aloe was used as a purgative. Unprocessed aloe has been used for centuries as a laxative.

Because of these healing properties, aloe vera is the most popular species of the more than 500 aloe plants. Although aloe is native to northern parts of Africa, it has spread around the world because it's easy to cultivate. Aloe is a succulent plant with thick, fleshy, serrated green leaves. When cut open, an aloe leaf releases a clear, mucilaginous gel.

This gel is what is most often used when aloe is used as a treatment.



Aloe has been widely grown as an ornamental houseplant that is occasionally used to help treat minor wounds. Many of us have probably had grandmothers who have kept an aloe plant somewhere in the house to use for minor cuts and burns. Once again, modern science has shown that our grandmothers' wisdom was correct. The average time of minor wound healing with aloe gel is faster than without, according to studies.¹ Similar results have been shown with first-degree burns.²

In addition to small cooking burns, aloe is widely used to help treat sunburns. A clinical trial showed a gel containing 97.5 percent aloe vera outperformed a hydrocortisone gel. The researchers concluded aloe may be useful in the topical treatment of inflammatory skin conditions such as sunburn.³

Two clinical trials even showed promise for aloe as a natural treatment for kidney stones. Although more research is still needed to confirm the results, these initial studies showed participants who consumed aloe orally displayed increased calcium and oxalate urinary secretions.^{4,5}

The evidence continues to mount showing aloe may be an effective natural remedy. Aloe vera gel has been shown to help treat burn wounds, constipation, genital herpes and seborrheic dermatitis in clinical trials.⁶

Aloe is a common ingredient in cosmetics, including makeup, moisturizers, soaps, sunscreens and shaving cream. Even facial tissues use aloe due to its moisturizing and anti-irritant effects. Chemical analysis of aloe plants shows carbohydrate polymers, notably glucomannans, along with a range of other organic and inorganic components.⁷ It remains unclear which of these components are responsible for the physiological properties of topical aloe.

However, it is clear that raw aloe taken directly from the plant, or moisturizing products with aloe as an ingredient, do help the skin.

There is some evidence that the largest molecular weight carbohydrate polymers in aloe vera gel, sometimes referred to as acemannan, are capable of stabilizing growth factors in a wound so that they persist and contribute their healing activity much longer than they would be able to without the stabilizing effect of these large molecules.

In many tropical climates, aloe grows in the wild. Because it is a hearty, easy-to-cultivate plant, it can be kept on windowsills in any home as a plant that is both decorative and functional.

¹ Visuthikosol V, Chowchuen B, Sukwanarat Y, et al. "Effect of aloe vera gel to healing of burn wound a clinical and histologic study." *J Med Assoc Thai.* 1995 Aug;78(8):403-9.

² Vogler BK, Ernst E. "Aloe vera: a systematic review of its clinical effectiveness." *Br J Gen Pract.* 49 (447): 823-8. PMC 1313538. Freely accessible. PMID 10885091.

³ Reuter J, Jocher A, Stump J, Grossjohann B, Franke G, Schempp CM. Investigation of the anti-inflammatory potential

of Aloe vera gel (97.5%) in the ultraviolet erythema test. *Skin Pharmacol Physiol.* 2008;21(2):106-10.

⁴ Kirdpon S, Kirdpon W, Airarat W, Thepsuthammarat K, Nanakorn S. Changes in urinary compositions among children after consuming prepared oral doses of aloe (Aloe vera Linn). *J Med Assoc Thai.* 2006;89(8):1199-205.

⁵ Kirdpon S, Kirdpon W, Airarat W, Trevanich A, Nanakorn S. Effect of aloe (Aloe vera Linn.) on healthy adult volunteers:

changes in urinary composition. *J Med Assoc Thai.* 2006;89 Suppl 2:S9-14.

⁶ "Aloe Vera Gel Research Review." *Natural Medicine Journal.* N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Apr. 2017.

⁷ Eshun K, He Q (2004). "Aloe vera: a valuable ingredient for the food, pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries—a review." *Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr.* 44 (2): 91-6. doi:10.1080/10408690490424694. PMID 15116756.

The Telling Signs of Life

We all know that we don't look our best when we're overstressed. Whether we end up with pimples, baggy eyes, hunched shoulders, wrinkled clothes or something else, we all outwardly project the stress we're holding inside of us. However it manifests for you, it is possible to beat the causes and symptoms of stress to look and feel good inside and out.

