

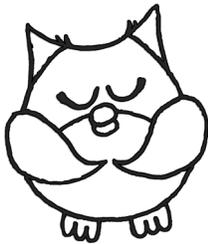
FP WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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Habits That Age You

2018

Aging is one of those inevitable things that happen to us. Below are some habits you might not even realize are aging you even more...



YOU'RE A NIGHT OWL

Staying up late is fun in your teens, but burning the midnight oil can make you look older as you age. Beauty sleep is not just an old wives' tale. "Sleep deprivation causes bags under the eyes and droopy, tired eyelids and pallor," says Dr. Allen Towfigh, a board-certified sleep medicine doctor and neurologist affiliated with Weill Cornell Medical Center/New York Presbyterian Hospital. "This makes us look less healthy, and, hence, we appear less attractive to others." To determine how much sleep you need to look your best, add up the number of hours of sleep you get over a period of two weeks (including naps) and divide by 14.

YOU HOLD GRUDGES

If you're unable to let bygones be bygones, you may add years to your body. Several studies show a link between forgiveness and physical health. A study published in the Journal of Behavioral Medicine from 2005 showed that a lack of forgiveness increased nervous symptom activity, contributing to a greater number of medications taken and decreased sleep quality. "Holding a grudge increases stress, which boosts levels of the hormone cortisol," says Dr. Jennifer Landa, chief medical officer of BodyLogicMD, an anti-aging network. "Cortisol contributes to weight gain, raises blood pressure, elevates blood sugar and increases the risk of diabetes." Learn how to let go, and you may live longer.

YOU EXERCISE ONLY WHEN YOU WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT

If your exercise plan starts every Jan. 1 and lasts only until you're able to fit back into your jeans, you may be cheating yourself out of longevity. Many studies show that regular exercise helps prevent age-related diseases and prolongs life span. "Daily exercise helps lower cortisol levels and increases beneficial hormones like testosterone," says Landa. "It also helps control high blood pressure, improve mood and keeps us strong and flexible as we age." The American College of Sports Medicine recommends 30 minutes of activity most days of the week.



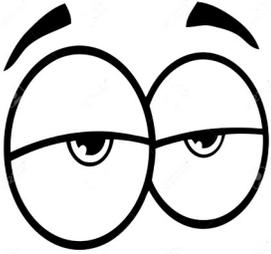
YOU HAVE A SWEET TOOTH

If you never say no to dessert, you may be saying yes to more wrinkles. "Sugar increases aging of every part of our body," says Landa. "Eating a diet high in sugar will not only damage your waistline but it will increase your risk of diabetes and can even cause skin problems, especially acne and wrinkles." When you eat sugar a process called glycation occurs, where the sugar in your bloodstream attaches to proteins, forming new molecules called advanced glycation end products, or AGEs for short. These AGEs damage nearby protein fibers that keep skin elastic. "A better choice would be dark chocolate with low sugar, or if you need to use sweeteners, consider monk fruit, a natural sweetener that doesn't raise blood sugar," suggests Landa.

YOU SMOKE

It's time to kick those butts to the curb if you want to live a long, healthy life. A clear link between smoking and longevity exists, and the earlier you quit the more years you add to your life. A study published in the American Journal of Public Health in 2002 showed that smokers who quit at age 35 add approximately eight years to their life, compared with people who continue to smoke. Smokers who quit at age 65 add between two to four years of longevity. "Smoking causes the release of free radicals . . . which is like rust for your body," says Landa. "Smokers have higher risks of almost any disease under the sun, including cancer, heart disease, dementia and generally premature death."

YOU RUB YOUR EYES



Tired eyes? Avoid rubbing them if you want to stay younger-looking. Rubbing your eyes breaks down the collagen and elasticity around the area, which produces wrinkles and broken capillaries. "The skin in this area is incredibly thin and extremely sensitive and vulnerable to sun damage and wrinkling," says Dr. Dennis Gross, a dermatologist and founder of 900 5th Dermatology in New York City. "This is why rubbing your eyes may result in broken capillaries." For relief from tired or irritated eyes, instead of rubbing them, try brewing two green tea bags, allow them to cool and place them over your eyes for 10 minutes. If you are concerned about broken capillaries, look for ingredients that

build collagen. Applying creams that contain vitamins K and D, as well as including them as part of a balanced diet, can also help.

YOU LOSE AND GAIN THE SAME WEIGHT BACK

Stay young by attaining a healthy body weight and sticking to it. Losing and regaining weight ages you by increasing your risk of heart disease and diabetes, according to a 2012 study published in The Journals of Gerontology, Series A, Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences. In the study, 80 overweight and obese women followed a five-month diet, losing an average of 25 pounds (11.3 kilograms). They regained an average of 32 percent of the lost weight within the following year. The women who regained weight had increased levels of LDL ("bad") cholesterol, total cholesterol, insulin levels and measurements of insulin resistance, a precursor to diabetes. The levels after weight regain were worse than before the women dieted. Dietary counseling and a maintenance program can help.

YOU RARELY DRINK WATER

Increasing the amount of water you drink each day may be the key to younger-looking skin. Water is essential to maintaining skin moisture and helps deliver essential nutrients to the skin, says nutritionist Goodson. "Water helps your skin cells rejuvenate faster. On the reverse, loss of hydration in the skin can cause dryness, tightness, flakiness and tends to make you look older," she says. Dry skin has less resilience and is more prone to wrinkling, which can make you look older. In addition to drinking water, Goodson recommends eating foods high in water content, such as cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini and eggplant, which are more than 90 percent water.



THE TV IS YOUR BEST FRIEND

It's okay if you binge-watch your favorite season of "Friends", but it is not the same thing as keeping yourself glued to the computer or TV for long hours. A study of 11,000 Australians over 25 showed that for each hour you spend in front of the screen, you cut your life expectancy by 22 minutes. Moreover, people who spend an average of six hours a day watching TV are likely to live five years less than their peers who watch less TV. "This effect is more about sitting and being inactive than the TV watching," says Dr. Casciari. "When you sit for more than 30 minutes, your body begins to deposit sugar into your cells, which makes it much more likely you'll be overweight as well."