

Radiantly Youthful Skin and Beauty---*for Your Type!*

Tap into ancient wisdom and battle aging better

By Nancy Lonsdorf, MD

Have you ever noticed that people differ not only in how fast they age, but also in the way that they age? Some fight (and lose) the battle of the bulge, while the fashionably thin decry the wrinkles that deeply line their faces. Others bemoan the age spots, dark circles, and sags and bags that follow them into their 40s, 50s, and beyond.

While nothing short of death can prevent aging, ayurveda, India's ancient science of longevity, may hold the secret to minimizing its impact on how you look and feel. The equivalent of the slow food movement for the skin, ayurveda's slow beauty approach prizes mind-body balance as the ultimate source of youthful radiance. While Botox, lasers, and surgery may recreate the look of youth, ayurveda inspires us to cultivate long-lasting results with personalized lifestyle regimens and natural, food-based products that gently nourish, detox, and tone the skin from the inside out.

The first step: Re-establish balance in the three guiding principles, called doshas, that maintain order in all organs and tissues of your body. Each of these three doshas—vata, pitta, and kapha—creates a predictable pattern of aging, singly and in concert with one another. By finding out which dosha, or constitution, drives your aging process and discovering how to keep it in balance, you can learn how to age wisely, gracefully, and beautifully.

To learn your dominant dosha, take the quiz below. Then follow the tips for your type to enhance your natural beauty.

Vata (Airy)

Vata governs your brain, hormones, circulation, assimilation, and elimination, all key players in the pursuit of youthful skin. Too much vata jacks up collagen-depleting cortisol, throws off your internal rhythms, disrupts sleep, hormone levels, and digestion, and constricts your circulation. The unwelcome effect? Dull, dry, and depleted skin that eventually thins, wrinkles, and sags. Your antiaging antidotes: lubricate, moisturize, and nourish. Plump up your skin and glow again with the following vata-soothing tips.

Set a regular, early bedtime, get plenty of sleep, and manage your stress.

Favor warm, nourishing meals with extra "healthy" oil to fight vata dryness.

Give your skin a full-body massage each day with organic sesame oil.

Vata skin rejuvenation: For a moisturizing facial cleanse, mix 1 teaspoon raw honey with 3 teaspoons rosewater. Apply to face. Leave on 15 minutes, then rinse.

Tone: Gently splash your face with rosewater two to three times per week. On alternate days, spritz with lavender water.

Moisturizer for deep lubrication: Apply a few drops of pure castor oil to your face after toning.

Nourishing, exfoliating facial mask: Soak 2 teaspoons finely ground blanched almonds in a blend of 2 teaspoons organic milk and 2 teaspoons rosewater until it becomes a paste. Gently pat on your face. Leave on 5 minutes, then rinse.

Special vata complexion enhancer: Mix 1 teaspoon ground urad dahl, (a tiny protein-rich lentil found in health food stores or Asian markets) with 5 finely ground, blanched almonds and enough warm water to make a paste. Apply to your face. Rinse off after 5 minutes.

Pitta (Fiery)

Pitta fuels your metabolism, including digestion, energy production, and detoxification. When balanced, pitta

keeps your skin clear and radiant. However, too much sunshine, free radicals, trans fats, chemicals, additives, or toxins can stoke pitta into a raging wildfire. The visible result? Redness, breakouts, inflammation, and eventually irregular pigmentation, broken capillaries, moles, freckles, and deeper wrinkles. Your antiaging antidotes: soothe, cool, and gently detoxify. Calm and smooth your complexion with the following anti-inflammatory, pitta-pacifying suggestions:

Adopt a pure, organic diet with lots of sweet, juicy fruits and watery vegetables.

Drink two cups daily of a cooling detox tea made with 1/8 teaspoon each of fennel seed, coriander seed, and skin-soothing Indian madder (manjistha) powder. Order this powder from banyanbotanicals.com, or substitute two food-grade rosebuds.

Give yourself a full-body massage daily with coconut oil.

Cooling facial cleanse: Rinse with rosewater. Then, using a natural sponge, gently blot your face with generous amounts of whole milk (room temperature) for a full 2 minutes.

Tone: Gently splash your face with cucumber juice 2 to 3 times per week (Put one peeled cucumber through a juicer, or blend at high speed and strain.) On alternate days, spritz with rosewater or jasmine water.

Moisturizer for deep lubrication: Apply supercooling, deeply moisturizing coconut oil to your face after toning. Leave on overnight, or apply in the morning and rinse off after 10 minutes.

Exfoliating facial mask: Mix together equal parts chickpea flour, finely ground blanched almonds (paste), whole milk, and aloe vera juice. Apply. Rinse after 5 minutes.

Special anti-pigmentation treatment: (Caution: not for irritated skin) Apply pure papaya juice (juice your own when in season, or get 100 percent pure, preservative-free bottled juice). Rinse after 5 minutes. Alternative: Mix 5 finely ground blanched almonds with 1 teaspoon fresh cream and a few drops fresh lemon juice. Leave on for 5 minutes, then rinse.