Acute stress in response to daily events can be a healthy motivator for women who maintain a generally positive attitude. When stress is unremitting and a woman does not have proper coping skills, the long-term effects of chronic stress can damage her health. Chronic stress can make you feel mentally drained and physically exhausted yet unable to sleep at night, which exacerbates the problem.

As stress mounts and sleep dwindles, the accumulated physical toll can eventually lead to larger health problems for women. The relationship between psychosocial stress and disease is well-established. The speed with which and the extent to which a woman responds to chronic stress are affected by many factors, including the amount of stress, genetics, psychosocial resources, support networks, diet, fitness level, mental outlook and more. Learning to better cope with stress and maintain a positive focus throughout life may influence the course of many chronic diseases.¹

Stress has become so ubiquitous with modern life that many women don't even realize how their lives are being negatively affected by chronic stress. Juggling careers, families, friends and hobbies may feel like second nature to many women who are not aware of how it is damaging their bodies.

To begin combating stress, you must first learn to recognize when you are experiencing too much of it. Monitor your feelings and your body.

Inwardly, stress can manifest as worry, anger, irritability and other negative emotions. Check in with yourself several times a day and evaluate your feelings. If more often than not you feel these negative thoughts, your mind is telling you that you are suffering from too much stress and aligning your thoughts and feelings with negative things. When you find your feelings aligned with the negative spectrum, make an effort to realign your thoughts with positive things and experiences. Focus on the positive aspects, such as how good you are going to feel when you meet your deadline.

Simply changing your focus a little bit can make a huge impact in your ability to cope with stress.



Becoming more mindful grants a woman an awareness of her current thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations with a higher degree of kindness and understanding for herself. Being mindful also creates a psychological space between what is currently happening in a woman's life and her response. It gives her the ability to respond in a wise, positive manner instead of reacting in an impulsive, negative way. Responding to stressful situations mindfully helps control negative feelings and stress before they have a chance to build up.²



Outwardly, when you look at yourself in the mirror in the morning and when you get home from work, what do you see? Baggy eyes, acne, hunched shoulders, wrinkles, clenched jaw, split ends, rumpled clothes? If you see any of these in your reflection, they may be physical manifestations of stress.

When your reflection is telling you that your stress levels are too high, it is past time to add stress-busting activities into your daily life.

¹ Schneiderman, Neil, Gail Ironson, and Scott D. Siegel. "STRESS AND HEALTH: Psychological, Behavioral, and Biological Determinants." Annual review of clinical psychology 1 (2005): 607-628. PMC. Web. 27 Apr. 2017.

² Kermene MM (2016) A Psychological Study on Stress among Employed Women and Housewives and Its Management through Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (PMRT) and Mindfulness Breathing. J Psychol Psychother 6:244. doi:10.4172/2161-0487.1000244.



One of the best ways to manage stress is to force yourself to relax. This is easier said than done in the fast-paced time we live in. Fortunately, it truly does not matter what activity you find relaxing as long as it leaves you feeling calm and tranquil afterward. A few minutes spent reading a good book can be just as effective of a stress buster as a manicure on the way home from work. Longer escapes such as nature walks, massages or an afternoon intentionally listening to calming music are helpful as well. To beat stress, simply find a relaxing activity you enjoy and devote at least a few minutes to it every day.

A healthy diet can help fight against chronic stress as well. Antioxidants from diets rich in fresh fruits and vegetables have been shown to help reduce free radical surges that accompany bouts of extreme stress. The body also uses antioxidants to help combat the biochemical changes that occur as a result of stress. Antioxidants are so powerful in the fight against stress that some researchers suggest that antioxidant supplement therapy as an adjuvant therapy is useful in patients with certain stress-induced disorders.³

Certain nutrients, such as vitamin B, are also helpful when stress levels rise. B vitamins are required for the proper function of neurotransmitters, amino acids, some hormones and fatty acids, and they play important roles in converting carbohydrates into energy, helping relieve chronic stress and fatigue.

Staying focused on healthy foods also helps prevent bingeing on comfort foods when stress levels rise.

Much like the stress sleep spiral, the stress comfort food cycle affects many people who turn to food as a way to cope with stress but then end up feeling even worse after bingeing, which causes even more stress. A healthy diet also provides longer-lasting energy to fight against fatigue associated with stress.

Chronic stress takes its toll physically, emotionally and spiritually. By eating a healthy diet, engaging in stress-reducing activities and focusing your energies on positive thought patterns, you can easily beat stress so you look and feel great!

