

# Health + FITNESS

## Healthy at Every Age

Be your best at  
20, 30, 40 and 50

BY MARGENA A. CHRISTIAN

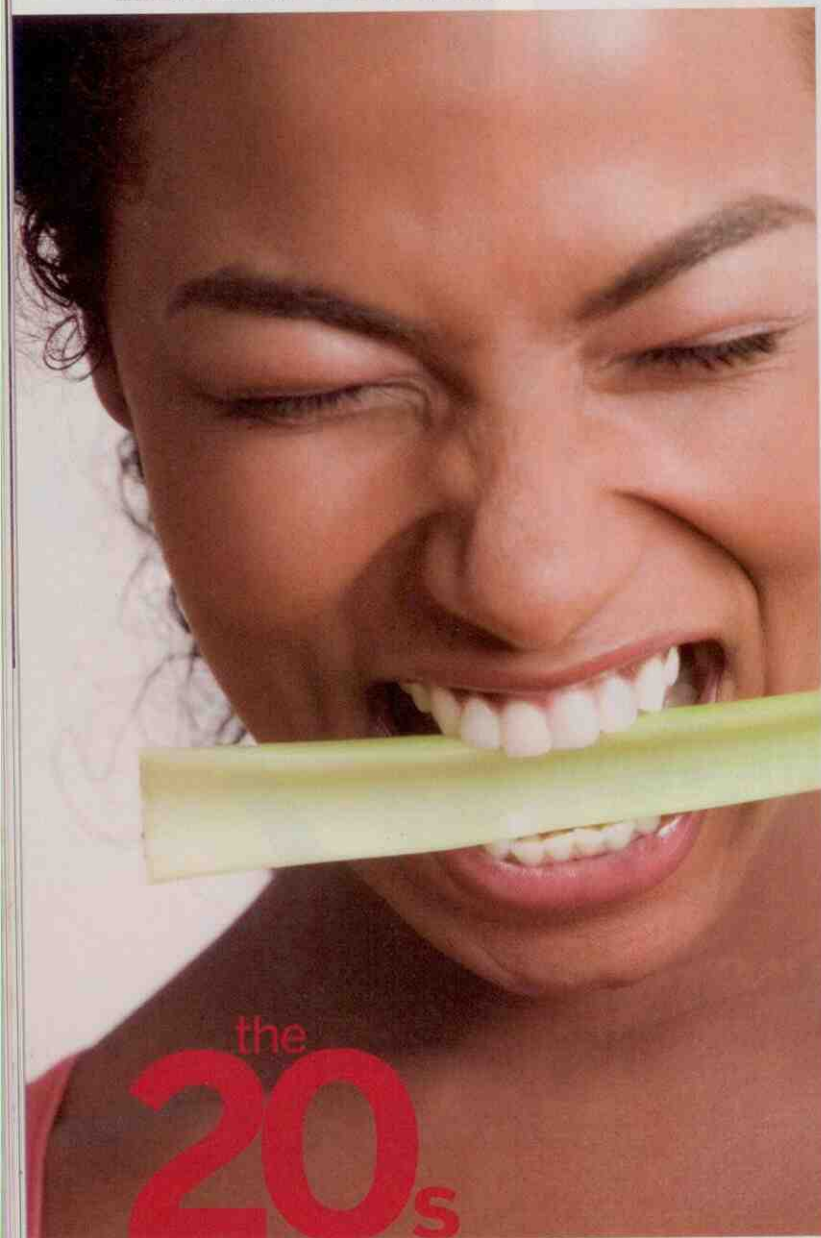
**THE KEY TO AGING GRACEFULLY IS TAKING THE LONG VIEW.** Just as we lay out a financial strategy that will pay off with future dividends, a plan for long-term wellness will reward you with more vitality, strength and higher energy levels for years to come. For guidance on what critical areas women should focus on during each decade, we consulted a team of experts on the issues that matter most.

Here's our panel and what they had to say:

- **Donna Richardson Joyner**, fitness expert and creator of the *Body Gospel* workout series, and a member of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition (Dallas)
- **Rovenia "Dr. Ro" Brock, Ph.D.**, nutrition coach on *The Dr. Oz Show* and author of *Dr. Ro's Ten Secrets to Livin' Healthy* (Washington, D.C.)
- **Victoria Barbosa, M.D.**, owner of Millennium Park Dermatology and co-author of *Reader's Digest Guide to Skin Care* (Chicago)
- **LaSheta P. David, O.D.**, president, National Optometric Association (Concord, N.C.)
- **Nicole Metcalfe, M.D.**, Physicians for Women, P.L.L.C. (Southfield, Mich.)







