Healthy Aging: How to Age Gracefully

Although aging can be frustrating due to our bodies naturally slowing down over time, anyone who is old enough to have greying hairs should consider themselves lucky. Thanks to scientific advancements, humans are pushing biology further and we are learning more about the aging process and how to mitigate its negative impacts on our bodies. Aging doesn't have to be painful or debilitating as long as you view your body as a machine and stay on top of its maintenance requirements.

*Why Healthy Aging?*

When you are looking up ‘anti-aging’, you often find results that show you how to improve your appearance. But what if you are happy with how you look now, and just want to increase the overall health of your skin and body? This is what healthy aging is all about.

You are maintaining your youth and vitality as long as possible, while also focusing on aging gracefully, instead of trying to look young forever. This is done with healthy lifestyle habits, simple changes, on focusing on both inner and outer health.

The following information will show you how you can develop a new healthy mindset into the aging process.

**1. Adopt a Plant-Based Diet**

There are many ways to change your diet in order to live a healthier lifestyle, with incorporating more healthy food choices being at the top of the list. By simply making better food choices, such as adding more fruits and veggies, eating whole grains, and cutting back on animal products like meat and dairy, you have made the first great step.

While it is not mandatory for a healthy aging process, there have been studies to show the benefits of a plant-based diet.

*Want to Give it a Try?*

If you are interested in trying a vegan diet for the purpose of healthy aging and anti-aging, keep reading this section.

Veganism has taken the world by storm the past few years for good reason. Documentaries like Cowspiracy and Earthlings have revealed how detrimental harvesting animal products is for the animals, the environment, and human health. With meat and cheese substitutes popping up in grocery stores around the world, it's never been easier to still enjoy the flavors and textures of animal products without the added cholesterol, saturated fats, and chemicals that are pumped into the livestock.

Plant-based diets have innumerable positive effects on our bodies and their longevity. People who have adopted a vegan diet have been able to reverse heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and other illnesses that take a toll on our bodies. Contrary to popular belief, vegan diets are actually much more inexpensive than animal products anyway since fewer resources are needed to produce those foods.

Since a majority of Americans are deficient in fiber, even participating in meatless Mondays can give your body a dose of vitamins and nutrients it needs to stay youthful. Although many skincare companies will claim that their products can magically rejuvenate your skin, remember that our skin is an organ and reflects the health of our insides. If you feed your body what it needs, not only will you have a lot more energy, but you will also be rewarded in your physical appearance as well.

**2. Exercise**

On top of a healthy diet, exercise is paramount to preventing disease and maintaining full mobility as we age. Doctors recommend 30 minutes of exercise every day because it keeps our hearts strong and improves circulation so our entire bodies can get the nutrients they need.

Taking care of your body doesn't mean you have to turn into a gym rat. Studies have shown that dog owners live longer, most likely due to the cardiovascular exercise they must do each day to walk the dog. If you want an easy way to be held accountable for daily exercise, consider adopting a pet to reap the benefits of having a loving companion who will motivate you to reach your fitness goals.

If you are fully committed to slowing down your aging, consider incorporating some strength training into your exercise regimen. This can include using resistance bands and doing pushups, planks, and squats.

Again, a gym is not necessary to take care of your body since strength training exercises can be completed at any time in any place simply by utilizing the weight of your own body to build muscles. Strength training can improve your joints, relieve stress, and fix your posture, all of which are important to looking and feeling youthful.

**3. Drink More Water**

Water is the ingredient to all life on Earth. Bodies are mostly made of water, so you have to take special care to replenish your reserves every day. Every function your bodies do every second behind the scenes is all possible thanks to water. The benefits and its anti-aging properties are overwhelming.

It can be challenging to drink sufficient amounts when coffee or soda is the more appealing choice, but the health benefits are worth it. Drinking water can boost your metabolism, aid in weight loss, and improve the appearance of your skin.

Circulatory systems are the highways of our bodies and blood is what transports nutrients and removes waste from every cell. By maintaining a healthy circulatory system, you're helping your body fight aging. Thicker blood has a hard time squeezing through our vessels, so drinking water can speed that process up greatly.

Have you ever eaten a meal with a substantial amount of calories and felt hunger pangs? Many people confuse this empty feeling with hunger so they consume more, even though they don't need the calories. When our bodies require water, our stomachs simulate a hunger sensation to alert us to drink more. If you often feel hungry but are interested in losing weight, try drinking one glass of water before and after every meal to prevent overeating.

**4. Avoid Harsh Chemicals**

Chemicals are everywhere. They're in the food you eat, the air you breathe, and the products you use in the house and on your bodies. Exposure to harsh chemicals can cause serious damage and should be avoided whenever possible.