³ Gautam, Medhavi et al. "Role of Antioxidants in Generalised Anxiety Disorder and Depression." *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 54.3 (2012): 244-247. PMC. Web. 28 Apr. 2017.

The Healing Power of Touch

The simple act of physical touch has been shown to possess amazing healing powers. As men around the world are changing their idea of what it means to be masculine, they are tapping into these powers by embracing the benefits of massage therapy.

Men have traditionally felt uncomfortable allowing themselves to be touched by others, particularly in the ways needed for massage (e.g., in a spa, without a shirt on). Today, modern men are redefining their gender roles. For the first time ever, many of them are more comfortable with the intimacies of massage, allowing themselves to take part in this millennia-old healing art and experience its many health benefits.

Men who embrace the power of touch know that massages are more than just indulgences.

They are scientifically proven health and mood treatments. Studies have shown massage treatments can help with pain relief, relaxation, speeding recovery from injury or surgery, and reducing stress.¹

Massages can be a great complement to traditionally masculine activities, such as lifting weights or playing challenging sports. Researchers at McMaster University in Canada discovered massage affects the activity of certain genes, directly reducing inflammation in muscles, which can help boost those muscles' ability to recover from strenuous exercise. The results, according to the study, are very similar to what a man would get by taking aspirin or ibuprofen.² But neither over-the-counter drug offers the same relaxing, mood-boosting effects as massage! What better way to recover from hard exercise than a relaxing massage?

Older men, who, unfortunately, are still more likely to be uncomfortable with massage, may experience some of the biggest benefits. One of the most common health issues faced by older men is chronic pain. Whether the discomfort comes from back pain, headache, arthritis pain or everyday aches, it presents a barrier to a full and happy life.

Fortunately, there is a simple way for many men to cope with the aches and pains associated with old age: massage. Studies have shown regular massage can produce an overall positive effect on a person's ability to deal with the challenging physical and psychological aspects of chronic pain. One particular study found that when people regularly receive massages, they don't just experience less pain, but they also report improvements in relaxation, sleep, emotions, recovery—the entire healing process.³ That's a lot of benefit from touch!

Modern men may be taking more active roles in their health than in years past, but they are still less likely than their female counterparts to seek assistance when they're feeling blue. Massage is not a substitute for therapies required to deal with substantial mental problems, but it can help boost mood by increasing serotonin levels enough to help ward off the occasional blues and improve mental outlook.⁴

Along with boosting mood, massage therapy has been shown to effectively reduce stress.



The touching action of massage reduces the stress hormone cortisol while increasing both dopamine and serotonin.⁵ To put it another way, massage has a twofold protective action against the stresses of modern life. It both decreases stress and increases happiness. What man wouldn't want to experience this?

Because massages are closely linked to traditionally female spaces, such as spas and beauty salons, some men are still uncomfortable entering these areas. However, as more men become comfortable receiving touch, massage parlors are becoming less female-centric. The result is that more and more men are turning to massage for a variety of reasons—from dealing with chronic pain to enjoying a simple, relaxing treat. And as time goes on, even more men will embrace the power of touch.

¹ Publications, Harvard Health. "The healing power of touch." Harvard Health. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Apr. 2017.

² McMaster University. "Massage is promising for muscle recovery: McMaster researchers find 10 minutes reduces inflammation." N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Apr. 2017.

³ Adams, Rose, Barb White, and Cynthia Beckett.

"The Effects of Massage Therapy on Pain Management in the Acute Care Setting." *International Journal of Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork* 3.1 (2010): 4–11. Print.

⁴ "Research Roundup: Massage Therapy Can Help Reduce Winter Blues | American Massage Therapy Association." American Massage Therapy Association.

N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Apr. 2017.

⁵ Tiffany Field, Maria Hernandez-Reif, Miguel Diego, et al. "Cortisol decreases and serotonin and dopamine increase following massage therapy." *Int J Neurosci*. 2005 Oct;115(10):1397-413.



Why Playing Barefoot and Scraping Knees Are Good for Us

All parents want their children to be safe. But the recent rise of the helicopter style of parenting, which emphasizes protecting kids against danger at all costs, may be doing more harm than good.

The past few generations of parents have adopted increasingly protective stances on child care that are limiting our children's ability to maximize their potential. Fears of scraped knees, exposure to pollution, allergies and other lurking dangers have led many parents to limit their children's outdoor playtime.

