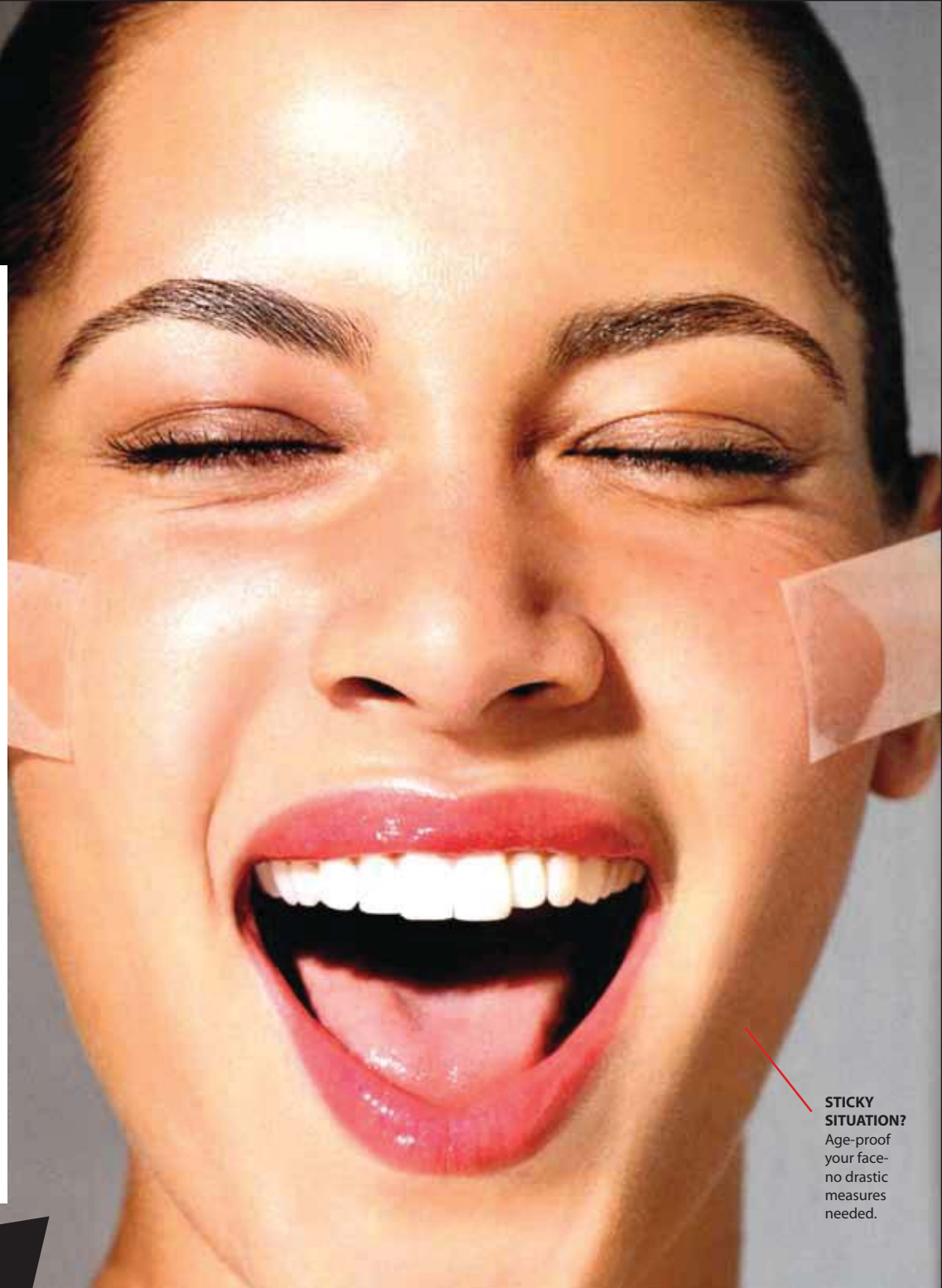


**Beware!**  
**FIVE**  
**SNEAKY**  
**THINGS**  
**THAT**  
**MAKE**  
**YOU**  
**LOOK**  
**OLDER**

*Nope, not wrinkles. That would be obvious. Lots of other skin woes can age even a young woman before her time. Here's how to fight back!*

BY JESSICA BAUMGARDNER



**STICKY SITUATION?**  
Age-proof your face—no drastic measures needed.

**a**

**AFTER SEEING PICTURES OF LINDSAY LOHAN** when she was sentenced to 90 days in jail plus rehab this past July, many people raised an eyebrow at her appearance. At just 24, she looked swollen, sallow, exhausted—older. Granted, the woman has had a hard couple of years. But even those without addictions and ankle bracelets are at risk too. Many of us are so busy obsessing over little lines that we ignore other signs of aging that can be prevented or repaired with a few easy adjustments. So what could be wreaking havoc on your face? Here's what to watch out for, along with no-brainer ways to turn back the clock.

