

By Tara Marie Segundo, M.A.

# LOOK

# FABULOUS

*Your ultimate guide to looking good (and feeling great) as you age.*

# AT

# 40!

*Does the cashier at the grocery store call you ma'am? Do you ever start sentences with the phrase "When I was your age?" Do you own even one pair of sensible shoes?*

*You now like Sunday mornings better than Saturday nights, all new music sounds like noise and your doctor is tossing around words like "peri-menopause" and "mammogram."*

*Yep, we're all getting older. I myself just turned 40. Since there's no way around it, I decided to make the most of the situation and, to the extent that I can, slow down the aging process. I am often asked what I do to keep myself looking and feeling younger than my years. In truth, I have a number of habits that give me an advantage in the aging game. To make sense of my "system," I will divide the body into sections and tell you exactly what I have come to learn (the hard way!).*

## PERFECT HAIR

Today, approximately 36 percent of all women aged 40-49 stress over thinning hair. As we age, we also fret about our locks losing their shine and luster. One way to prevent this is by not over-washing, processing or blow-drying your locks. In my 20s and 30s, I would wash and blow-dry my hair every day and then wonder why it lacked shine and volume. Now I only wash it three times a week unless I work up a big sweat during a workout. You should also keep your ends trimmed and well conditioned. Be gentle when you brush, and never brush hair when it's wet; use a wide-tooth comb, instead to prevent split-ends.

Another tip: Do not use too many styling products. For me, the less I use, the better my hair looks. Too much mousse, gel and spray can weigh hair down and make it look oily, sticky, crunchy or stiff. As the saying goes, less is more.

What you eat, however, is far more important to your hair than what you put on it. You can use some of the most expensive salon products, but if you do not eat a nutrient-rich diet complete with healthy fats and oils, you'll have dry, dull hair that grows slowly and has split ends. I eat lots of organic almonds and flax seeds, olive oil, avocados and other foods with healthy fats. Beware of letting your fat intake drop too low or your hair will lose its luster.

## FULLER HAIR IN AN INSTANT

Having trouble getting full, perfectly styled hair? It all starts with the upkeep. Try following this simple how-to from the Women's Institute for Fine and Thinning Hair for all-around body and shine.

1.) Look for shampoos containing silicone derivatives, such as dimethicone and dimethicone copolyol. Shampoos that contain keratin and collagen can also help build volume.

2.) Avoid moisturizing conditioners, as they can flatten fine hair. Use a light conditioner and apply it only to the ends of your hair.

3.) Towel-dry your hair first, then use a low heat setting on your blow-dryer.

4.) To get maximum volume, bend over and comb up and back from the front of your head toward the crown.

5.) Fine hair looks fuller when it's shorter, so ask for an above-the-shoulder, layered cut.



PHOTO: JEFFREY GARDNER

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## PEARLY WHITES

Brush and floss your teeth after you eat. I carry a toothbrush with me if I am going to have a long day away from home. Ugly, poorly maintained teeth will certainly make a young, pretty face look old and bedraggled before its time. Keep your gums healthy by flossing, and see a dentist right away if they bleed when you brush. Bleeding signals gum disease, and there is nothing pretty or youthful about gingivitis. Without fail, see your dentist twice a year for a cleaning and a check-up. A beautiful smile will make you look younger and feel more confident.

## SMOOTH SKIN

Your skin is your body's largest organ and an organ of elimination. Dull, dry or blemished skin is a telltale sign of a trashy diet. If you eat junk (foods low in fiber, high in saturated fat and sugar or full of chemicals and preservatives) you will look like someone who eats junk. The turnover rate of cells in the body is constant, and new cells form from the nutrients available to them. Also, if your main sources of fluids are coffee, tea, soda (diet or otherwise), sugary commercial juices or alcohol, you're not only highly toxic but probably dehydrated, which is also bad for the skin.

If your body's elimination system is backed up, your skin will reflect it. When you are chronically constipated, your body is not disposing of its waste, and you're absorbing toxins back into the body via the colon – a recipe for disaster (and colon cancer). If you follow a poor diet, try this experiment for one month: Make a commitment to eat plenty of vegetables (think green), whole grains, moderate amounts of nuts and seeds and a variety of lean meats. Drink a gallon of purified water daily. Eliminate sugar, flour (including bread and pasta), caffeine, alcohol, soda, artificial sweeteners, chemicals and preservatives (or anything that you cannot pronounce) and commercially packaged foods. Keep your salt intake low. Avoid adding salt at the table; you get plenty of sodium from the foods you eat. After one month of cleaning up your diet, you'll look younger and have more energy. You will probably also drop a few pounds and find that your skin is more radiant.