## Nutrition

### •Women in their 20s are chronic meal skippers.

Protein helps you stay full and aids in building muscle, which burns calories. Add chickpeas, chicken breast strips, lean roast beef or fish to salads. Have fat-free yogurt with apple wedges or strawberries for snacks and small meals.

### •Get your potassium!

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, most women in their 20s get less than half the recommended amount of potassium. Muscles (including the heart) need this mineral to

function properly. For African-American women, potassium is especially important for maintaining normal blood pressure. Two cups of fruit per day will do the trick. Munch on bananas, oranges, strawberries, apricots.

### •Omega-3 fatty acids are essential for women in their 20s

because they are more susceptible to depression. To elevate serotonin levels (the brain chemical that makes you feel good), add salmon and tuna to your diet for the best sources of Omega-3s. Walnuts, ground flaxseed (added to morning oatmeal or salads) and canola oil are great sources, too.



## Dermatology

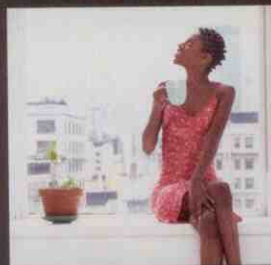
•Developing good skin care habits now will pay dividends well into the future.

•Wash your face twice a day. That may sound like a lot, especially if your skin type is anything other than oily, but using a mild cleanser followed by a moisturizing cream will leave your skin feeling clean without feeling too tight and dry.

•Don't skip the nighttime cleansing. Wash off all your makeup (and with it, any deposits that your fingers or the environment have inevitably left) each day.

•Get into the habit of wearing sunscreen. African-Americans can develop skin cancer, and a good sunscreen will help to reduce that risk and to minimize the uneven pigmentation that the sun can cause. Look for "broad-spectrum" coverage, which means that the sunscreen protects against UVA and UVB rays.

•In our 20s, many of us are dealing with acne and the dark spots that are left behind. Over-the-counter products containing salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide are a good place to start. If they don't do the trick within 2 months, it's time to see a dermatologist.



## Optometry

•Aside from being nearsighted, farsighted or having an astigmatism, most eye problems now are related to visual stress and injury.

•Most women in this age group are either in college or starting a career, both of which mean lots of reading and staring at computer screens. Be sure to adjust the computer monitor, have proper lighting, take frequent breaks and maintain proper posture.

•Wear safety and/or sport goggles as needed.

## Gynecology

•Get yearly STD testing, which includes HIV and HSV, and safe sex counseling.

•Repeat testing with each new partner, and always use condoms.

•Three years after first intercourse but no later than age 21, get a Pap smear. Get more frequent testing if HIV positive or immunocompromised.

•Screenings for abnormal menstrual cycles should take place yearly.

