

# Your Total Body Anti-Aging Plan

FROM YOUR HEAD TO YOUR TOES, THESE SIMPLE STRATEGIES WILL HELP YOU STAY YOUNG. *By Marygrace Taylor*

## **BRAIN:** Turn up the tunes.

Listening to music doesn't just get your feet tapping. It stimulates a large part of the brain, including areas responsible for processing sound, movement, emotion, memory, rewards and patterns. Rock out to your old favorites, but make an effort to expose yourself to new songs at least once a week, too, says Charles J. Limb, Chief of the Division of Otology, Neurotology and Skull Base Surgery at the University of California, San Francisco. "Unfamiliar music may require a greater degree of cognitive effort to process and may lead to the formation of new connections within the brain," he says.



## **EYES:** Eat your greens.

Carrots aren't the only veggie that can help keep your vision sharp. Leafy greens also pack a powerful punch. As you age, your retina's ability to break down harmful compounds from environmental stressors (like sunlight, unhealthy foods and smoke) gets weaker. A daily dose of spinach or kale delivers antioxidants like lutein and zeaxanthin, which evidence shows can protect your sight. Pass the salad, please!



## **FACE:** Get more sleep.

Beauty sleep is a very real thing. Logging enough shut-eye is crucial for helping your skin stay youthful and fresh (in addition to boosting your mood, protecting your heart



and keeping your weight in check). In one study, women who reported sleeping well were found to have fewer fine lines, more even pigmentation and more skin elasticity compared to those who reported sleeping poorly. They also tended to bounce back quicker from skin-ravaging stressors like sunburn and dehydration. Do your face a favor and shoot for eight full hours each night, recommends Manhattan-based dermatologist Janet Prystowsky, MD.



## **HEART:** Be gung-ho for hugs.

Just like eating right and exercising regularly, taking steps to manage stress is essential for keeping your ticker in tip-top shape. Hugs might seem like a small thing, but they're pretty powerful, triggering the release of feel-good hormones like oxytocin, while lowering levels of stress hormones like cortisol. One University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill study even found that women who got more frequent hugs from their partners had lower blood pressure and healthier resting heart rates compared to women who weren't hugged often.

## **BONES, MUSCLES and JOINTS:** Step it up.



You don't need to run marathons or lift giant weights to minimize the age-related loss of bone density and lean muscle mass. But you do need to keep moving. "We get slower and weaker if we don't use our bodies," says Vonda Wright, MD, author of *Fitness After 40*. Her top advice for staying active? Become a regular at your local high school track. Work up to walking eight laps (on most tracks, that's a total of two miles) three to five times per week, then add step-climbing on the bleachers. Build up to going up and down all the steps on one side of the stadium. "You'll strengthen your muscles, while the impact from the stairs will promote the growth of new bone cells," she says. Knee pain an issue? Take your workout to the pool for 40 minutes of walking forwards, backwards and lunging side to side in chest-high water.

## **FEET:** Be a super soaker.

Stiff joints, flat arches and loss of padding



under the foot can leave older tootsies tired and inflamed, which make you more prone to getting hurt. "Inflammation causes pain, and pain can lead to walking in a compensated way, which can lead to injury," says Jackie Sutura, podiatrist at Vionic Shoes Innovation Lab. Regular Epsom salt soaks can ease inflammation and stiffness—and keep you on your feet more comfortably. Add ¼ cup Epsom salt to a gallon of warm water, and soak for at least 15 minutes. For extra oomph (and a spa-like scent), add a few drops of lavender essential oil. It minimizes foot odor and can help prevent fungal infections around your toenails. ●

