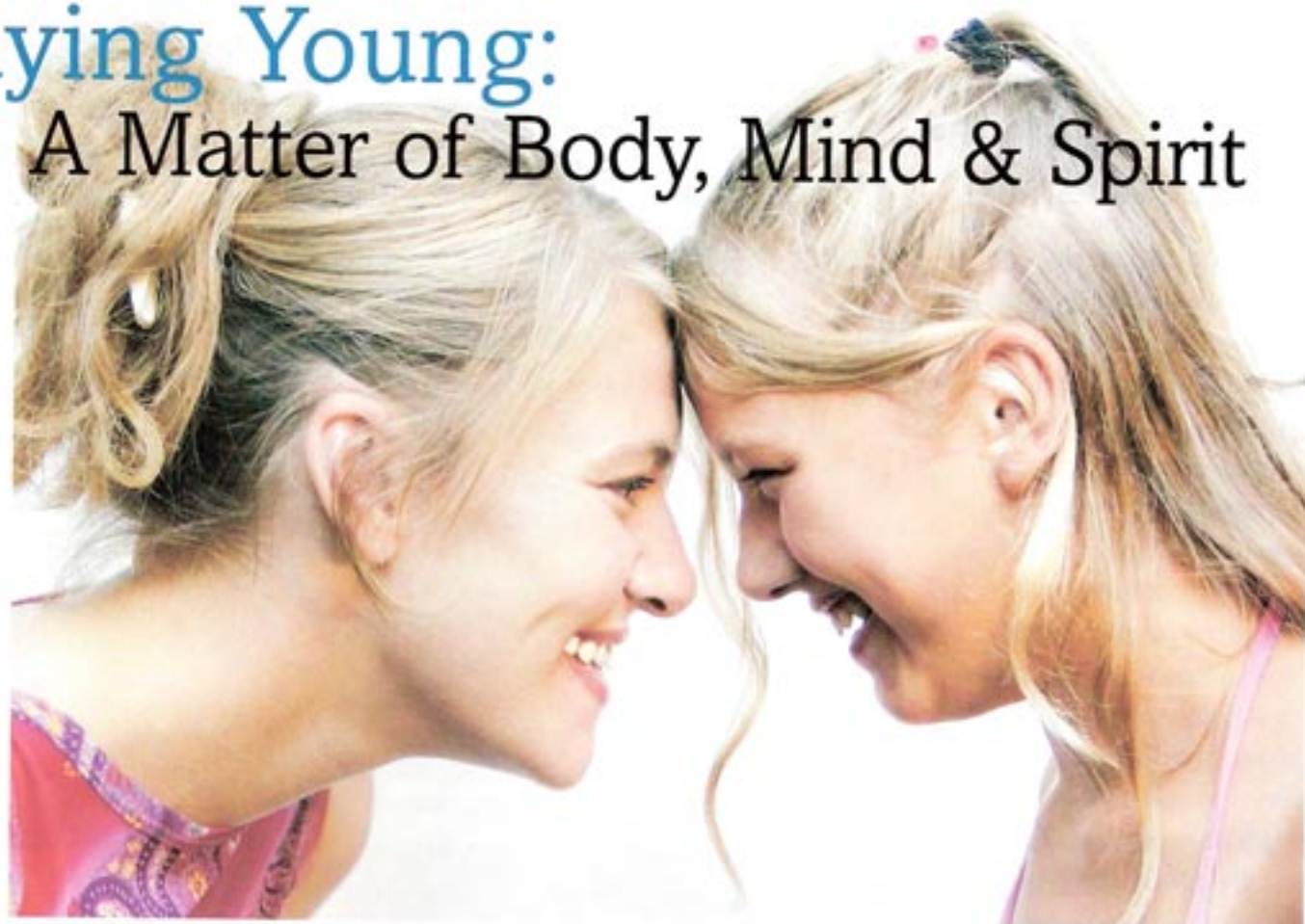


# Staying Young: A Matter of Body, Mind & Spirit



**Forget the wrinkle cream.** Toss the pills and powders. Ditch that funny contraption you bought on an infomercial at 2 a.m. Staying young doesn't have to dent your budget. And it certainly doesn't have to leave your pillowcase greasy. To regain your youth, or perhaps even turn back the clock, you can have fun—without spending lots of time, energy, or money.

Staying young, however, does take an understanding that body, mind, and spirit are interconnected. What good is a "young" 90-year-old body if your mind and spirit have grown old? Or, how would you feel if your mind was sharp, but physically and spiritually you weren't at your peak? You get the idea. Without the balance of all three, staying young wouldn't be worthwhile.

So how do we do this? How do we stay young in body, mind, and spirit? What steps do we take?

The following are some simple guidelines that can be easily incorporated into our busy, everyday lives. All of them

have been proven to help us lead longer, happier, and healthier lives. When practiced consistently, these steps will bring results almost immediately. Just remember to have fun with them. Staying young shouldn't be a chore. It doesn't need to be serious, and it certainly isn't complicated. If you enjoy the process, you are more than halfway there!

## YOUNG BODY

"Science tells us there is no reason the physical body should not live a minimum of 120 years."

—Peter Ragnar

*How Long Do You Choose to Live?*

**SMILE.** Really smile. Practice a big smile in the mirror and see how wonderful it looks. When you smile, you naturally feel better. There's nothing more beautiful and young looking than a face with a smile. Let that beauty radiate from you. The next time you feel the corners of your mouth going south, turn them around and smile, smile, smile.

