

# 15 Ultimate Age Erasers

by Men's Health

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*Looks. Energy. Health. Time erodes them all, unless you follow these simple Instructions to slow the clock.*

Think there's no answer to time's toll? Well, you're right. If you don't lift a finger, time will take everything you have. But nearly 70 percent of aging factors actually fall within your control. "People just accept that they're going to start looking and feeling older, but they really don't have to," says Steven Austad, Ph. D., an expert on aging at the University of Texas at San Antonio. You can outrun Father Time--at least for a while. Here's an arsenal of age-defying weapons-- distilled from experts and visits to key "fountain of youth" labs--that will help you look, feel, and stay in your prime.



## 1. Look Younger

A man typically greets those first wrinkles with an anxious frown, which in turn produces more wrinkles. Indeed, the effects of age first show up on our faces, especially around the eyes. In a recent study in *Ophthalmology*, 47 young adults had their eye movements tracked as researchers presented them with images of older adults. When asked to determine the ages of the people in the photos, the study participants focused on the eye region, particularly the brow and lower lids. If you want to fool the kids, the best thing you can do for your skin is to wear sunblock with an SPF of 30, says Cameron Rokhsar, M. D., a dermatologist and laser surgeon. The best block is Anthelios; it's the only sunscreen that contains mexoryl, a powerful drug that protects your skin against UVA rays. But that's just the start.

## Soothe Your Eyes

As you age, your cell-renewal process slows: A 20-year-old's outermost layer of skin sheds every 2 weeks. By age 50, that cycle takes twice as long. Your skin also gradually loses collagen, the spongy protein beneath the epidermis. Both factors produce wrinkles and sagging, particularly around your eyes, where the skin is thinnest. "Wrinkles there instantly make you look older," says Rokhsar. He recommends using Retin-A (tretinoin) or retinol, citing studies showing that it creates new collagen. Try L'Oreal Paris Men's Expert Vita Lift Anti- Wrinkle & Firming Moisturizer (\$10, [lorealparisusa.com](http://lorealparisusa.com)).

## Scrape off the Years

Reach for the razor every morning. "The low-grade friction from shaving stimulates collagen production and smooths the skin," says Kenneth Beer, M. D., a dermatologist in West Palm Beach, Florida. "That's one of the reasons men typically have far fewer wrinkles than women have." So even though a survey of 60 women at Northumbria University found that light stubble was considered sexy, you should limit the Clooney treatment you give her to only a few days a month. (Besides, those same women also said that clean-shaven men looked 5 1/2 years younger than those wearing beards.)

## Trim the Mane

If you're starting to thin out, befriend a barber. In the early stages of hair loss, you can actually make your hair appear fuller by having it cut short, according to John Allan, the founder of a chain of grooming and lifestyle clubs. Upright and feathered hair tends to look thicker, while longer hair will part and reveal the scalp you're trying to hide. And a less shaggy cut will age well with you, Allan says. "Many men actually have better hairstyles-- and look better--in their 40s than they did in their 20s," he says. (This month's Health department can help you break the link between stress and hair loss as well.)

*Tip: No, you don't have to go bald. [Here are surprising ways to outsmart hair loss.](#)*

## Wake up Youthful

Chronic sleep deprivation could quickly add years to your face. Here's why: The extraocular eye muscles are exercised during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and could atrophy when not used, says sleep researcher David Kuhlmann, M. D. This may contribute to the circles beneath your eyes after a poor night's rest. If you can't sleep, then don't go low-carb at dinner. A 2008 Australian study found that men who consumed carbohydrates before bed had significantly longer REM sleep cycles than when they ate a low-carb meal. The carbs help create acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that promotes REM sleep.

## 2. Feel Younger

Don't want to lose your marbles later? Lose some calories now. German researchers recently found that eating less can reduce markers of inflammation and insulin resistance, which are suspected risk factors for cognitive decline. Older study participants who cut 30 percent of their daily calories for 3 months were able to improve their memory on a word-recall test. Here are more ways to keep your youthful edge.