PHOTO: CHARLES WORTHINGTON

*With the help of a healthy diet, you'll feel young and energized for years to come.*

## FAKE-BAKE BASICS

Want a natural-looking glow without doing damage to your skin? Try these six easy steps for a beautiful, bronzed body that'll help you look years younger in seconds.

1.) Lather on a soap-free wash, like Fake Bake's passion fruit Body Polish (\$12 at [fakebake.com](http://fakebake.com)) – particularly on the feet, knees and elbows – to restore your skin's moisture balance.

2.) Shave your legs two days before applying a sunless tanner, especially if you have sensitive skin.

3.) Apply an oil-free tanning mousse, like St. Tropez Whipped Bronze Self Tanning Mousse (\$24 at [sephora.com](http://sephora.com)). It will dry in seconds.

4.) Wash your hands at least every five minutes during application, being careful to scrub your palms and fingernails.

5.) If you feel sticky afterward, apply baby powder generously to your skin an hour after applying the mousse.

6.) Flaunt and enjoy your faux sun-kissed glow!

On the subject of skin, over-exposure to the sun is the number one culprit in the aging game. My goal now is to soak up just enough sun to get plenty of vitamin D and not look pasty. One inexpensive beauty tip for the skin: Buy vitamin E oil at your local health food store and apply it to your lips, under your eyes and on your other facial features before bedtime. It is a cheap way to moisturize and is very healing for the skin.

## STRONG BONES

Weight training builds dense bones, which otherwise lose density as we age. Osteoporosis is a serious and common disease, but it can be avoided. Most old people don't fall and break a hip – they have a hip fracture, and that is what causes them to fall.

Weight training also builds strong, youthful and useful muscles. As we age, some of us will lose strength to the extent that it affects our participation in daily activities. It takes exerted muscular efforts to carry home heavy bags of groceries or drag around baskets of laundry. Weight training is not only about looking great; it is about being strong. We should all do some form of resistance training over the course of our lifetimes to maintain skeletal strength and remain self-sufficient as we age.

I perform strength training exercises 5-6 days a week unless I am sick or on a self-imposed rest period (which I regard as highly important). I alternate bodyparts to avoid overtraining, and I make sure that my form is impeccable, so I don't injure myself. Face it: A toned, tight body automatically makes you look and feel years younger.

## TOTAL FLEXIBILITY

If you find yourself grunting while sitting down, your body is stiff and needs some stretching. Being stiff will add years to your appearance. It also inhibits graceful, youthful movement. Incorporate stretching into your weekly exercise routine and become aware of your posture at all times, especially while doing mundane activities. The ways you sit, stand, drive and work at your desk all put negative stress on your back if you're not using proper posture. I try to catch myself in the reflection of a store window or a mirror and see what I really look like when I am not consciously trying to alter my alignment.

Also, if you have shoulders that round forward, make sure that the muscles of your shoulders and chest are well-stretched on a regular basis. Overworked chest/front delt muscles combined with underworked back/rear delt muscles result in a forward-sloping posture that not only is bad for your back, but doesn't look so great, either.

## PEACE OF MIND

As I have gotten older, I have learned (or rather, my body has demanded that I learn) to balance activity with relaxation, noise with quiet, and hard exercise with easier exercise. What you take from your body you must replenish. We are not physically designed to be doing, going, thinking and moving all the time. Your nervous system needs calm and quiet to recharge itself. I always end my day with about 30 minutes of "chill time." Before bed, I like to give my brain a break. What relaxes me the most is lying in bed watching something funny and mindless on the tube. This not only allows my brain to completely disengage, but it also allows my body to fully relax. I find it helpful to concentrate on how still and lifeless my body feels as I am lulled into unconsciousness.

When you think about it, we age gracefully when we do the things that our mothers taught us: Don't drink, don't smoke, don't take drugs, don't eat too many sweets, brush your teeth, eat your veggies, stand up straight, don't get too much sun, get plenty of rest and exercise sensibly. Now let's prove to the world that 40 really is the new 30. You, too, can be fabulous when you hit the big 4-0 and beyond. ★

*Resistance training is the best way to keep your bones strong and healthy.*