A survey of 2,000 8-to-12-year-olds is the latest in a string of studies showing today's young children are missing out on the benefits of outdoor play. This study found the distance kids stray from home on their own has shrunk by a massive 90 percent since the 1970s. Nearly half of adults believe children shouldn't be allowed to play outdoors unsupervised until the age of 14. In the United Kingdom, more children are admitted to hospitals for injuries incurred falling out of bed than falling out of trees.¹

Trying too hard to protect our children from the dangers of being outdoors actually inhibits them from reaching their true potential.

Outdoor play helps promote not only children's physical well-being (which is so critical in this age of obesity) but also healthy cognitive, social and emotional development.

Some parents may think that providing large spaces indoors for running and jumping is just as good as letting their children play outside when it comes to expending energy and getting exercise. But outdoor play offers an explosion of sensory experiences that are amazing for developing brains. There are also benefits from increased sun exposure and, yes, even dirt exposure.

¹ Henley, Jon. "Why our children need to get outside and engage with nature." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 16 Aug. 2010. Web. 28 Apr. 2017.

Helicopter parents are also raising kids in an era of antibacterial everything—soaps, sprays, wipes, cleaning products, sanitation stations. Kids are growing up in sterile environments, and although it may seem healthy to protect children from germs, the opposite is true. Research shows that the "scary" microorganisms, bacteria and viruses that enter the body through dirt are part of a healthy processes that helps developing immune systems grow into the robust bodily protectors we need later in life.² Playing barefoot in the grass and scraping knees in the dirt allow these organisms to interact with young immune systems and to build a healthy microbiome, which scientists are learning affects many more functions in humans than anyone would have guessed just 20 years ago.

Outdoor play activities are an essential part of preventing and reducing obesity rates. Far more calories are burned while playing outdoors than when children are sitting in front of a television or computer screen. Encouraging outdoor games and activities such as tag, tree climbing, bike riding and jumping rope while modeling healthy eating behaviors will help children grow into physically healthy adults who stay active throughout life.

When groups of children meet and play outdoors at the park or playground—as opposed to playing video games or watching movies on the couch—a community is formed in which children are able to develop emotional skills such as emotion regulation, empathy, fairness, leadership, coping and more. Playgrounds where your children will meet new kids can be especially beneficial, ensuring that children develop social coping skills.

² Brody, Jane E. "Babies Know: A Little Dirt Is Good for You." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 26 Jan. 2009. Web. 28 Apr. 2017.

What looks like play to adults is also a deep learning process. Not everyone can go down the slide first, so who gets to go first? Which equipment is the most fun? Who leads the game of chase? Children sort these questions out themselves. As they do so, they develop skills that will be necessary later in life for successful relationships, both personal and professional.³

³ Lindsey, E.W. & Colwell, M. J. "Pretend and physical play: links to pre-schoolers' affective social competence." *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 59(3), 330-360.





Sun exposure from playing outside has several important benefits as well. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, many children suffer from vitamin D deficiencies due to staying indoors too often. Vitamin D has many health benefits, including preventing kids from having future bone problems, diabetes and even heart disease, not to mention fostering optimal muscular and neurological development.

Children who play in the sun also experience better vision. It has been shown that increasing exposure to sunlight is key to reducing one's chances of developing myopia (near-sightedness). Australian researchers found children should get at least two hours a day outside to help reduce their chances of myopia's developing and progressing.⁴

It's a simple fact that children who play outside experience many health benefits.

Parents who can overcome their fears of dirt and scraped knees harming their children will help their kids find a fun path to better physical, emotional and social health.

⁴ Queensland University of Technology. "Outdoor light has role in reducing short-sightedness in kids." ScienceDaily, 6 Apr. 2016.



Reclaim Your Body

Your skin is constantly sending messages to you and the people around you. Is your skin aging gracefully or is it prematurely wrinkled and loose? What does your skin say about you?

The connection between nutrition and healthy skin aging is well-established. Study after study leads to the same truth: Beauty comes from within.

One of the best preventive strategies for safeguarding your skin is to eat a diet that provides ample protection from free radicals while supplying the building blocks of healthy, elastic skin. A skin-healthy diet is one comprising primarily fresh fruits and vegetables, due to their antioxidant and vitamin content.

Vitamin C may be one of the most important antioxidants for skin health.