## Enjoy a Hearty Laugh

One of the greatest differences between a child and an adult is that the child has no worries, says sports psychologist Terry Orlick, Ph. D., the author of *In Pursuit of Excellence*. You can counteract stress--and roll back psychological aging--with laughter. Even the anticipation of a good laugh decreases the stress chemicals cortisol and epinephrine by 39 and 70 percent, respectively, say researchers at Loma Linda University. Laughter is also great for the heart. When participants in a University of Maryland study watched stressful film clips, they experienced vasoconstriction-- a narrowing of the blood vessels-- while the blood vessels of those watching funny films expanded by 22 percent.

### **Explore Opposites**

Your brainpower naturally starts to slide as you become older. You can help slow that decline by simply deviating from your daily patterns whenever possible-- jog backward for a few hundred yards, or brush your teeth with your nondominant hand. This can increase bloodflow in your brain and recharge your neurological connections, according to Daniel Amen, M. D., author of *Magnificent Mind at Any Age*. Additionally, research by Gary Small, M. D., director of the UCLA Memory and Aging Center, found that "brain training" exercises focusing on memory techniques (for instance, remembering to pick up stamps and eggs by visualizing an egg with a stamp on it) can reset a 45-year-old's cognitive ability score to that of a 30-year-old.

### **Keep it Up. Way Up...**

There's no better way to feel like a 20-year-old than to have sex like one. But plaque buildup affects bloodflow in the small arteries of a man's penis sooner than anywhere else in his body, according to Steven Lamm, M. D., an internist and the author of *The Hardness Factor*. That's one reason the angle of a man's erection falls to 100 degrees by age 45, down from 130 degrees in his 20s. Dr. Lamm's recommendation for a gravity-defying erection? Edox. Research shows that this supplement's two ingredients, Pycnogenol and the amino acid L-arginine aspartate, increase the production of nitric oxide, a vasodilator that relaxes blood vessels in the penis, allowing increased bloodflow and harder, longer-lasting erections.

*Tip: Check out [this free guide on how to conquer erectile dysfunction](#), and you'll have great sex and stay virile for life.*

### **3. Stay Young**

If you want to see your 85th birthday, limit your alcohol to two drinks a day. This may make you less likely to die of cardiovascular disease, according to Japanese researchers. And make one of those drinks red. A recent review in *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* suggests that resveratrol, a compound

commonly found in red wine, may prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease. As you savor your pinot, swallow these other stay-young secrets.

### **Lose the Belly, With Breakfast**

Developing a big, round gut as you age will not only make you look bad, but also weigh heavily on your manhood. According to a landmark 2007 study in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*, men with a 5-point increase in body-mass index--about 30 extra pounds--had testosterone levels comparable to men who were a full decade older. Eating the right breakfast--one with lots of protein--will keep your belly at bay, according to multiple studies of the subject. Yet 19 percent of men in their 40s skip this meal altogether. "I've seen guys drop serious weight just by eating protein at breakfast," says Louis Aronne, M. D., the director of the comprehensive weight control program of the Westchester Medical Group, in New York. People on weight-loss diets who break eggs for breakfast, for instance, lose 65 percent more weight than those who down a bagel with the same number of calories, according to a study in the *International Journal of Obesity*.

### **Maintain Your Muscles**

If you don't use your muscles, you'll lose them. And over time lost muscle is likely to be replaced by fat, according to a *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* study. That's particularly problematic, because a pound of fat takes up 18 percent more space on your body than a pound of muscle does. So even if you maintain your weight as you age, your waist may still balloon. Spinach can help with muscle maintenance; recent test-tube research from Rutgers University found that a hormone in spinach increases protein synthesis. Spinach is also rich in vitamin K, potassium, and calcium, which can help you ward off osteoporosis.

### **Build a Longer-Lasting Ticker**

If you want to stay young, make your heart stronger. With proper conditioning (high-intensity activities such as cycling and rowing work best) you can increase your heart's stroke volume and your body's oxygen uptake. This allows your heart to pump blood more slowly and efficiently. "The average human life span is about 3 billion heartbeats," says Michael Lauer, M. D., of the National Heart Blood and Lung Institute. "If you can lower your heart rate, you can increase your life expectancy." It's that simple.

*Tip: [Safeguard your heart for life](#) with these 100 small lifestyle changes*