COLLAGEN Hacks I Love

My Mini-Guide To Boosting Collagen

Dr. Axe
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ABOUT

DR. JOSH AXE

Dr. Josh Axe, DNM, DC, CNS, is a doctor of natural medicine, doctor of chiropractic and clinical nutritionist with a passion to help people get well using food as medicine and operates one of the world’s largest natural health websites: www.DrAxe.com. He is the author of the groundbreaking health book Eat Dirt, which uncovers the hidden causes and cures of leaky gut syndrome. Dr. Axe is an expert in digestive health, functional medicine, natural remedies and dietary strategies for healing. He has been featured on many television shows, including the Dr. Oz Show, CBS and NBC, and has his own Eat Dirt program running on select PBS TV stations.

Dr. Axe founded one of the largest functional medicine clinics in the world, in Nashville, TN, and has been a physician for many professional athletes.

DrAxe.com is one of the most visited websites worldwide for healthy recipes, herbal remedies, nutrition and fitness advice, essential oils, and natural supplements.
When most people hear “collagen,” they think of its benefits for fine lines, wrinkles and skin.

But what many people don’t know is that collagen’s benefits go far deeper than the “surface level.”

In fact, it can provide powerful support to your joints, digestive system and more.

In this guide, you’ll learn some simple tips I believe can make a big difference in your body’s collagen levels. Let’s get started...
INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS COLLAGEN?

You have probably heard the popular term “collagen.”

But what is collagen, exactly — and how can you incorporate it into your life?

Collagen is the most abundant protein in our bodies. Collagen is found in muscles, bones, skin, blood vessels, digestive system and tendons. It’s what helps give our skin strength and elasticity. When it comes to joints and tendons, in simplest terms, it’s the “glue” that helps hold the body together.

Generally speaking, our body’s collagen production naturally begins to slow down as we age, and, oftentimes, it’s apparent.

Other lifestyle factors — such as eating a diet high in sugar, smoking and high amounts of sun exposure — also contribute to diminishing collagen levels.
In Part 1, I want to give you what I believe are some great collagen supporting lifestyle tips.

These are simple changes to your diet and lifestyle. But they can make a big difference in the long run.

Your #1 priority should always be protecting existing collagen. Through natural aging, the body slows down its collagen production. So, protecting the collagen you have is your first line of defense. Once you’ve laid a solid foundation to protect what’s there, then we’ll talk about a few ways I believe you can support your collagen levels.
In the early 1900s, a theory of aging was proposed. It suggested that many of the issues associated with aging are caused by too many free radicals in the body.

Free radicals are unstable molecules in the body that can occur from sunlight, the environment and even food. When they enter the body, they damage other molecules by stripping them of electrons.

Too many of these molecules in your body can definitely wreak havoc. But, thankfully, we have antioxidants.

Antioxidants can help neutralize free radicals. You may have heard that antioxidants are good for you. Well, now you know a big part of WHY.

So, getting enough antioxidants can be a powerful way to support your body as it ages. In my estimation, here are a few of the best ways to get started.
Vitamin C is a well-known and researched water-soluble antioxidant. The most effective way to get vitamin C into your body is by ingesting it. Once inside your body, vitamin C safely interacts with free radicals and help neutralize them at the cellular level, so fewer free radicals can affect collagen and DNA.

Get Enough Vitamin C

Vitamin E is another well-known antioxidant. It’s fat-soluble and can be found in certain foods, taken orally or even used topically as a cream. While Vitamin E is helpful in neutralizing free radicals, its usefulness goes well beyond antioxidant properties and can actually support healthy collagen.

Get Enough Vitamin E
UV rays from the sun are a double-edged sword. On one hand, they are responsible for up to 90% of all the free radicals that come into contact with your skin. Excessive exposure to the sun is known to cause weathered and wrinkled skin as well as skin cancer. But the sun isn’t all bad.

Sun exposure stimulates Vitamin D production, enhances our mood, helps set the body’s circadian rhythm, and offers many other benefits. It’s important to get a bit of sunlight every day, but too much of a good thing can be a bad thing.
Eat Healthy

Collagen-boosting Foods

Eating a healthy diet can also help with skin health and collagen levels. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables provides the antioxidants listed above plus many other collagen-guarding, free-radical fighting nutrients. The following foods are great sources of vitamin C or vitamin E:

- Oranges and grapefruits
- Dark leafy greens such as spinach or kale
- Cauliflower
- Peaches
- Kiwi
- Tomatoes
- Hot & sweet peppers
- Lemons and limes
- Broccoli
- Brussel Sprouts
Our daily habits can also affect our collagen production for the better or for the worse:

**Smoking**
- If you smoke, quit now. If you don’t smoke, don’t start.

**Alcohol consumption**
- If you drink alcohol, do so moderately. Excessive consumption of alcohol can damage cells. Damaged cells create free radicals that speed up the aging process.

**Sleeping**
- Anti-aging hormones such as Human Growth Hormone (HGH) are at their highest levels during sleep. Getting a good night’s sleep is vital to stimulating new collagen production.

**Exercise**
- Exercise at least three times a week. Not only is it good for your overall health, it’s good for boosting circulation and anti-aging hormones.

Now that you know the basics of collagen protection, you’re ready to learn some hacks I believe can help your body with collagen reserves and production.
Red light laser therapy is growing in popularity when it comes to skin and its appearance. While more studies need to be done and not all studies come to this same conclusion, results from a 2014 study published in *Photomedicine and Laser Surgery* highlighted that researchers concluded that red infrared therapy “provides a safe, non-ablative, non-thermal, atraumatic photobiomodulation treatment of skin tissue with high patient satisfaction rates.”

Subjects treated with red light therapy experienced significantly improved skin complexion, improved skin tone, improved texture/feeling, reduced skin roughness, reduced signs of wrinkles and fine lines, and increased collagen density as measured through ultrasonographic tests.

If you’re interested in red light laser therapy, you can find more information online or ask your healthcare professional.
Another Do-It-Yourself collagen-supporting hack is to consume a bone broth on a regular basis. Your body uses the collagen in your diet, and uses it to support healthy collagen in the skin, bones, joints, etc.

The key is to eat a REAL bone broth (not the kind you find in cans at your grocery store).

When you include real animal skin, bones and joints (connective tissue) in your broths, the collagen from those body parts are boiled out and go into the broth. Once consumed, the body can put it to good use. Chicken broth is a good staple, but it’s also recommended to use fish, or beef broth.
Take a High-Quality Collagen Supplement

On top of regularly consuming bone broth, I also suggest taking a high-quality collagen supplement.

Why? Typically, our diets are not rich in collagen, and I am convinced that supplementing can help bridge that collagen shortfall.

There are different types of collagen in the body, so I recommend using a collagen supplement featuring several collagen types.

Of course, there are a variety of collagen supplement products on the market, but I suggest you choose them wisely. Read the labels. Look at the ingredients. See what others are saying about it.

I hope you’ve enjoyed this mini-guide and that it has been helpful when it comes to ways to help maintain and boost collagen in the body.
If you’d like to learn more, I have several articles about collagen at draxe.com.

Thank you for reading.

Dr. Axe