Vitamin C, or L-ascorbic acid as it is often called, is used orally and topically for skin benefits in a wide variety of supplements and beauty products. Vitamin C fights against damaging oxidation from free radicals and helps stabilize the triple-helical structure of collagen, the main connective tissue in skin.¹ Vitamin C deficiencies can lead to skin lesions, bruising and slow wound healing, all of which make your skin appear unhealthy.²

Citrus fruits, black currant, rose hip, guava, chili pepper and parsley are all rich sources of this skin-health-promoting antioxidant.



Vitamin C works even better at protecting your skin when consumed with vitamin E. These two vitamins work synergistically to stop oxidation processes.³ Vitamin E is found in many nuts and seeds.

Another potent antioxidant that works hard to protect skin is coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10). A fat-soluble, vitaminlike compound, CoQ10 is rich in the epidermis, where it acts in combination with other enzymic and nonenzymic substances as the initial barrier to free radical attacks.⁴



CoQ10 is found in salmon, tuna and other oily fish, as well as whole grains. It is also synthesized within the body unless certain medications, such as statin drugs, which block the body's ability to synthesize CoQ10, are used.

Omega-3 fatty acids found in fresh, deep-ocean, cold-water fish have been shown time and time again in clinical studies to help protect skin from sun damage. One study has already shown that ingesting omega-3s from fish oil every day for three months significantly reduced sensitivity to sunburn. The study also showed omega-3s reduced the amount of an important marker of UV-induced DNA damage.

¹ Draelos ZD. Nutrition and enhancing youthful-appearing skin. *Clin Dermatol.* 2010;28:400–8. doi: 10.1016/j.clindermatol.2010.03.019.

² Boyera N, Galey I, Bernard BA. Effect of vitamin C and its derivatives on collagen synthesis and cross-linking by normal human fibroblasts. *Int J Cosmet Sci.* 1998;20:151–8. doi: 10.1046/j.1467-2494.1998.171747.x.

³ Fryer MJ. Evidence for the photoprotective effects of vitamin E. *Photochem Photobiol.* 1993;58:304–12. doi: 10.1111/j.1751-1097.1993.tb09566.x.

⁴ Shindo Y, Witt E, Han D, Epstein W, Packer L. Enzymic and non-enzymic antioxidants in epidermis and dermis of human skin. *J Invest Dermatol.* 1994;102:122–4. doi: 10.1111/1523-1747.ep12371744.



Carrots, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, mangos and papayas all help maintain natural skin coloring. These vegetables are all rich in beta carotene, which appears to contribute significantly to normal human skin color.⁵



A little more time in the sun can also help protect your skin. This may sound counterintuitive to people who have heard all their lives to avoid long stretches of sun exposure, but sun exposure is absolutely necessary for healthy skin. Vitamin D, which the body produces itself when exposed to sun rays, protects human skin cells from UV-induced cell death, or apoptosis.⁶ Low levels of vitamin D have also been linked to photodamage, hyperpigmentation and wrinkling.⁷

All it takes is 10-20 minutes of unprotected time in the sun during peak hours every day for the body to produce adequate amounts of skin-protecting vitamin D.

In addition to the nutrients needed to keep skin supple and healthy, your body requires plenty of fresh, pure water. This is especially important during hotter times of the year, when you are more likely to lose water through sweat. To keep skin healthy and hydrated, drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water every day. Drink more if you are exercising. Proper fluid levels in the body help moisturize skin and increase elasticity.

Along with drinking water, keep your skin hydrated by avoiding extremely hot baths and showers, as hot water can damage and dry out skin.

Beauty comes from the inside. A healthy diet and plenty of fresh, pure water will help keep your skin looking young and supple for years to come.

⁵ Alaluf S, Heinrich U, Stahl W, Tronnier H, Wiseman S. Dietary carotenoids contribute to normal human skin color and UV photosensitivity. *J Nutr.* 2002;132:399-403.

⁶ De Haes P, Garzyn M, Degreef H, Vantieghem K, Bouillon R, Segaert S. 1,25-Dihydroxyvitamin D3 inhibits ultraviolet B-induced apoptosis, Jun kinase activation, and interleukin-6 production in primary human keratinocytes. *J Cell Biochem.* 2003;89:663-73. doi: 10.1002/jcb.10540.

⁷ Chang AL, Fu T, Amir O, Tang JY. Association of facial skin aging and vitamin D levels in middle-aged white women. *Cancer Causes Control.* 2010;21:2315-6. doi: 10.1007/s10552-010-9646-y.