If you can afford it, opt for organic foods to better fuel your body. Although going organic can be pricey, think of it as an investment in yourself. If you're going to develop a disease, the cost of healthcare to treat it greatly outweighs the upfront costs of preventative care.

Instead of using bleach and other toxic chemicals in your house, a vinegar and water solution is much cheaper, safer, and just as efficient at sanitizing. Make sure you read the labels of any products you purchase and always choose ones with more natural ingredients.

If you live in a city, taking vacations to rural areas where there is fresh air can really do your body and mind good. Not only will you feel relaxed, but you can absorb clean air to purify your lungs and skin for an all-around more youthful appearance and attitude.

**5. Use Sunscreen**

Millions of people are diagnosed with skin cancer each year because they spend too much time outside without sunscreen. Not only could sunscreen save your life, but it will prevent the ultraviolet rays from damaging your cells and DNA.

People can get a leathery look to their skin by not using sunscreen. Although Americans value the appearance of a tan and often achieve it by laying in the sun unprotected for hours at a time, this will only lead to a temporary improvement in their self-esteem. You are much better off embracing your natural skin tone and soaking up the sunshine in small doses.

If you struggle with crow's feet, wearing protective eyewear outside can help improve the appearance of the skin around your eyes since you won't have to squint in the bright sunshine to see better.

**6. Upgrade Your Skincare Routine**

Although most of skin appearance can be improved by diet and drinking more water, there are steps you can take to really glow. Exfoliation and moisturizing can help your skin look youthful. You don't have to spend a fortune on skincare products, either! Baking soda and coconut oil are cheap and common household items that get the job done.

While you shower, you can take a teaspoon of baking soda and wet it enough to form a thick paste. You can spread it all over your face and gently rub in circles to exfoliate. Since your pores will be open in the steam, the baking soda will cleanse your skin and stimulate better blood flow.

Exfoliation encourages the growth of new skin cells and this can improve the appearance of any skin type. Even using baking soda on scars can help your body heal until it's barely visible.

After you shower, your skin will be more at risk of drying out. Moisturizers work best at the end of your cleansing routine to seal the moisture inside your skin. Coconut oil has many uses for the body, one of which is maintaining smooth skin. Take a dab of coconut oil and massage it into your skin for desirable results. By massaging, you will increase the circulation in your skin, which allows your blood to supply nutrients and remove toxins.

**7. Get Enough Beauty Sleep**

Have you ever noticed that older people seem to sleep all day but still complain of fatigue? They're not crazy. The more we age, the less REM sleep we get, which is the most restorative stage our bodies experience while sleeping. Although the quantity of sleep is larger, the quality is usually quite poor.

When we sleep, our bodies go into housekeeping mode so we can wake up feeling energized and detoxified. Getting enough restful sleep is crucial to your anti-aging battle, so any measure you can take to mitigate the natural deterioration of the quality of your sleep is important.

To ensure more restful sleep, stop drinking water at least an hour before bedtime to prevent waking up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom. Make sure your room is dark and cozy by your own preferences. Try to avoid using the television to fall asleep since the brightness and volume can drastically change throughout the night and disturb your sleep. Although we all love our pets like family, if you have an animal in your bed, the quality of your sleep will suffer as well.

**8. Make Healthier Substitutions**

The reason why so many diets fail is because they can make you feel deprived. Life is all about balance, so finding a middle ground is better for long term diet success. Many things people enjoy often have healthier substitutions that offer better nutrition without sacrificing the taste.

The good news is you don't have to give up alcohol entirely. However, some drinks are healthier than others and any alcohol should be consumed in moderate amounts. If you choose wine instead of beer, you get the same calming benefits of alcohol with added antioxidants and nutrients.

Instead of eating white or milk chocolate, try choosing chocolates with higher cocoa contents to increase antioxidant intake. Dark chocolate also tends to have less sugar and saturated fat, which makes it more diet friendly.

Potato chips are addicting because of how salty, rich, and crunchy they are. While healthy people can still enjoy potato chips in small portions, if you have a hard time controlling yourself, try eating baked varieties with reduced sodium instead. Your heart and waist will thank you!

**9. Smile**

Although this may sound like counterintuitive advice due to wrinkles that can form, smiling really does improve your appearance. Have you ever noticed how people radiate when they smile? That's because smiling produces good chemicals in our bodies that reduce stress.

Even if you have wrinkles, smiling can bring a youthful brightness to your face. Besides, you should have a lot to celebrate in life, so relax and rejoice. Aging is natural and happens to everyone, so you should never let shame or self-consciousness prevent you from enjoying each day.