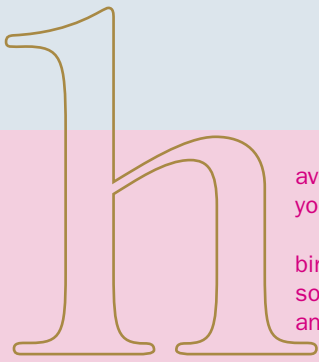


# How Old Is Your Skin?

When it comes to determining your skin's age, the date on your IC tells only half the story. The rest are factors that you can manage and change to get smoother, healthier, even younger-looking skin. BY SAKINAH MANAFF

PHOTO: PHOTOLIBRARY



ave you ever been mistaken for your son's grandmother or even an "auntie"? Do you look older than you really are? And how is it possible for your best friend to have a youthful glow at *her* age?

The thing about ageing is that it's not just about chronology (years gone by from your date of birth), but also about lifestyle habits. Your diet, sleep schedule, beauty regime and sun exposure are some of the factors that determine how young or old you look. So the better you take care of yourself and your skin, the better you look and feel.

"The rate of chronological ageing is determined by our genes, but photoageing is an accelerated ageing process that occurs as a result of sun exposure over a period of time," says Dr Jean Ho, Consultant Dermatologist at Jean Ho Skin and Laser Clinic. In other words, we may not be able to control chronological ageing, but we sure can do something about photoageing, and prevent ourselves from looking older than we are. Take our quiz to reveal your skin's true age, and follow a personalised plan to uncover a more youthful-looking you.

## Find Your Skin's Age

Total your score, then add or subtract that number from your real age. So if you're 31 and your score is -2, your skin's age is 29.

### 1. Are you or have you ever been a smoker?

- Yes (+2)
- No (0)
- I'm a social smoker (+1)

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Did you sunbathe in your teens or early twenties?

- Yes, I was a beach bunny (+2)
- No, I was hardly outdoorsy (-2)
- Yes, but I wore sunscreen (-1)

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. How often do you wear sunscreen?

- Daily (-1)
- Never or rarely (+2)
- Only when I'll be in the sun for more than a few hours (0)

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. How much sleep do you get each night?

- Less than 4 hours (+2)
- 5 to 8 hours (0)
- More than 8 hours (-1)

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Do you have fine lines and wrinkles around your mouth or eyes when you're not smiling?

- Yes (+2)
- No (0)

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. How often do you exercise?

- Every other day (-1)
- Hardly (+1)
- Once a week (0)

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

### 7. What do you use to even out skin tone?

- Tinted moisturiser (0)
- A little concealer (-1)
- Foundation all over my face (+1)
- The works: primer, foundation, concealer, powder (+2)

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

### 8. After cleansing, your face feels...

- Rough with some lines (+1)
- Supple and smooth with a bit of shine (-1)
- A bit dry but subtly soft (0)

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

### 9. Without any makeup, you look...

- Tired (+1)
- Good (-1)
- Not too bad (0)

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Your diet consists of...

- Vegetables, fruits and lean meat (-1)
- Healthy foods but you pig out occasionally (0)
- Mostly fast food and hawker takeaway (+2)

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

Final Score

Turn to the next page for your personal anti-ageing prescription.

## What Your Results Mean

**0-29** Lucky you! Your skin is plump and regenerates regularly. Perhaps you've always avoided the sun or past sun sins have not caught up with you yet. If you haven't been diligent about sun care, start now. Ward off future sun damage with a sunscreen that has minimum SPF 30. Gentle anti-agers will also keep skin healthy and radiant.

**30-39** The bad news is that your laugh lines are fine and shallow; you may have some pigmentation and your skin is not as plump and dewy as it once was. The good news is that you can coax your complexion into looking and behaving more like it did a decade ago with powerful over-the-counter products. Now is the best time to start an at-home anti-ageing regimen. Otherwise, you'll get a rude awakening in your 40s.

**40 and above** Your skin has definitely aged, but the bright side is that skin dullness, fine lines and brown spots are reversible. Glow-restoring peels and topical creams can reduce wrinkles and discolouration in several weeks. If you smoke, quit right away for faster results.

## Turn Back The Clock

Look younger by your next birthday with our personalised strategy. Match the results from the skin age quiz to your goals for a fresher face.

YOUR SKIN IS IN ITS...

# 20s

TO COMBAT FINE LINES & WRINKLES, LOOK OUT FOR...

### PEPTIDES

These are amino acids which signal lazy cells to increase collagen production (skin's support structure), which minimises lines and firms skin. Some peptides are believed to shrink eyebags by improving lymphatic circulation, while some relax the muscles that cause wrinkles.

**TRY:** DermaE Peptides Plus Wrinkle Reverse Serum, \$85

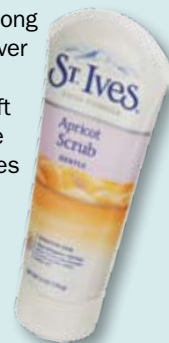


TO IMPROVE RADIANCE, LOOK OUT FOR...

### A FINE-GRAINED SCRUB

Regular face scrubs go a long way in assisting cell turnover (every 28 days) but look out for small granules; soft particles may not exfoliate well enough, and large ones can create tiny tears.