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Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a varied diet.

Ask the Expert

Why does my BMI tell me I'm overweight when I feel and look healthy?

BMI (body mass index) is a simple ratio of height to weight that has become a quick and easy tool for doctors and insurance companies to determine if someone is healthy. BMI might be good for tracking obesity rates over large populations, but it can be misleading when used for individual weight tracking. BMI doesn't take into account important factors such as lean muscle mass, which means many bodybuilders would be considered morbidly obese based solely on their BMI.

When people start getting in shape after an extended period of inactivity, their efforts often result in replacing fat with muscle.

Because muscle is denser than fat, this period can lead to weight gain even though the person's body is losing fat and getting healthier. Measuring one's health is more complex than any one scale can measure. Mental health, fat content, activity level, cholesterol levels, eating habits, family



health, friendship status—the list of factors goes on and on. Instead of focusing on BMI or bathroom scale readings, focus on how you feel (and how your clothes fit). If you learn to listen to your body, you might be surprised at how much information it can give you on your current state of health.

Will snacking between meals ruin my weight loss goals?

Eating snacks between meals won't necessarily hurt your weight loss goals, so long as you make healthy choices and keep the snack size reasonable. In fact, some people's bodies actually perform better when they eat four to five small meals a day instead of the traditional three larger meals. When hunger hits between meals, create a healthy snack by looking for protein and fat while limiting carbohydrate and sugar content. For example, apple slices topped with your favorite sugar-free nut butter will provide the fat and protein content needed to give your body a sustained energy boost, whereas an apple on its own will not stave off your hunger for long, which might leave you needing another snack later. Instead of eating just one food (especially junk foods such as potato chips or candy bars), turn your snacks into healthy mini-meals that will fuel you for two to three hours.



How important are friendships to my health?

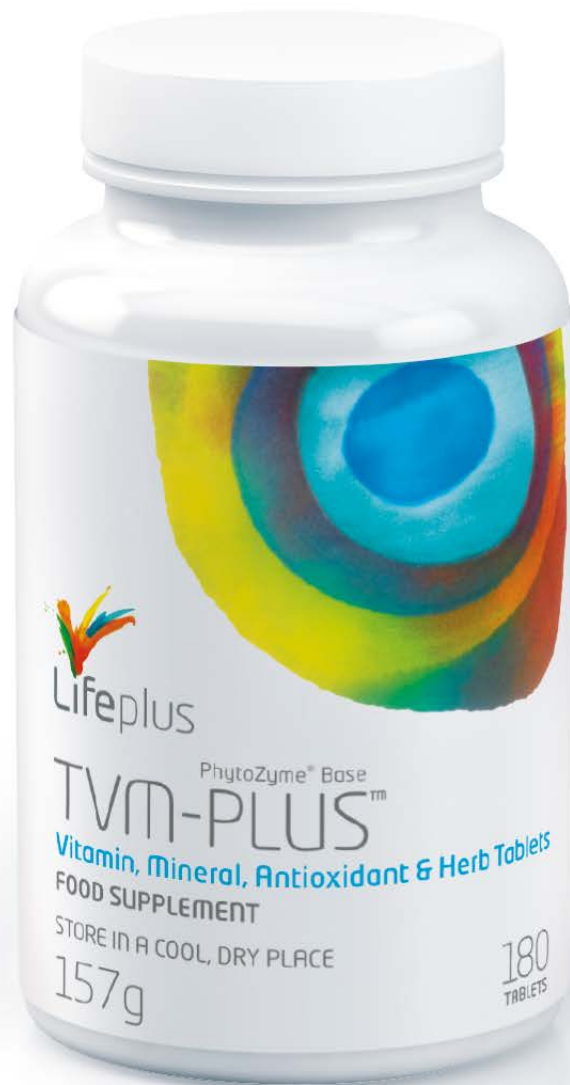
Friendships are extremely important to your physical and mental health. Humans tend to adopt the lifestyles of those around them. If you are close friends with negative, unhealthy people, you are likely to take on those characteristics yourself. On the other hand, if you spend time with people who are healthy in mind and body, you are more likely to be healthy yourself. Forming close friendships with healthy, positive people will make you feel happy and help ease stresses, not add to them. If you find yourself feeling stressed, down or angry after spending time with your friends, it might be time to seek out a new group of people to be around. Let your feelings guide you toward healthier friendships and, ultimately, a healthier life.



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