## A Dull Complexion

Sure, sure, by now you probably know that skipping your daily skin care routine can make you zitty, but can it also make you look older? Unfortunately, yes. "If you're not cleansing your skin on a regular basis, dead skin cells start to accumulate on the surface," says Diane Berson, M.D., assistant professor of dermatology at Weill Medical College at Cornell University. All those unsloughed cells block the work of moisturizers and anti-aging creams and make your skin look lackluster, according to Rolanda Johnson, Ph.D., senior scientist at Procter & Gamble Beauty. And if that's not skeezy enough, "research has shown that free radicals in the environment can react with remaining dirt and oil to damage and age skin over time," says Johnson.

**Solution:** Take your skin care as seriously as your pedicure colors. "We cut corners, but we should be giving our skin as much attention as we give our other external features, like hair, nails and teeth," says Jody Alpert Levine, M.D., a New York City dermatologist. If you don't have time to wash your face in the morning, do at least a quick sweep of toner. And after a long day, "you definitely need to wash your face, whether you wore makeup or not," says Dr. Levine. "There is always sebum produced and outside pollutants to wash off." Don't stop there: Gentle exfoliation a couple of times a week is a must for young, healthy skin. Elizabeth Tanzi, M.D., co-director of the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery in Washington, D.C., gives these guidelines to de-gunk pores: "For sensitive skin, just rub a wet washcloth over your face in a circular motion for a minute or two; a couple of times a week is enough. Oily skin types can use a glycolic exfoliator on a daily basis, and normal skin can use one up to three times a week." Dr. Berson is a fan of electric cleansing brushes to mechanically exfoliate every day; try one with a bit of your favorite face wash.

## Pesky Dark Spots

The most likely cause of brown spots is our good old friend and foe: the sun. UV rays can trigger an overproduction of melanin in the skin, and the effect on your appearance is every bit as aging as wrinkles. Shockingly, a 2009 study done on facial aging in identical twins found that different amounts of sun exposure

made the more sun-damaged sibling look as much as 10 years older! "A lot of what we call aging is actually photo-aging from the sun," says Dr. Berson. But first of all, what does a sunspot look like? Basically, it's a big freckle that's symmetrical and all one color, as opposed to skin cancers, which generally have asymmetry, irregular borders, color changes and a diameter larger than six millimeters, or about a quarter of an inch.

## How Old Do You Look...Really?

Blame genetics all you want, but doctors say it's also about how you've treated your skin. We enlisted Michael Roizen, M.D., internist and author of the RealAge books, to quantify the effect your habits have had. The quiz is designed with a 28-year-old in mind. Damage is cumulative, so if you're older or younger than 28, the numbers on the right would be slightly higher or lower.

Take your age and add the number of years listed on the right for every "yes" answer.

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Have you had more than 10 bad sunburns in your life? | +2.5 years |
| Do you have red, itchy eyes from allergies?          | +2.5 years |
| Are you a regular smoker?                            | +2 years   |
| Do you live in a highly polluted city?               | +2.5 years |

Now subtract the number of years on the right for every "yes" answer.

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Do you cleanse your skin every day?                 | -1.5 years |
| Do you get seven to nine hours of sleep each night? | -1.5 years |
| Do you wear sunscreen regularly?                    | -1 year    |
| Do you have dark brown skin tone?                   | -1 year    |
| Do you regularly wear moisturizer?                  | -1 year    |

**Solution:** Wear sunscreen, folks. "Some people think if the damage was done in their teens, Why bother with sunscreen now?" says Dr. Tanzi. "This is a serious mistake, because sun damage is cumulative—it's never too late to regularly use an SPF of at least 30."

And there are ways to deal with the damage you already have, too. "Once you're in your thirties, everybody has some pigmentation that shows up from sun damage that happened before you were 18," says Dr. Levine. "It's easy to add a toner to your daily routine. Look for lightening agents like kojic acid, arbutin, emblica or hydroquinone, which can even out your skin tone." Using a dark-spot treatment will do the trick too. Hyperpigmentation also frequently occurs in dark-skinned people in response to inflammation or hormones. These lighteners will tackle those spots, which can darken from sun exposure, says Dr. Levine. Just don't forget to keep them in check with your daily dose of sunscreen.

## Major Dryness

It's no coincidence that the dude who represents the harshest season of the year is called Old Man Winter—chilly weather is brutal on the skin. The cold air and arid indoor heat break down your skin's protective barrier, making it blotchy, flaky, older-seeming. "A youthful glow is all about luminosity," says Dr. Levine. "Dry, rough, scaly skin stops light in its tracks."

**Solution:** For dewy, I-just-got-a-facial skin year-round, get a good moisturizer that's right for you. "If you have normal to acne-prone skin, look for a light, noncomedogenic lotion," says Dr. Tanzi. Oily skin types can get away with just swiping on serum. For those with super-dry complexions, Tanzi recommends rich hydrators with shea butter, petrolatum or dimethicone. And don't forget to hydrate at night, too. Before bed, smear on an anti-aging night moisturizer to do double duty.