Kapha (Earthy)

Kapha governs the physical body—its bones, muscles, joints, and tissues. Balanced kapha bestows youthful, toned skin, firm muscles, full cheeks, and just the right amount of subcutaneous fat for a smooth complexion and a “curvaceous” figure. Out of balance, kapha can tip the scales toward excess fat, loose joints and tissues, puffiness, fluid retention, cystic acne, large pores, blackheads, fatty nodules, and other annoying beauty busters. Your antiaging antidotes: tone, temper, and spice. Tone up and trim down with the following kapha-kicking guidelines:

Strengthen your muscles and lubricate your joints with a structured exercise and resistance program.

Cut your portions by one-third, and add a mixture of spices to your food at each meal, including metabolism boosters such as black pepper, ginger, fenugreek, and turmeric.

Give yourself a full-body massage daily with sesame oil.

Facial Cleanse: Mix 1 tablespoon of chickpea flour with 1 teaspoon of raw honey. Dab on and rinse.

Tone: Mix 1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice with 1/2 teaspoon cucumber juice. Splash on your face, and leave on for 30 minutes before rinsing.

Deep cleanse: Gently massage your face for 1 to 2 minutes with a few drops sesame or olive oil. Leave on for 1 to 3 minutes. Then give yourself a steamy, minty facial. Steep 3 mint tea bags in boiling hot water for 2 minutes. Then cover pot and head with a towel as “steam tent,” lean forward over the pot, and gently steam your face for 5 minutes.

Exfoliating face mask: Mix 1 teaspoon chickpea flour, 1/4 teaspoon lemon peel, 1/4 teaspoon neem powder (available from banyanbotanicals.com or fromnaturewithlove.com), 1/4 teaspoon finely chopped basil, and 1/2 teaspoon Fuller’s Earth clay (a natural clay that purifies the skin and removes excess oil) with a few drops of raw honey and warm water. Apply to your face, and leave on for 10 minutes. Rinse.

Special treatment for large pores: Mix 1/2 cup barley flour with whole milk to make a paste. Refrigerate for 25 minutes. Apply to your skin, and leave on for 15 minutes, then rinse with cold water. Over the next 10 hours, use only pure, cold water on your face, rinsing your face several times. n

* Note: For all recipes, use organic ingredients when possible.

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QUIZ: What's Your Ageless Beauty Type?

Check each description below that applies to you, then total up each column.

Follow the lifestyle and skincare tips for the type you score highest in. If other types are close behind, follow those lifestyle tips as well.

Airy (Vata)

- My skin is dry, and I have scaly patches or cracked heels and hands.
- My skin problems and wrinkles occur most easily in the forehead region.
- My complexion or hair lacks a healthy glow; appears dull or lackluster.
- My face lacks fullness or roundness and is getting thinner as I get older.
- By nature, I am enthusiastic, but I can often feel worried, anxious, or forgetful.
- My body is losing too much weight or becoming frail, weak, or delicate.
- I often have trouble getting to sleep and sleep fitfully through the night.
- TOTAL

Fiery (Pitta)

- My skin is sensitive and tends to rashes, rosacea, irritation, sunburn, or breakouts.
- My skin problems most commonly occur on the nose or cheek areas.
- I am experiencing excessive hair loss, premature graying, or early wrinkling.
- I easily maintain my normal weight and good digestion but tend to hyperacidity.
- I have more freckles, moles, or "age spots" than I used to.
- I can focus well but get easily irritated, angry, or aggressive.
- My eyes are prone to redness, irritation, or burning sensations.
- TOTAL

Earthy (Kapha)

- My skin is oily and firm but easily develops large pores, deep wrinkles, or acne.
- My skin problems are more common around the mouth, chin, and neck.
- My body often feels stiff and heavy, especially in the morning.
- My hair is quite thick and lustrous.
- My body easily retains fluid, and my face may appear puffy or jowly.
- I have a sturdy physique and a lifelong tendency toward weight problems.
- My mood is usually stable but tends toward melancholy and lethargy.
- TOTAL

Soak It In

Counter the drying, depleting effects of age (vata's mischief) with this luxurious, "slick and slippery" whole-body oil massage. Take it from a true queen of beauty, Sophia Loren, who at 71 beat out many younger contenders to be voted the world's most naturally beautiful person. Her secret? The virgin olive oil bath.

Instructions: Warm 1/8 cup oil (see tips for the best oil for your type) to just above body temperature. Sit comfortably on a toweled surface. Massage oil over your entire body, including your head and your feet. Use

the flat of your hands to massage the oil into the skin with motions that follow the curves of the body—up and down movements over the long bones, and circular motions over the joints and abdomen. Spend extra time on the head, feet, and hands for maximum benefit. Traditionally, this oil massage is performed before you bathe to soften and mobilize toxins, which are then cleared from the tissues during a hot shower, or better yet, a luxurious, warm bath.

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