

Men Married to Smart Women Live Longer

Posted by: [Dr. Mercola](#)

December 08 2009 | 37,661 views



A study has determined that for men, long life and good health have nothing to do with the man's education and everything to do with his wife's. Men married to smart women live longer.

The effect may relate to skill at processing advice about healthy lifestyles, and passing it on -- educated married women are more likely to share their good lifestyle habits.

These habits could include healthy food choice, exercise routines, and risk-avoidance.

Sources:

» [Times Online October 18, 2009](#)

» [Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health December 2009; 63\(12\):992-8](#)

After analyzing data on more than 1.5 million men and women, researchers from the Swedish Institute for Social Research found that men live significantly longer when they're married to, or living with, a woman who graduated from college.

The women's education level had an even greater impact on the men's lifespan than did their own!

Why would this be?

It is true that women traditionally have more responsibility for the family's home lifestyle, such as food choices, exercise habits and other daily activities. And this research suggests women may, in general, tend to make healthier lifestyle choices for their families than men would make on their own.

If we could think outside the box for just a moment we may find a bigger component to these findings. To be married to a woman with a high intellect can indeed stimulate a man and make him live longer, though perhaps it's through daily conversations and interactions and not just through his stomach. While the importance of diet and exercise cannot be emphasized enough, there is another crucial factor to a healthy lifestyle, and that is one's emotional state.

Previous studies have shown similar results that [married men, in general, tend to be healthier](#), while widowed or divorced men eat fewer vegetables, drink more alcohol and are less likely to quit smoking than their married peers.

The message here isn't for men to run out and find a wife who will make the healthiest lifestyle choices for them. Nor is the message to run out and find anyone at all. But since the majority of men prefer to have a mate, it might pay off if they seek someone with whom they can have a healthy, strong, intellectual bond that keeps them alive for years to come!

Just How Important is Your Lifestyle?

There's a reason why [Jack LaLanne looks better at age 93](#) than many people half his age. He's been a champion for a healthy lifestyle for decades now.

This is so important that if there were ONE step I could advise you to take to extend your lifespan, improve your energy, maintain an ideal weight, lower your risk of virtually every chronic disease, and increase your feeling of mental well-being, leading a healthy lifestyle would be it.

Of course, a healthy lifestyle is made up of many different parts. Think of it like building a house. If you have a solid foundation, four walls and a roof, you'll be able to survive. Add in plumbing, electricity and insulation and you'll not only survive but feel comfortable too.

Then add in the appliances, décor, furniture and touches that make it your own, and now you have a home that will nurture you in return for the extra work you put in. As with your body, the more you put in the more you will receive in the form of solid health and well-being.

You can get by with just the basics -- food, water, warmth -- but it's when all the pieces of a healthy lifestyle come together that you'll really reap the rewards.

And the rewards are well worth it. There are actually too many to list, but to give you an idea, a healthy lifestyle can:

- Lower your risk [Alzheimer's disease](#) and [Parkinson's disease](#)
- Virtually eliminate your risk of [cancer](#)
- Cut your [diabetes](#) risk in half
- Protect you from [heart disease](#) and high blood pressure
- Help [balance women's hormones](#)
- Help you achieve your [ideal weight](#)

While you may not feel the effects of an unhealthy lifestyle immediately, in time health problems like diabetes, heart disease and others begin to

surface. In fact, if you eat poorly for a long time, your [DNA may become permanently altered](#), and the effects could be passed on to your children and grandchildren.

What this all points to is even more support for the emerging field of **epigenetics**, which is the study of how environmental factors like diet, psychological & emotional state, stress and maternal nutrition can change gene function without altering the DNA sequence in any way.

In other words, you are born with a set of genes, but the expression of those genes is not set in stone. Your genes can be either activated or silenced by various factors including your diet and [even your mind](#). It is not your genes that dictate your future health, but rather the expression of those genes that matter.

By leading a healthy lifestyle, you are helping your genes to [express themselves in a positive, disease-fighting way](#).

For those of you who haven't been leading a pristine lifestyle so far, there's good news too. If you [switch to a healthy lifestyle now](#), it can have a positive impact on your health down the road.

