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# 7 Deadly Sins of Skin Aging

Each of these stars turns 40 in 2009: Renee Zellweger, Uma Thurman, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Jennifer Aniston, Cate Blanchett and Jennifer Lopez, and yet they still have that magnificently youthful radiance and glow.

My educated guess is that they scrupulously avoid committing these 7 deadly sins:

## 1. Pro-inflammatory foods (sugar and starches)

Foods can be pro-inflammatory or anti-inflammatory. Pro-inflammatory foods promote wrinkles, disease, accelerate aging and cause the storage of body fat. Pro-inflammatory, sugary, starchy foods causes a loss of radiance, dark circles under the eyes, loss of tone, increased lines and wrinkles, loss of facial contours, increased puffiness and pore size. These foods also exacerbate acne, which is a systemic, inflammatory disease. Sugars and starches rob your youth, health, and beauty.



## 2. Excessive exposure to the sun

We need to get some sun to absorb Vitamin D and keep our bones strong and healthy. But baking in the sun will cause:

- Loss of elasticity
- Thinner, translucent-looking skin
- Wrinkles
- Dry, rough, leathery skin
- Broken capillaries
- Freckles
- Liver spots
- Spots or blemishes
- Skin Cancer

## 3. Stress

Stress is a highly destructive, pro-inflammatory and pro-aging force. Stress causes hormonal changes, altering cellular function in vital organs, including skin.

Stress causes the release of the hormone cortisol. Large amounts of cortisol circulating in our blood streams for extended periods, is toxic. Brain cells are extremely sensitive to the effects of cortisol. High levels of cortisol cause brain cells to die, can destroy your immune system, shrink vital organs, decrease muscle mass, and cause thinning of the skin. Thin skin accelerates skin wrinkling, and causes blood vessels under skin to be more prominent.

#### **4. Smoking cigarettes/Exposure to secondhand smoke**

Cigarette smoke is highly damaging and aging to skin. When we inhale just one puff, over a trillion free radicals are produced in our lungs. This triggers an inflammatory response in all organs including skin. White blood cells, which line our arteries, are activated, predisposing us to heart disease. Cigarette smoking depletes skin of oxygen and vital nutrients. Tobacco also acts as a vasoconstrictor, (constrictor of blood vessels), reducing blood flow to an area, and temporarily raising blood pressure. Reduced blood flow to the skin results in a gray, pallid, lifeless and unhealthy-looking complexion. Smoking also causes dry, leathery looking skin, premature deep lines, wrinkles and loss of radiance.

#### **5. Excess alcohol**

People think that alcohol is bad because it dehydrates the body. They assume that increasing water intake will counteract this. Unfortunately, alcohol creates inflammation throughout the body including the skin, resulting in effects that far outlast dehydration. The metabolites of alcohol are molecules known as aldehydes. Aldehydes cause cellular damage.

Alcohol causes small blood vessels in the skin to widen, allowing more blood to flow close to the skin's surface. This produces a flushed skin color and a feeling of warmth which can lead to broken capillaries on the face. The alcohol-induced dehydration also makes the skin more prone to fine lines and wrinkles.

Dullness, enlarged pores, discoloration, sagging and lack of resilience are some of the short and longer term effects. Because alcohol alters blood flow to the skin, it will create an unhealthy appearance that lasts for days. An occasional glass of red wine can confer some health benefits. But moderation is key. Too much alcohol is highly destructive.

#### **6: Lack of sleep**

A good night's sleep will ensure that you awake refreshed, looking radiant and youthful. Adequate sleep is vital to avoid eye area puffiness and maintain vibrant skin. Sleep turns down the negative effects of cortisol and the "bad" neurotransmitters, like epinephrine and norepinephrine that can be elevated during stress. Growth hormone, the youth hormone is released during sleep. The hormone melatonin is also released, which has a positive effect on the immune system and the skin. Sleep rebuilds energy reserves and regenerates the body as our cells undergo repair. Inadequate sleep leads to unwanted weight gain and a craving for fat-laden, carbohydrate-heavy foods.

People who exercise enjoy improved sleep quality. They fall asleep more quickly, sleep more deeply, awaken less often, and sleep longer.

#### **7. Lack of exercise**

Mountains of studies prove that exercise takes off pounds, reduces heart disease, lowers blood pressure, improve mood, solves sleep problems, and cuts risks of certain cancers. Exercise also ensures beautiful skin. Exercise benefits the skin in much the same way that it improves bone and muscle quality. Without regular activity, bones become fragile and muscles atrophy. When the skin of regular exercisers is examined, the impact of their high fitness levels is clearly apparent. The skin is thicker, has more and healthier collagen, the fibers that give the skin its strength and flexibility. Exercise increases circulation and gives the skin a healthy and radiant glow.