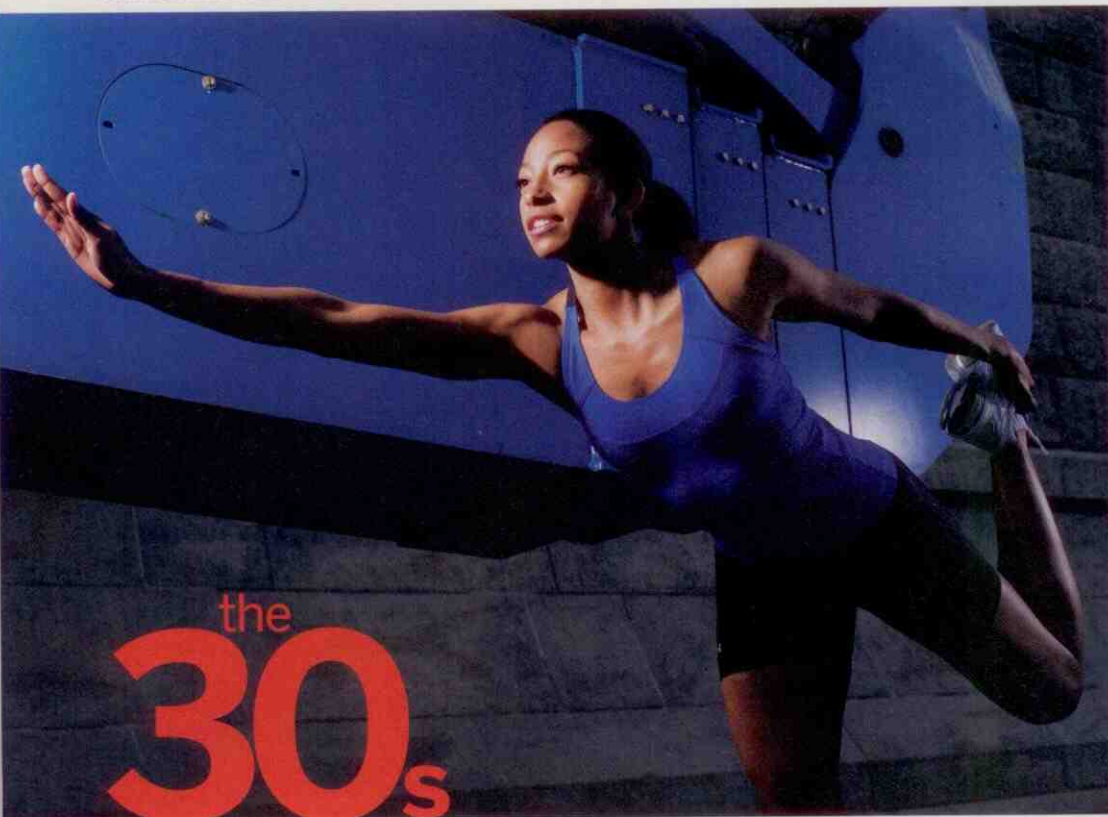
## Fitness

•Start early with healthy habits that lay the foundation for lifelong health. Establish a wellness program that becomes a part of your daily routine.

•Incorporate physical activity 3 to 5 days a week, 30 to 60 minutes each session. Exercise and healthy eating lead to increased energy levels.

•Also use exercise and meditation as relaxation techniques.

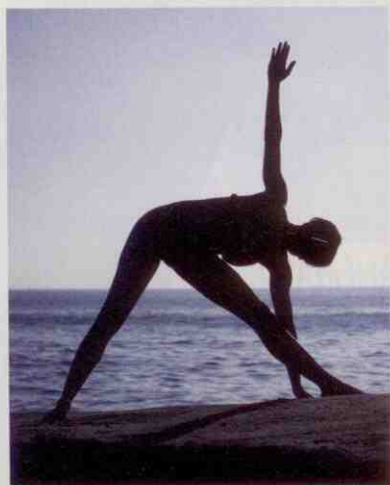




# the 30<sub>s</sub>

## Fitness

- **Strength training is important to keep your metabolism running** at optimal levels. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn, even at rest.
- **Incorporate a total body strength-training program.** When you don't have a lot of time, you can achieve maximum benefits by doing an interval workout, which alternates short bursts of high intensity with short recovery periods.
- **Also recommended is core training; try a Pilates workout.**



## Nutrition

- **During the childbearing years, women lose a lot of iron through menses.** Not getting enough can leave you feeling mentally and emotionally drained. Get your daily dose (18 mg) from lean beef, poultry and fish. Other good bets are fortified cereals, soybeans (snack on edamame) and pumpkin seeds.
- **Folate (a B vitamin) is needed to prevent birth defects** and to help your body make new cells. Good sources: chickpeas, asparagus, spinach, broccoli, avocados, oranges and fortified whole grains.
- **Phytochemicals (phytonutrients) are chemical compounds that contain antioxidants,** which slow the aging process, ward off heart disease and prevent changes in your cells' DNA that might promote cancer. Colorful fruits, vegetables, beans and nuts are great sources.

## Optometry

- **In addition to making the necessary changes in your work environment,** your doctor may prescribe a pair of computer/reading glasses.

## Gynecology

- **Get a Pap smear annually if sexually active,** every three years if in a monogamous relationship.
- **The baseline for mammograms is age 35.** If family history is positive, start screening 10 years before youngest person was diagnosed. Consider breast MRI as an addition.
- **Yearly flu vaccines and screenings** for abnormal menstrual cycles should be ongoing.