10 Steps to a Healthier Lifestyle

As I said earlier, everyone has the ability to make positive changes to their lifestyle. You don't have to try to do it all at once; you can take it a step at a time following the detailed guide in my [nutrition plan](#).

I would STRONGLY encourage you to review this guide very carefully when you have a moment as it is very comprehensive, and broken down into beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels, depending on the level you're starting from.

This is completely FREE, and my gift to you.

You can integrate these recommendations with the steps below and also use the 300,000 pages of free information on the website to get more specific details, or answer any specific question you have.

Remember that the search engine box at the top of every page on this site is a very powerful tool that will allow you to quickly find all the articles I have written over the last 12 years, as they are all here.

Finally, following these 10 guidelines -- which are based on basic tenets of health -- will help you optimize your health, and by doing so, minimize your risk of developing disease.

1. Address your [emotional traumas](#) and [manage your stress](#)
2. Get optimal exposure to sunlight to [optimize your vitamin D levels](#)
3. Drink plenty of [clean water](#)
4. Limit your [exposure to toxins](#)
5. Consume [healthy fat](#)
6. Eat a healthy diet that's right for your [nutritional type](#) (paying very careful attention to keeping your insulin levels down)
7. Eat plenty of [raw food](#)
8. Optimize your [insulin](#) and [leptin](#) levels
9. [Exercise](#)
10. Get plenty of [good sleep](#)

Remember, leading a common sense, healthy lifestyle is your best bet to produce a healthy body and mind, and increase your longevity.

Your Life, Not Your Genes, is What Adds Years to Your Face

Posted by: [Dr. Mercola](#)

February 19 2009 | 37,701 views

Your mother's wrinkles may not be the best predictor of how you'll age. A study involving identical twins suggests that despite genetic make-up, certain environmental factors can add years to a person's perceived age. Factors such as divorce or the use of antidepressants are the real culprits that cause facial aging.



Researchers obtained comprehensive questionnaires and digital images from nearly 200 pairs of identical twins. The images were reviewed by an independent panel, which recorded the perceived age difference between the siblings.

Study subjects who had been divorced appeared nearly two years older than their siblings who were married, single or even widowed. Antidepressant use was associated with a significantly older appearance, and researchers also found that major weight gain or loss played a major factor, too.

In sets of twins who were less than 40 years old, the heavier twin was perceived as being older, while in those groups over 40 years old, the heavier twin appeared younger.

The presence of stress could be one of the common denominators that caused facial aging. The researchers also suspected that continued relaxation of the facial muscles due to antidepressant use could account for sagging.

Sources:

» [Eurekalert February 3, 2009](#)

» Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Journal

Interestingly, this article is published in the official medical journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), and the study's author, Bahaman Guyuron, MD, is also one of their member surgeons, so the study may have some ulterior motives.

As Dr. Guyuron said, "Our findings put science behind the idea that volume replacement rejuvenates the face."

In other words, plastic surgeons can use the finding that fuller faces appeared younger after age 40 as "proof" that injectable filler plastic surgery procedures can make you look younger. Already, more than 1.5 million such procedures were performed in 2007, according to ASPS statistics.

But to me, the REALLY interesting part of this study has nothing to do with going out and having your face injected with fat in an attempt to look a few years younger. Instead, what struck me was the finding that your life experiences shape the look of your face as you age, far more than your genes do.

People who had been through the stress of a divorce looked nearly two years older than their married, single or even widowed twin. Those who used antidepressants also appeared significantly older. The researchers attributed this to the drugs causing continued relaxation of the facial muscles, which led to sagging, but it could also be that those taking antidepressants were under some type of psychological stress.

For those of you who are regular readers, you'll know that this lends

further credence to the emerging and [incredibly interesting field of epigenetics](#), which centers around the notion that environmental factors such as stress and your diet influence the expression of your genes.

And it is the expression of your genes -- NOT the genes themselves -- that dictates whether you develop certain diseases or age prematurely.

How Stress Shapes Your Genes

Parents often joke about how their grey hairs all magically appeared after their kids were born. Likewise, if you've ever watched someone go through a divorce or other emotionally trying time, they can seem to age 10 years in a matter of months.

Even if you've faced just a few stressful days in a row, you'll often be able to see it written all over your face.

These are prime examples of the toll stress can take on you physically.

