

TIPS

9 CAUSES OF WRINKLES—THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH AGING



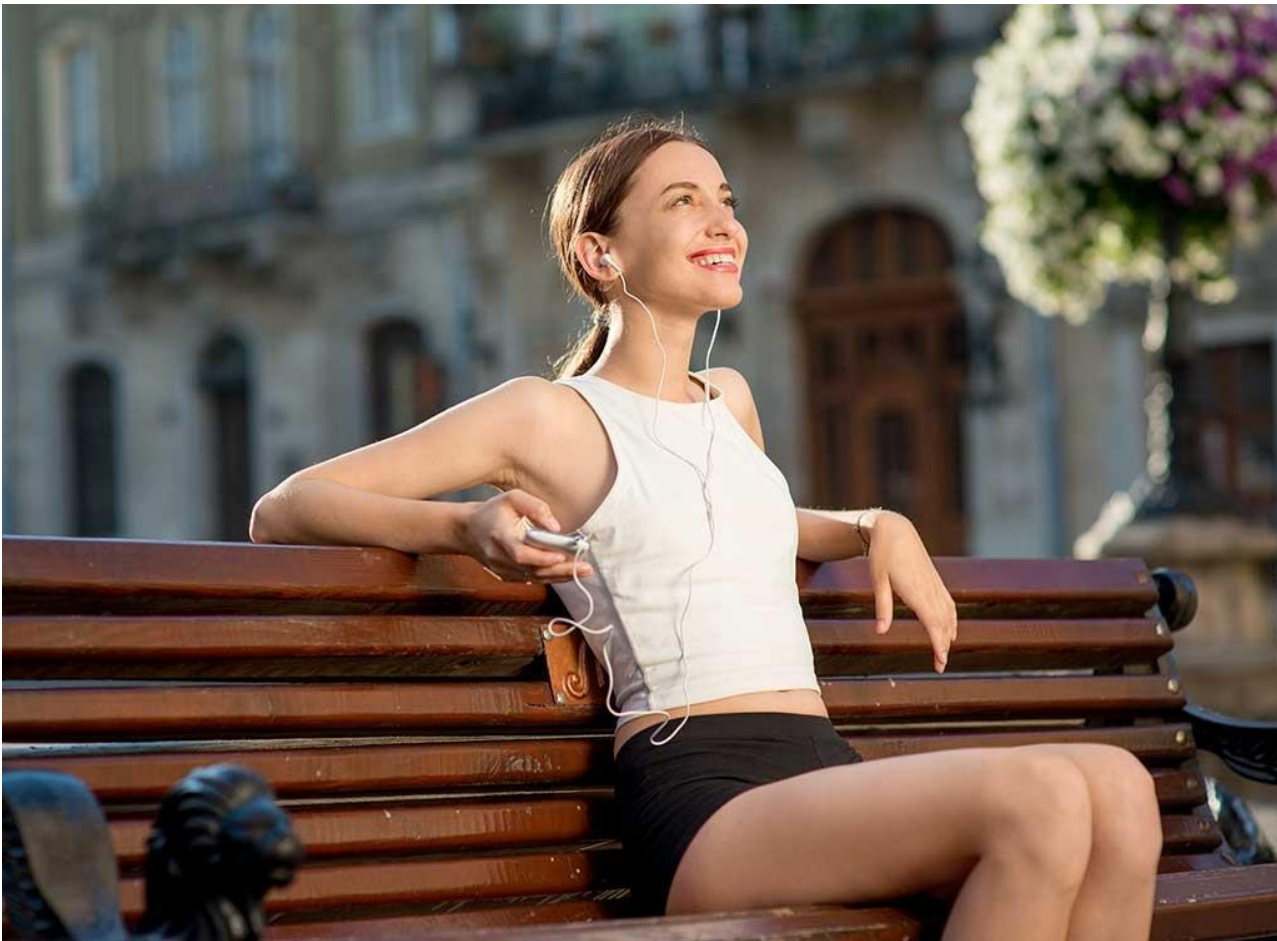
By The Editors of Eat This, Not That!

There could be a whole host of lifestyle and environmental factors that are aging your prematurely.

People usually associate crow's feet and laugh lines with getting older. After all, as your skin ages, it loses elasticity and can start to show wrinkles and fine lines.

But these physical signs of aging sometimes have nothing to do with aging at all. Other lifestyle and environmental factors can take a toll on your physical appearance, including a poor diet, lack of sleep, and chronic stress. It's not just your imagination; those wrinkles in the mirror could have more to do with your daily habits than you think. To turn back the clock, be sure to address these major causes of wrinkles, and avoid the 20 Foods That Age You 20 Years.

1 THE SUN



It should come as no surprise that the biggest culprit for wrinkles is exposure to the sun. Both UVA rays, which penetrate the skin's deepest layers, and UVB rays, which cause sunburn, can lead to premature aging and wrinkles. Not only does staying out of the sun (and out of tanning beds!) protect you from skin cancer, but it will also keep you looking young.