## Dermatology

- **Dark circles tend to be common problems now.** To combat the discoloration, use a hydrating eye cream to help "plump up" the skin and look for ingredients such as vitamin C, vitamin K or licorice extract. If you tend to have sinus congestion, your dark circles may be worse. Over-the-counter retinols or prescription-strength retinoids are both derivatives of vitamin A, and are an excellent way to start your anti-aging routine.
- **In the morning, add an antioxidant product to help fight free radicals and repair collagen.** Look for products containing ingredients such as vitamin C, green tea, red tea or coenzyme q10. These can be found in moisturizers or in serums that can be used under your moisturizer.
- **Don't be surprised if you are still dealing with acne breakouts in your 30s.** Over-the-counter fading products containing hydroquinone or vitamin C help manage dark spots.





the  
**40s**

## Dermatology

•In addition to using the retinols or retinoids that we started in our 30s, which will help fine lines, add products containing alpha hydroxy acids such as glycolic acid to further improve the texture of the skin. They have the added benefit of helping to even out pigmentation and they help minimize the appearance of our pores, which may appear enlarged to us after years of having oily skin and perhaps, acne.

•Add moisturizers or serums containing peptides, which help improve the skin's texture, collagen production and elasticity. It sounds like a lot: sunscreen, moisturizers, antioxidants, peptides, glycolic acids and retinoids, but you can layer the products in the form of serums or look for multi-purpose products that contain several of these ingredients. For instance, you can find a moisturizer with sun protection and glycolic acid for morning use. Also, you might alternate products and use each every other day.

## Fitness

- Women in their 40s burn 100 fewer calories a day.
- There is also a decrease in muscle mass, and unwanted pounds may show up around our abs, thighs, hips and butt.
- A strength workout for the entire body is recommended 2 to 3 times a week, along with a cardiovascular workout of at least 40 minutes 4 to 6 days a week.

## Optometry

- You'll notice decreased ability to focus on reading and computer tasks. This is the most common change noticed in this age range. Bifocals or multifocals will likely be prescribed.
- If there is a family history of glaucoma and/or age-related macular degeneration, see your eye doctor more frequently.

## Gynecology

- Repeat STD testing with each new partner every 3 years if in a monogamous relationship.
- The risk for STD and HIV transmission is still high. Condom use is mandatory for non-committed relationships.
- Have mammograms (the frequency of which should be prescribed by your doctor) and screening for abnormal menstrual cycles.

## Nutrition

- Because women start to lose bone and muscle mass from age 35—menopause revs up the process—it's important to prevent injury or worse, the brittle bones of osteoporosis.
- Key nutrients include calcium, which is important in maintaining healthy bones. You'll need 1,000 mg/day from low-fat or fat-free dairy products. If you're lactose intolerant, try Lactaid milk, calcium-fortified orange juice or soy milk and supplements. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium and protects against breast and colon cancers. A daily supplement of 600-1,000 IU (international units) is recommended.
- Take vitamin D3, a cancer-fighting hormone that women tend to become deficient in by age 40. Most doctors will prescribe a one-time dose of 50,000 units to be taken over a week to get you back on track. Thereafter, 2,000 units/day of a good supplement is recommended.





## Nutrition

- **Women start to lose bone and muscle mass from age 35.** Focus on battling the bulge and maintaining your strength.
- **Continue to take calcium, vitamin D and vitamin D3.**

## Gynecology

- **Repeat STD testing with each new partner, every 3 years** if in a monogamous relationship.
- **Have yearly mammograms for early detection of any abnormalities.**

## Fitness

- **Now you burn 200 fewer calories a day,** so make sure you do 40 to 60 minutes of moderate activity at least 4 days a week.
- **Build muscle and decrease your risk of osteoporosis,** incorporate a strength training program 2 to 3 times a week.
- **Cardio workouts will help you,** especially if you are experiencing menopause.



# the 50s

## Optometry

- **At this age, the naturally clear lens inside the eye begins to discolor,** resulting in the need for more light, problems with glare and changes in color perception.
- **In addition, women experiencing menopause may notice a reduction in tear production.** Your optometrist may recommend an artificial-tear solution.

## Dermatology

- **This is when the years of good skin care habits really start to pay off.** Some of us coast into our 50s with skin that looks wonderful thanks to a combination of years of care, great genes and good luck.
- **Most of us experience menopause now,** and you may

notice that your skin is drier.

- **Increase the hydrating power of your moisturizer, if necessary.** Look for creams, instead of lotions, for maximum hydration.
- **Also, this is the time when many of us start to develop deeper lines,** particularly on the forehead, around the eyes and from the nose to the mouth.

We also start to notice some sagging of the skin. Use skin-firming creams to help improve your skin's appearance. These products tend to be very hydrating and combine multiple anti-aging products such as antioxidants and peptides, sometimes in higher concentrations.

- **Our complexions can appear dull,** so exfoliate weekly.