As proven through the massive genetic study, the Genome Project, each one of your genes can create up to 30,000 proteins, any and all of which can create a different outcome. So the fact that you may have a genetic "predisposition" for facial wrinkles, for example, does not mean that you are doomed to develop a face full of wrinkles during middle-age.

There is something that either activates or suppresses your genes, and research by Bruce Lipton, PhD., a forerunner in the field of epigenetics and The New Biology, has shown it is often related to your mind.

In other words, whether you are mentally stressed or able to [maintain a more positive outlook](#) can influence the expression of your genes, and thus directly impact how you age.

Consider a study done back in 2001, which assessed how quickly the skin of medical students could recover from having a piece of sticky tape

applied to it. What they found was skin recovery seemed to be directly linked to stress levels -- with high stress during exams associated with a decreased ability of the aggravated skin to return to normal function.

They concluded that [stress lessens your skin's ability to function properly](#), heal wounds and fight disease, and could put you at an increased risk of skin diseases like psoriasis or dermatitis.

Meanwhile, scientific data has revealed that extended exposure to psychological stress could [speed up the aging process of your cells](#) and cause them to die at a faster rate than normal.

Taken as a whole, what this means is your body's ability to resist and adapt appropriately to both internal and external stresses is essential for good health, and the hallmark of aging is your body's inability to withstand stress, which then starts to degrade it.

The solution, therefore, to preventing premature aging and having a youthful appearance on the outside is to effectively deal with your stress, and teach your body how to best tolerate it. This is great news, as it means that you have the ability to directly influence the way you age, simply based on your mental outlook.

Top Tips for Effectively Dealing With Stress

The key is not getting rid of stress completely, as we all face stressful situations from time to time (even exercise is a form of stress), but rather adjusting your body's ability to tolerate the stress. Here are my top tips for doing so:

- **Release negative emotions with the [Emotional Freedom Technique \(EFT\)](#).** EFT, considered by many to be the ultimate stress-management tool, targets a person's disrupted energy meridian system as the real driver behind heightened stress levels. This simple do-it-yourself acupressure technique balances your energy and eliminates your body

and mind's stress response.

- [Exercise](#). Physical activity is an excellent way to relieve tension and ward off the physical consequences of stress. Studies have shown that during exercise, tranquilizing chemicals, endorphins, are released in your brain, making exercise a natural way to bring your body pleasurable relaxation and rejuvenation.
- **Get plenty of sleep.** Regularly catching only a few hours of sleep can hinder metabolism and hormone production in a way that is similar to the effects of aging and the early stages of diabetes. Plus, your body needs high-quality sleep to help it deal with stressful situations.
- **Optimize your diet.** Eating the [right foods for your nutritional type](#) can have a direct impact on your mood. It's also important to get plenty of omega-3 fat, from fish oil or krill oil, as it can help to [reduce psychological distress and depressive symptoms](#).

Omega-3 fats also help to normalize skin lipids and prevent dehydration in your cells. This keeps skin cells strong and full of moisture, which can help to decrease the appearance of fine lines.

What Else Can You do to Look Younger?

Focusing on the bright side of life is only one key way to [keep a fresh, youthful appearance](#).

One of the most important strategies you can possibly do is to optimize your vitamin D levels by appropriate sun or safe tanning bed exposure. If this is not an option then taking an oral vitamin D supplement is the next best option. But if you take this route you must [be sure and have your blood levels tested](#) as there are simply too many factors to predict what the correct dose is unless you measure it.

Vitamin D controls about 2,000-3,000 of your genes and can radically improve every system in your body -- including your appearance. If you use the preferred UVB exposure to optimize your vitamin D levels you need to know that it is important not to overdo it. You only need enough exposure to turn your skin the slightest pink.

Additional exposure will not increase your vitamin D level but it will increase premature aging of your skin. So be careful and prudent out there.

As I said earlier, it is also helpful to pay attention to what you're eating, and this one is so important it bears repeating. By consuming large amounts of whole, unprocessed, healthy raw foods that are loaded with antioxidants, you can help to slow down the speed at which signs of your real age show up.

In fact, one of the reasons I started [vegetable juicing](#) is that I would see 75-year-old women in my practice who looked like they were 40 years old with virtually no facial wrinkles. Most of them were doing large amounts of juicing and led healthy lifestyles.

