

Want to Stay Youthful? Avoid These Mistakes

You Don't Sleep Enough: If you don't get your ZZZs, your skin can start to wrinkle and sag early. Try to set up a quiet, soothing bedtime ritual with regular hours, and avoid alcohol, caffeine, and electronics before bed.

You're a Smoker: If you use tobacco, you could end up with wrinkled, sagging skin at a younger age. Smoking lessens blood flow that carries essential nutrients like oxygen to the surface of your skin and may slow your body's production of collagen.

You're in the Sun Too Much: Some sunlight is good for you, but soaking up too many UV rays damages collagen in your skin. If you must be in direct sun, cover up with hats, long sleeves, and sunglasses and sunscreen.

You Don't Moisturize Your Skin: If your skin dries out, it can give you the rough and scaly look of an older person. Moisturize with cream twice a day to help seal in moisture that keeps you looking young.

You're Not Eating Healthy: The right foods help prevent heart disease, diabetes, and other illnesses that sap your youthful energy. Consider the heart-healthy Mediterranean diet. It's good for your brain, too. Get healthy fats from foods like fish, nuts, olive oil, and avocado, as well as plenty of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.

You Don't Exercise Enough: Regular physical activity is a key way to keep yourself feeling young. It strengthens your muscles, boosts your energy, and improves your mood. Moving around keeps your brain sharp, and you don't need to go to a gym. Some brisk walking, yard work, or even dancing should do the trick.

You Squint a Lot: When you squint, you crinkle up the skin on your face, which over time can lead to lines and wrinkles.

You Don't Have a Social Network: Staying connected with friends and family can help you stay young at heart -- and boost your emotional and physical health, too. And when you look for a community, remember, it's the quality of your social connections that matter, not the quantity.

You Don't Lend a Helping Hand: Your body releases more "pleasure hormones," when you spend money on other people than when you spend it on yourself. But it doesn't have to be money. The calmness, pleasure, and connection you feel when you help someone often makes you do it more, which in turn makes you even calmer and happier.