If you're already religious about face cream (yay, you!) but still suffer from parched skin, your diet could be to blame. Overloading on carbohydrates and sweets can add years to skin's appearance. "Excess sugar binds to proteins, which results in damage to elastin and collagen," says Dr. Levine. "That makes your skin dry, brittle and less springy." So instead of that third cupcake—we're channeling your mother

here—munch on skin-protecting antioxidants like those found in green tea, berries, and dark-colored vegetables such as kale, beets and broccoli.

### Puffy Eye Bags

You might not experience these till your forties or beyond—but in this world, many women get them earlier, and they can make you look older than you are.

**Solution:** Spending more time in the sack could help. "Chronic fatigue leads to overproduction of stress hormones, which creates an inflammatory response in your skin," says Dr. Tanzi. "Getting at least seven hours of sleep a night would be fantastic. Two or three consecutive nights of good sleep can make a huge difference, but even one night is helpful." The way you snooze also impacts puffiness. "If you sleep on your stomach or on your side, fluid can accumulate under the skin around the eyes," says Dr. Berson. "Try to sleep on your back with your head elevated on an extra pillow to drain any excess." It's worth a shot—the more often you do it, the easier it is for gravity to work. A fix for morning emergencies: "Stick a wet washcloth in the freezer for 15 minutes, then use it as a cool compress," says Dr. Tanzi. Another trick: Try an eye treatment with a roller ball applicator to help the product sink in deeper. It mimics the action of patting on cream with your finger, but does it faster.

### Two Things That Make Every Woman Look Older

All the doctors we spoke with named the sun and smoking as the biggest agers—they cause all sorts of skin issues or worsen the ones you've already got. Both cause free radical damage to skin's structure, making it look leathery, sallow and dry. And their effects are cumulative over time. "At age 35, you can look 5 to 10 years older from sun damage," says Dr. Roizen. "But at 50, you could look 80—the process accelerates." So pick up the SPF, put down the ciggies and give your skin—and the person it's attached to!—the TLC it deserves.

So what if you're doing everything right and getting good sleep, and you still look puffy? It's most likely allergies, our experts agree. Try an over-the-counter antihistamine like Claritin or Zyrtec. Michael Roizen, M.D., recommends a simple fix of buying an impenetrable filter, like a latex cover or 1-micron filter case, for your pillow. "Most allergies are to dust mites or dust mite poop," he says. "After two years, your pillow is 80 percent dust mite poop." Another less gross possible irritant: sensitivity to your eye cream or makeup. Be sure to rule that out as a cause, but take note: "For at least 50 percent of my younger patients with this problem, it's due to allergies, not products," says Dr. Tanzi.

### Dark Circles

While your skin is doing the whole growing-old-gracefully thing, the under-eye area slowly darkens from a natural loss of fat stores. Eventually, that leads to hollowness and a shadowy effect. But in your twenties and thirties, dark circles can be attributed to three things: genetics, allergies or yo-yo dieting.

**Solution:** First, rule out genetics. "Certain ethnicities, like those from India or the Middle East, have increased pigment under the eye," says Dr. Tanzi. "In those cases, laser procedures can help, but they come with a recovery period of weeks or even months." If genetics aren't the issue, allergies may again be the culprit. If you have them, resist the urge to rub when your eyes get itchy. "Skin build's up pigment in response to rubbing," says Dr. Levine. Minimize dark circles from allergies in the same way you'd treat under-eye bags—with cold compresses, antihistamines and allergen-reducing pillow covers.

Are none of the above scenarios sounding like you? Check your eating habits. Dark circles could be due to dramatic weight shifts from dieting. "Fat loss on the face can make you look drawn and older," says Dr. Berson. Also, rapid weight gain or loss can have a bad impact on your skin overall, leading to a decrease in elasticity that ages you noticeably. The bottom line: Moderation is key. Keep weight loss to a sane pace of one to two pounds a week, cut back on late nights, curb your sweet tooth and stick with your daily skin care ritual, no matter how tired you are. Oh, and keep your driver's license handy—these healthy habits just might get you carded.

## Meet Your Skin's New Best Friends

Seven secret weapons of younger-looking skin. So nice to know!



**FADES AWAY DARK SPOTS**  
Prevege Clarity Targeted Skin Tone Corrector (\$125, elizabetharden.com)

**SMOOTHS WHILE YOU SNOOZE**  
Neutrogena Rapid Wrinkle Repair Night (\$20, at drugstores)

**WAKES UP EYES**  
Garnier Ultra-Lift Anti-Wrinkle Eye Roller (\$15, at drugstores)

**EVENS SKIN TONE**  
Chanel Sublimage Essential Revitalizing Concentrate (\$425, chanel.com)

**ADDS A SHOT OF REDIANCE**  
Dior Capture Totale One Essential (\$95 for 1 oz., dior.com)

**SLOUGHS DEAD SKIN**  
Olay Professional Pro-X Advanced Cleansing System (\$30, at drugstores)

**HYDRATES AND ZAPS LINES**  
L'Oréal Paris Youth Code Day/Night Cream (\$25, at drugstores)