**6 Everyday Habits That Are Secretly Aging You**

Ah, to be forever young. It’s a fantasy for most of us that unfortunately will never become a reality – at least not in this day in age! However, keeping healthy habits is a simple and effective way to maintain a youthful glow for years to come. Here are 6 everyday habits that are secretly aging you, and what you can do about it:

**Sitting Too Much**

Many full-time employees are susceptible to a [sedentary lifestyle](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/sedentary-lifestyle-vs.-active-lifestyle-infographic). Sitting at your desk for 40+ hours a week has a lot of health consequences. Besides substantially increasing your risk for certain diseases, sitting too much can shorten your lifespan and accelerate the aging process. According to a [report](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/01/080128165734.htm) by *Science Daily*, adults who are physically active during their leisure time appear to be biologically younger than those with sedentary lifestyles.

To combat a sedentary lifestyle and keep your youthful looks, try to get up and move once every hour of the workday. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise, five days a week, and invest in a standing desk. Be sure to also stay active during your evenings off work and weekends. Find active hobbies or weekend hobbies that will keep you moving.

**Your Sleepless Nights**

A [study from *Biological Psychiatry*](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27702440) found that women with five key symptoms of insomnia (including restlessness and difficultly falling asleep) had an accelerated rate of biological aging by almost two years than that of women the same age without any sleep issues. Lack of sleep can cause premature skin aging and decrease the skin’s ability to recover after sun exposure.

Even just one night of bad sleep can cause uneven pigmentation and reduce skin elasticity. To stay youthful looking and healthy, maintain a routine sleep schedule. Always aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep per night.

**Your Regular Happy Hours**

While it might be a great way to socialize and take a much-needed break from the stressors of the real world, drinking too many cocktails during happy hour could start to age you. Many studies have shown that excessive alcohol consumption can cause both premature aging and exaggerated aging. Long-term alcohol abuse can lead to skin aging, dementia, and liver damage.

While we definitely aren’t saying you can’t enjoy an adult beverage on an evening out, it’s important to refrain from heavily drinking on a regular basis. If you don’t want to suffer from the health and aging consequences from excessive alcohol consumption, limit your drinks at happy hour and drink a glass of water in between cocktails. Moderation is key!

**Not Applying SPF**

Years of [research](http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/04/health/sunscreen-aging/index.html) have shown that applying SPF daily helps reduce skin aging, as well as reduce the risk of skin cancer. Too much sun exposure without proper UV protection causes premature winkling and discoloration of your skin. While you might think you’re playing it safe by applying SPF before a day at the pool or a summer hike, SPF should be applied every day – rain or shine.

Skin damage cause by the sun might take months or even years to become visible, but once the damage is done it’s irreversible. Make a habit of applying a moisturizing SPF to your face and any exposed areas of your skin every day to prevent premature skin aging, sunspots, and wrinkles.

**Ignoring Chronic Stress**

Unmanaged stress really takes a toll on your body. Chronic stress has been shown to age the brain, accelerate cellular aging, and lead to unhealthy lifestyle habits that contribute to premature aging even more. According to an [article](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/11/stress-aging-process_n_3047000.html) published by *Huffington Post*, researchers found that people with high levels of work-related stress had the shortest [telomeres](https://www.tasciences.com/what-is-a-telomere/) (an essential part of cells that affect how our cells age), causing cells to die or become damaged, which speeds up the aging process.

The good thing about chronic stress is that it can be managed and coped with. [Practicing mindfulness](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/tap-the-power-of-mindfulness-free-guide), taking care of your mental health, and making time for yourself can all help [reduce the daily stress](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/make-your-life-less-stressful-instantly-with-these-11-tips) in your life.

**Your Sugary Afternoon Snack**

While most of us know that [excess sugar](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/8-signs-that-you-are-eating-too-much-sugar) is bad for our waistline, many of us are in the dark about sugar’s negative impact on our skin. [According to Dr. Frank Lipman](http://abcnews.go.com/Health/Wellness/top-10-diet-tips-healthy-skin/story?id=18712349), “sugar is poison for the skin”. Sugar can be a cause of inflammation and lead to premature skin aging through a process called glycation. If you want to look and feel your best for as long as possible, skip your afternoon candy bar and soda, and reach for some fresh fruit if a sugar craving kicks in.

While we might not have discovered the Fountain of Youth just yet, we think there are plenty of healthy habits to keep yourself looking youthful for as long as possible. Getting enough sleep, managing your stress, and taking care of your body are effective and preventative actions you can take to keep on looking and feeling like you did in your 20’s.