

10 bad habits that add years to your face

Many people look ten years older than they should due to poor lifestyle, says this leading cosmetic surgeon



Getty + Mike Kemp

By Dr Julian De Silva 🕒 28 September 2016

Ageing happens to us all but certain lifestyle factors can easily add as much as five or tens years to your looks. I see patients every day who could **significantly slow down the ageing process** in their faces by making small changes in their lives.

Here are the 10 quickest ways to age your face:

1. Knocking back margaritas

Excess drinking means your blood vessels lose tone, leaving your face with permanent thread veins. It also dehydrates your skin, leading to sallowness, deepening of wrinkles and dryness. Crows feet are another danger because **drinkers are often chronically deficient in vitamin A** which is essential for making collagen.

Some booze is worse than others. Avoid sugary cocktails for a more youthful complexion.

But if you are going to drink, there are ways of limiting the damage. Beer contains antioxidants and important B vitamins such as niacin and folic acid. Red wine contains the anti-ageing compound resveratrol.

2. Not getting enough sleep

A good eight hours a night is the perfect antidote to the stresses of daily life and keeps your skin looking younger for longer.

Lack of sleep causes short-term complexion problems including; **dark circles around the eyes** and generally lacklustre skin.



During the day our skin cells are battling against on-going damage caused by sunlight, dirt and pollution.

Sleep is crucial because stress hormones drop to normal levels at night, giving cells time to repair and rejuvenate.

3. Forgoing SPF on rainy days

The sun is the primary cause of skin ageing particularly in the summer. But it can reach you on cloudy, rainy or snowy days as well.

Skin-damaging UV rays can even penetrate through glass, so it may be appropriate to **apply sun protection even indoors**.

4. Smoking

Give up or at least limit yourself to no more than five cigarettes a day. The good news is that if you do give up, the skin will start to repair itself.

But if you cannot or won't give up, the problems become more irreversible the longer you leave them.



Smoking puts stress on the entire body due to the toxic concoction of carbon monoxide, cyanide, tar, formaldehyde and other chemicals. So the brain is forced to divert vitamins away from your skin to be used elsewhere.

Nicotine also reduces blood flow to the lower living layer of skin, or dermis, which results in less oxygen being delivered.

You'll notice the change in your skin **within six weeks of giving up.**

5. Crash diets

This is particularly dangerous after the age of 30. It will cause some of the natural fat in your face which keeps you looking young to dissolve. This can result in a more gaunt appearance.

6. Sugar

We all know that a high-sugar diet isn't good for us and raising the risk of type 2 diabetes, a serious health problem in 2016. But did you know it can age your face too?

A diet high in sugar and carbohydrates such as bread, rice, potatoes can lead to glycation in the skin. This is where sugar molecules attach to collagen and cause it to lose its strength and flexibility so the skin becomes less elastic and more vulnerable to sun damage.

7. Avoiding the gym

Moderate exercise improves circulation and boosts the immune system. This, in turn, may give your face a more youthful appearance.

8. Spot popping

Thanks to fluctuating hormones even women over the age of 40 can experience acne problems. But bursting a spot to relieve red spots will only dry out the skin, leaving a raw and irritated area.



Treat your entire face with an acne-fighting cleanser or moisturiser once a day. It's the best defence against future break-outs.

Most importantly, avoid ever bursting spots or pimples - it can lead to infection and scarring.

9. Going to bed in your makeup

It is tempting to fall into bed after a long day without cleaning your face, particularly if you have been out boozing. During the day, environmental toxins (like dirt and pollution) build up in your skin and invade pores, which can cause complexion problems. Do you really want them festering all night?

10. Using too many products

You like your new moisturiser but combine it with serum, toner and a night cream, too. Slow down. Using multiple products at the same time increases the risk of irritation, which quickly ages your skin.

Dr Julian De Silva is a facial plastic surgeon in London. Find out more about him at www.londonfacialplasticsurgery.co.uk.