

## Buying anti-wrinkle creams

No matter how silly it may seem, both men and women put a lot of energy into being attractive to be wanted by others – we are simply hardwired for it. But we should not let this drive us to self-depreciating madness. Some people only want the young and pretty to want them, but often what people want is someone who is a bit confident, comfortable in their body and interested in their own life as well as others. And we all want to be wanted by such a person. Being a bit older is often what it takes to become this kind of person and that comes with a few wrinkles.

Looking your age should not mean looking worn out. And no anti-wrinkle cream can completely hide or erase what you've done to your body and face. This doesn't mean we have to live like monks to look a little better either. We all have our bad habits and we should be allowed to keep a few. But throw some good ones on top of them – it's cheaper than an anti-wrinkle cream and actually works. Aside from the obvious, like not getting too much sun on your skin and not chain smoking cigarettes, we can:

- Use a good, but not overly priced, cleansing cream and skin cream.
- Drink a lot of water, I'm talking mucho.
- Eat healthy food most of the time.
- Get a decent amount of sleep.
- Breathe to relax (slowly, using your diaphragm, breathe in through your nose 8 counts, hold it for 8 counts, breathe out your mouth 8 counts). Do this when someone criticizes you, when your pet pees in an undesirable place, when your kids do the non-cute stuff they do, while you're waiting in a line you haven't time to wait in, breathe when all the stress and noise in life becomes too much... it takes only 24 seconds. Not even Calgon can take you away that fast.
- Get regular physical exercise. Even 20 minutes with a significantly raised heart rate twice a week can relax you and help you sleep better, which makes for fewer stress wrinkles. Try not to scrunch your face when you're exercising.

In addition and equally important to the above basics, we can also use thought process to solve the wrinkle problem:

- Think about your facial expressions. How you use your facial muscles determines where and how deep your wrinkles will be (alongside genetics and the stuff you put into and expose your body to, of course).
- Train yourself to modify facial expressions that yield wrinkles that you consider ugly. Example: If you don't like wrinkles between your eyebrows, use a piece of tape between your eyebrows to be reminded not to furrow them, maybe not in public though.

Think about where your wrinkles come from. We can also learn to live with our wrinkles by putting them in a better light using a little perspective. The scratch on your wooden floor that annoys you today reminds you in a good way of the child who created it when that child has moved out. Our wrinkles say who we are and how we have lived our emotional lives. I have horizontal lines on my forehead because of all the surprises I've encountered, amazing crowfeet from all my smiling and laughing and two vertical lines between my eyes from worry (bad), things I have contemplated (good), and my solo rock n' roll air guitar/slam dancing sessions (good for me, yet bad and embarrassing if anyone saw me).

Trying to control what kind of wrinkles you have can also help you, to a certain extent, control your emotions. The wrinkles I don't like on my face are the vertical lines around my lips. They show that I have pursed my lips when I was uptight and stressed. In getting rid of that facial expression, I also got rid of much of the uptightness. Kind of like when a stranger smiles at you when you're not in a good mood and when you give an automatic smile back you find that you actually do feel a bit better. The people who receive smiles from strangers aren't usually the terribly uptight looking ones, even though

that type often needs the smile the most. So, if you want smiles sent your way, you have to lose the undesirable facial expressions. People often decide what kind of person you are by your facial expressions and treat you the way your facial expression tells them to treat you – you're in control of that.

No wrinkle cream can give you this emotional perspective because it has to be experienced and understood – it can't be bought. Sorry, there is no easy way out, no quick fix. And though people don't like to hear this: the process of "fixing" something (our wrinkles) gives us information about how better to use the thing (our faces, our bodies and our emotional lives). You can't understand how to avoid unnecessary wrinkles or learn to accept some of them if you don't understand how they got there or how you felt when your face made that expression.

If none of this has made you feel better about your wrinkles, then think of us, the people who are still getting zits while acquiring our wrinkles and you'll be thankful for only wrinkles! And if that little tidbit didn't help and you've concluded that anti-wrinkle creams aren't worth their price, but you're still hell-bent on not appearing to age and are looking at plastic surgery, do consider that too much plastic surgery tends to look like a weird mask after a while; time and gravity don't spare those faces either.

However we choose to deal with our aging bodies, it is not modern culture that is to blame for our desire to look eternally young. Being satisfied with ourselves and how we look at each stage of our lives in any century takes mental skill (adapting to change) and physical accomplishment (working with what you have) – and figuring that out usually comes with age... and wrinkles.