“The first and most common type [of skin wrinkling] is from chronic sun damage,” Jerome Potozkin, MD, board-certified dermatologist, says. “Sun damage results in loss of collagen and elastin resulting in wrinkling of the skin.” To protect your skin, be sure to wear at least an SPF 30 daily. When going out in the sun, especially if you'll be exposed to water, be sure to reapply your sunblock often and load up on these 7 Foods to Eat to Help Prevent Sunburn.

2 POLLUTION



You may not think much about the environment that you live in, but it can play a major impact on those deep wrinkles and fine lines. “Pollution is another environmental factor- contributing to free radical damage,” explains Maral K. Skelsey, MD, board-certified dermatologist and Director of the Dermatologic Surgery Center of Washington.

In fact, a 2010 study published in the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* found that women who lived in urban settings had more wrinkles and age spots than those living in rural areas over a 24-year period. If you live in a heavily populated city, be sure to wash your face at night before bed to remove the pollution particles.

3 LACK OF SLEEP



You know getting enough sleep is essential to help you feel your best and can even help you lose weight. But did you know it can also help your skin stay smooth? “Lack of sleep contributes [to wrinkles] because the pH of the skin is altered by not sleeping enough and that skin cells' ability to remain hydrated,” Skelsey explains. “Additionally, it's during sleep that toxins are flushed from the body.” Be sure to get the recommended 6-8 hours a night for maximum health benefits; it's called beauty sleep for a reason.

4 STRESS



A busy work schedule or personal drama not only takes a toll on your mental and emotional well-being; it can affect you physically, too. “Stress increases cortisol levels which will reduce the skin's ability to hold moisture,” Skelsey says. “Additionally elevated blood sugar damages the collagen and elastin fibers in the skin. These are the critical support structures that keep skin from sagging and developing wrinkles.” Try to find ways to de-stress, whether that’s going for walks after dinner, hanging out with friends, or seeing a therapist.

5 SUGAR



You already know that sugar causes weight gain, especially in your belly; it's why readers have found so much success with the [Zero Sugar Diet](#) after eliminating it. But there's another reason to put down the sweets and the soda—they age your skin.

“Eating too much sugar will surely lead to premature aging. After sugar is ingested it goes through a process called glycation, which involves binding to different proteins in our bodies,” **Kristina Goldenberg, MD**, board-certified dermatologist of Goldenberg Dermatology, explains. “Unfortunately, these proteins include collagen and elastin. By binding to these building blocks of the skin, sugar weakens collagen and elastin and will lead to an appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. Glycation also produces toxic products that further cause premature aging.”

For maximum health and beauty benefits, try cutting out sugar for two weeks. You'll have more energy, lose weight, and start to turn back the clock on fine lines and wrinkles.

6 SQUINTING



If you've been wearing the same old pair of glasses for years and are desperately in need of a new prescription, you're not just hurting your eyes. "Squinting and other facial expressions are the result of muscle contraction. The more the muscles are used, the stronger they become," Goldenberg explains. "These muscle movements cause skin cells to be squeezed and wrinkles to form. Excessive squinting will, therefore, lead to deeper wrinkles and loss of skin elasticity." Visit your dermatologist to get a proper prescription ASAP, and wear sunglasses whenever you're in the sun.

7

DRINKING OUT OF A STRAW



Sure, drinking darker liquids such as iced tea and cold brew out of a straw can protect your teeth from being stained, but it can also cause wrinkles to develop around your mouth. Similar to how squinting causes wrinkles around the eyes, drinking out of a straw creates fine lines on and around your lips. “Drinking out of a straw involves muscle contraction around the lips. If this is done repeatedly, the muscles will become stronger and wrinkles will become deeper and more apparent,” Goldenberg explains.

8 DRY SKIN



Dry skin isn't just uncomfortable; it can add years onto your life. "Skin that is chronically dry is also more susceptible to wrinkles," Skelsey explains. "A dry environment can result in the skin losing some of its 'scaffolding' and succumbing to wrinkles."

Make sure you moisturize day and night, especially on your face. Investing in a nourishing under-eye cream is also a good idea since the skin underneath the eyes is thinner and more susceptible to fine lines.

9 SMOKING



This should come as no surprise: after the sun, smoking is one of the biggest culprits for wrinkles. Not only does the position of a cigarette in your mouth lead to fine lines, but the toxins from the cigarette itself can age your skin.

“Nicotine in cigarettes causes narrowing of the blood vessels in the skin, which leaves it more prone to wrinkling because vital nutrients cannot reach the epidermis,” Skelsey explains. Plus, smoking is linked to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease. You’ve probably heard this before, but it bears repeating: quit smoking ASAP!