

InStyle

How to Fight Fine Lines in Your 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s

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This is how to attack fine lines and creases, whether you're 20, 50, or somewhere in between.

You've sworn off sunbathing (OK, by 90%). You've said no to partying. You've even upped your veggie consumption, all in the name of making your skin as ageless as possible. Smart moves. "Preventing skin aging is the best strategy for keeping your complexion looking its best," says Joshua Zeichner, MD, a dermatologist in New York City. While there's no way to completely stave off lines, the following game plans—targeted to your age—will protect and repair your complexion, setting you up for healthy skin year after year.

YOUR 30S

You may start to see fine lines around your eyes. "The skin there is extremely thin, making it more vulnerable to damage from the sun and repetitive expressions," says Dr. Zeichner. You might also spot "11s"—that pair of vertical lines between the brows. "Initially, these go away when your face is at rest, but over time, the lines begin to set in," he notes. People with lighter skin tend to see lines earlier than those with darker complexions, possibly because more melanin in skin equals more wrinkle protection.

Add a retinoid. "This ingredient works by creating cellular turnover to exfoliate the skin and repair DNA, which reverses sun damage and reduces the appearance of wrinkles," says **Ava Shamban**, MD, a dermatologist in Beverly Hills. Over-the-counter creams with retinol, like **Eve Lom Time Retreat Intensive Night Cream** (\$140; neimanmarcus.com), are gentler than prescription retinoids (like Retin-A), so they're good for those with sensitive skin. To minimize irritation, begin applying every other night (not during the day, because the sun diminishes the effectiveness of some formulas), working up to nightly use.

YOUR 40S

You're coming into your own now and likely have your career and relationships in place. But this decade might also bring more pronounced wrinkles. "If you don't start to treat fine lines around your eyes in your 30s, they will most likely start to stick in your 40s," says Dr. Zeichner. Also evident: horizontal lines on your forehead and maybe some fine creases on your neck.

Don't skip SPF and retinoid. Applying them consistently can keep your 40-something skin looking a decade younger. Still using an OTC retinoid? Ask your dermatologist for a stronger, Rx version, says Dr. Shamban.

Opt for a serum with growth factors. Not to be confused with growth hormones, growth factors are produced naturally by the skin and help repair free-radical damage and maintain smoothness. As we age, our skin produces less of these substances. But using a serum with growth factors, like **PCA Skin Rejuvenating Serum** (\$85; dermstore.com), nets you fewer wrinkles and creases, according to research.

Think antioxidants. "Add a serum containing vitamin C, vitamin E, ferulic acid, and phloretin to your morning routine," says Dr. Zeichner. Applying it before SPF enhances its effectiveness and prevents free-radical damage. "This is especially important," he says, "as your skin's natural antioxidant defenses start to decline in your 40s."

YOUR 50S

You may notice that forehead lines become deeper, 11s and crow's-feet are more prominent, and creases—so lovingly (not!) called marionette lines—start to form at the corners of the mouth. Plus, during menopause, the change in estrogen levels can reduce collagen production, leaving skin dry. With the right moves, though, you can improve your complexion.

Lather on moisturizer. Look for a cream with ingredients that plump the skin, such as hyaluronic acid and glycerin.

Find a derm you trust. She can make sure you're using the right products and tweak your nightly retinoid dose, if needed, so you get the best results.

Switch to a rich moisturizer. It's crucial to move to a thick emollient moisturizer loaded with hydrating ingredients, says Dr. Shamban. **Murad Hydro-Dynamic Ultimate Moisture** (\$75; sephora.com) packs hyaluronic acid and shea butter for a smoothing effect.

Hit the gym. Weight tends to creep up during menopause; yo-yo dieting weakens skin, causing it to sag. Dr. Downie's advice? Work out at least four days a week. Bonus: Exercise brings blood to the skin's surface, giving you an instant glow.

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