Juicing is actually a great way to get more raw veggies into your diet, as long as you fine-tune your vegetable selections based on your nutritional type, and if at all possible, aim to buy [organic, locally-grown vegetables](#) that are in season.

It's also important to cut back on sugar. Diets high in sugar increase free radicals and oxidative stress, and leads to signs of premature aging.

And the sooner you start to make these positive changes -- to your stress levels, mental outlook and your diet -- the better. Whether you're young or old, this healthy lifestyle will help keep the signs of aging away, or at least slow them down considerably.

Marriage Beginning Important For Long Term Success

Posted by: [Dr. Mercola](#)

July 28 2001 | 3,459 views

Researchers suggest that the long-term health of a marriage is rooted in a couple's level of love and commitment as they say their "I do's."

A successful marriage is one that has maintained a high level of affection right from the start, where both partners behave as lovers and stay that way.

The investigators found that couples who were happily together 13 years into their marriage had been deeply in love and in tune with each other from the very beginning.

In contrast, those who were unhappily married reported having a more negative and/or ambivalent relationship toward each other when interviewed as newlyweds.

The investigators also point out that, whether good or bad, the general tone of relationships did not change over time -- with the exception that those who ultimately had a happy marriage began to see their partner as having a less contrary nature than they did when first were first married, whereas spouses in the other categories did not change their views of their partner's contrariness.

Couples who experienced friction at the very outset of a marriage headed for the exits at a much quicker pace. The authors theorize that these couples entered into marriage hoping that the simple act of "tying the knot" would turn discord into bliss -- only to leave the relationship when this proved futile.

The researchers conclude that partners who maintain long, happy marriages carry between them a deep love, affection and attachment --

feelings that first began during courtship.

Most people think that it's unresolved differences that undermine marriages, but it's not that at all. It's the loss of the bliss and the loss of the romance that's important, rather than increasing problems or increasing conflicts.

Couples headed for the rockiest road are those who had either an extremely long or extremely short courtship prior to marriage.

Either they don't know each other very well -- they fell in love too quickly and they have an unrealistic belief that the romance will continue in the same way over time. Or it's a long road to marriage, not because they are learning so much about each other, but because they have real problems in the relationship that they're trying to put aside in order to marry. When they discover that marriage doesn't have any magical properties they often quickly exit the relationship.

First 2 Years of Marriage Can Tell If You Are Headed For Divorce

Posted by: [Dr. Mercola](#)

March 07 2001 | 6,874 views

Newlyweds who keep the romance alive for at least the first two years of marriage may be more likely to stay together for the long run.

Those couples headed for a quick divorce -- in less than two years -- tended to become **disillusioned** and **negative** toward one another **within two months** of being wed.

Those who go the middle distance -- two to seven years -- may be very romantic and loving at first, almost "giddily" in love. But if feelings wane and partners become disillusioned within the first year, it could be a sign of trouble.

Those couples most likely to be married for the long-term are those who maintain their positive feelings for their spouse for at least the first two years.

Researchers followed 156 couples married for the first time in 1981. After 13 years:

- 68 of the couples were happily married
- 32 were unhappily married
- 56 had divorced

The researchers divided the divorced couples into two groups: those who had divorced between two and seven years after marriage, and those whose marriages lasted at least seven years. They chose this point because the **average length of marriage for couples who divorce in the United States is seven years.**

The researchers found that the likelihood of divorce depended significantly on how much the marriage changed away from the romantic ideal over its first two years.

Couples who divorced quickly had a weak, frayed alliance as newlyweds, whereas those who divorced after two or more years showed evidence of becoming disillusioned with each other and their relationship over time.

Among couples who stayed married, the researchers found, differences between the happily married and unhappily married groups were apparent right after they tied the knot.

Compared with the unhappily married couples, those with **happy marriages** were **more deeply in love as newlyweds** and saw each other as possessing a more responsive personality; they also reported less ambivalence about their relationship and expressed negativity toward one another less often.

The couples who wound up **divorcing after seven years** were actually the **most affectionate as newlyweds**, even more so than those with happy

marriages, but their affection toward one another dropped dramatically during the first year of marriage.

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 2001;80:237-252