**LAUGH.** When is the last time you laughed until your eyes watered and your sides ached? Try renting a funny movie or going to a comedy show. Spend time around someone who makes you laugh. Borrow a joke book from the library. Learn some jokes and tell other people. Laughter can make you feel younger and lighter, and a good laugh is definitely contagious.

**BREATHE.** Have you ever watched an infant breathe? When a baby inhales, its abdomen is pushed all the way out. As adults, we breathe mostly from our chests. If we want to feel younger, we can learn to breathe like babies again. Slowly inhale through your nose and let it fill your entire torso. Let your diaphragm stretch. Hold the breath for just a moment and then slowly release it through your mouth. Since breathing helps get toxins out of your body, a few deep breaths a day can make a huge difference. Try it right before you go to sleep at night and you might even sleep like a baby.

**EAT FRESH & EAT LESS.** Portions seem to get larger and larger every day. For pennies more we can often double our serving size. Unfortunately, what seems smart for our wallets isn't necessarily smart for our bodies. A good idea for getting around the jumbo-sized meals is to eat more fruits and veggies. Try to have a big green salad every day. It's healthy and filling. Or carry a bag of baby carrots or an apple for those times when you need a snack. Fresh fruits and vegetables are full of vibrant energy—a perfect recipe for staying young.

**TAKE A WALK.** Moving your body is an excellent way to keep fit and limber. But

sometimes staying motivated is a challenge. So try finding an exercise buddy. Do you have a neighbor that would like to take a few laps around the block with you? How about a friend who can meet you in the park for a brisk walk? Even a dog makes a good exercise buddy. Find a way to move your arms and legs. Breathe deeply and smell the roses. Walking keeps you heading in the direction of a young, healthy body.

## YOUNG MIND

“Attend to keeping your mind fresh and youthful, and you will keep your body fresh and youthful.”

Deepak Chopra, M.D. & David Simon, M.D.,  
*Grow Younger, Live Longer*

**SOCIALIZE.** Staying connected with friends and family is a good way to keep your mind active and alive. Communication and interaction with other people can be a wonderful form of mental exercise. If you aren't in touch with many people, think about joining a club, attending a local meeting, or even starting your own book discussion group. Socializing is a lot of fun and helps you stay young.

**ELIMINATE CLUTTER.** Clutter is found in many shapes and sizes: on our kitchen tables, under our beds, in our cars, and in our heads. Whatever form it takes, clutter can be a youth-stealer. A clear mind and a relatively clean home help to bring about the peace found in a youthful mind. Organization helps to keep us from laboring over lost or misplaced items. And simplicity is a must for staying young.

**EDUCATE YOURSELF.** Reading, listening to tapes, and attending workshops are a few of the ways that we can educate ourselves. If you have a few minutes to sit and read, enjoy. If not, use your car as a traveling university. Borrow tapes or CD's from the library and fill your mind with your favorite topic. Learn to speak another language or get a recording

of inspirational stories. Remember that we are always young enough to learn something new.

**PUZZLES.** Most daily newspapers have a crossword puzzle and at least one or two word games. Even if you can't finish them, spend some time with a pencil and an open mind. These puzzles stimulate different thought processes which keep us on our toes. Some local newsstands carry books of puzzles for relatively little money; just one book can provide endless hours of amusement. A young mind is a nimble mind, and puzzles are a great way to achieve that.

**THINK YOUNG.** Forget about your age. Whether you've been on this planet 30 years or 60 is irrelevant to staying young. You can be ageless. Think young thoughts. Leave words like "old" and "decrepit" out of your vocabulary. Staying young starts with the thought that you want to stay young, and you can generate more young and ageless thoughts every day. If you think you can stay young, then you *can* stay young.

## YOUNG SPIRIT

“Once you are expressing your inner light, age becomes irrelevant.”

Victoria Moran, *Lit from Within*

**GRATITUDE.** Try looking at the world through a vision of gratitude for a moment. What are the things you are thankful for? Who or what is in your life right now that makes you happy? Gratitude journals have become popular lately, and for good reason. With newspaper and television bombarding us with all the "problems" we face, focusing on gratitude can be very grounding. Living our lives with an attitude of gratitude helps us to stay young in spirit.

**FORGIVENESS.** Few things make you feel better than letting go of a grudge. Being mad or upset can give you wrinkles on your face and in your spirit. Iron out a few of those wrinkles. Let go of an old upset. Set that person



free and you set yourself free. And remember that a young spirit is a free spirit.

**MEDITATE.** Taking time to relax, breathe, and calm our thoughts is practically a necessity. Five minutes of quiet time is like a mini vacation. It doesn't matter where you are—the car, the bathroom, the library—anywhere is good. Just find those few precious minutes to reconnect with yourself and your spirit, and you will feel younger and fresher.

**CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS.** When we were kids and earned a good grade in school, we got a star on top of the page. It was then proudly displayed on the refrigerator. As adults we rarely allow ourselves to bask in the moment of an achievement. Keep your spirit young and vibrant by giving yourself a gold star. Permit yourself to feel good about something that you achieved. Recognizing even the smallest step can help you stay young in spirit.

**LIVE ON PURPOSE.** Find something that you're good at, something that you enjoy tremendously, and then do it. It doesn't have to be a full-time job (although that's great if it is). Even if it's a hobby, or something that you do on weekends, that's okay. If you feel that you don't have any skills, then you can always volunteer some time at a local hospital or nursing home. Finding a purpose keeps us youthful in spirit, and it's also a great way to have some fun. ✨

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