**TRY:** St. Ives Apricot Scrub for Sensitive Skin, \$16.90



# 30s

### HYALURONIC CREAMS

Hyaluronic acids help to prevent wrinkles by lubricating and cushioning the skin cells of the face, providing a filled out, smooth appearance to the skin. When applied directly to the skin in a serum or cream, it is a great moisturiser and water magnet, attracting airborne water vapours and retaining water delivered to the skin by circulation.

**TRY:** Dr. Wu Hydrating Mask With Hyaluronic Acid, \$39.90; L'Oréal Derma Genesis Cellular-Youth Creator Essence Concentrate, \$36.90



### POLYHYDROXY ACIDS

Polyhydroxy Acids (PHA), the next generation of Alpha Hydroxy Acids (AHA), lifts tired, dead skin, but because their molecules are larger than those found in AHAs, they do not penetrate as deeply and are less likely to cause side effects. Great for sensitive skin.

**TRY:** NeoStrata Bionic Face Serum, \$80.25



# 40s and above

### OVER-THE-COUNTER RETINOL (VITAMIN A)

Retinol is the only thing that's been proven to reduce fine lines in the long-term, but it's not 100 per cent perfect. It can increase sun sensitivity (that's why it's best applied at night or if wearing in the day, never forget to put on sunscreen) and cause irritation in some women. If you are planning a waxing, exfoliating or peel session, wait at least 24 hours before or after to prevent skin irritation.

**TRY:** ROC Retin-OX Intensive Anti-Wrinkle Day Moisturiser with SPF 15, \$76



### ENZYME & PROFESSIONAL PEELS

By now, dead skin cells are piling up all over your face. Eventually, they will make your complexion rough and drab. Whisk them away with a weekly at-home enzyme peel. Look for natural sloughers like pineapple and papain. For more effective results, opt for a medium chemical peel at a clinic.

**TRY:** Neutrogena Fine Fairness Peel Mask, \$36





## TO EVEN OUT SKIN TONE, LOOK OUT FOR...

### GENTLE LIGHTENERS

Brighten up with niacinamide (vitamin B), which blocks melanin formation, and works faster to repair cell DNA. Do also look out for licorice extract, which prevents pigmentation.

**TRY:** Olay White Radiance Intensive Brightening Serum, \$29.90; Nivea Visage Sparkling White Day Care, \$17.20



### DE-PIGMENTING AGENTS LIKE ARBUTIN AND KOJIC ACID

Freckles don't stand a chance against these ingredients; they inhibit future melanin creation and lighten existing dark patches. We especially love arbutin (popular in Asian whitening skincare) because it brightens, has anti-ageing properties and UVB/UV-C filter. For more potent results, ask your doctor about a light or superficial chemical peel.

**TRY:** Dr. Jart+ Multi Action Eye Balm Dark Circle Corrector, \$49



### LIPOHYDROXY ACID (LHA) CREAMS, PRESCRIPTION TRI-LUMA

LHA creams exfoliate deeper than salicylic acid and boosts cellular renewal to smoothen and brighten skin. For significant pigmentation, Dr Ho recommends Triluma, which contains hydroquinone in combination with other ingredients. You may also want to consider Intense Pulsed Light Treatment (IPL) for mild discolouration.

**TRY:** Vichy Bi-White Reveal Double Corrective Whitening Essence, \$72



## Three Anti-Ageing Essentials

**Sunscreen** The most crucial anti-ageing weapon in your arsenal. Look out for long-wearing protection against both UVA (responsible for ageing skin) and UVB (which burns skin). The most powerful sunscreens have chemical SPF complexes (such as Mexoryl and oxybenzone) and physical blockers like titanium dioxide and zinc oxide.

*When to use it:* Any time you plan to be outdoors. In terms of application, use sunscreen after your moisturiser but before foundation.



**Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Complete UV Waterlight Lotion with SPF 50+, \$20.90**

**Antioxidant treatment** These kick the butts of free radicals (caused by sun, pollution and stress). Research shows that some newer types of antioxidants are more potent than old favourites like vitamins E and C. Seek wrinkle-fighting coffeeberry extract and Alpha Lipoic Acid, which is fat- and water-soluble, meaning it can work inside the cell and in the cell membrane to achieve some serious anti-ageing effects.

*When to use it:* Can be found in a range of skincare products so use as appropriate.



**La Clarée Oliv' Super Antioxidant Treatment with Olive Leaf Extract, \$54.90**

**Alpha Hydroxy Acid (AHA) creams** AHAs are exfoliants and are often called "fruit acids" because they are derived from fruit-based plants. Glycolic and lactic acids are also some common AHAs. According to Dr Jonathan Y. Lee, Consultant Surgeon of Aesthetic Medicine and Surgery at East Shore Hospital and Mount Elizabeth Hospital, AHAs stimulate cell regeneration by lightly removing the surface layer of skin cells. By doing this, healthier skin cells are exposed, improving skin texture and colour, and allowing moisturisers to be absorbed. The result? Supple skin.

*When to use it:* These come in various products which include serums and moisturisers so use as appropriate. As AHA products may increase sun sensitivity, use a sunscreen, which should be applied no less than 15 minutes after the AHA formula is applied to prevent neutralising the acids. AHA products should also not be combined with other exfoliative products such as facial scrubs or buff pads. \*



**DermaE DMAE-Alpha Lipoic C-Ester Crème Moisturizer, \$45**

**Uriage Isolift Oil-free Multi-action Anti-wrinkle Fluid, \$71.90**