

# REDBOOK

## ANTIAGING



Relax, laugh, and "om" your way to fewer lines.

## Your \$0 plan to erase wrinkles

When it comes to fighting lines and sagging, there's hope *outside* the jar too. These strategies will kick-start a youthful glow—no money down.

**I**t's been drummed into us that using the right products and staying out of the sun are the keys to looking young. But here's another tactic that has just as much impact: slowing down and living a saner life. Research shows that when we're highly stressed, neuropeptides (chemicals in the skin's nerve endings) are released into our skin and create inflammation, which, in turn, speeds up the skin's aging process. Now, the good news: Experts say there are easy, free—and super-relaxing—ways to combat these "stress molecules." Try them and prepare to look radiant. A possible side effect: You'll *feel* like a million bucks, too.

**Catch your breath.** When we're rushed, our bodies launch into stress-reaction mode: our hearts race, our blood pressure may spike. "Taking deep-breathing breaks stops our nerve endings from firing off damaging neuropeptides," says Susan Blum, M.D., an assistant clinical professor of preventative medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. To slow down, inhale deeply so that air expands your abdomen, then exhale slowly to flatten it. Repeat a few times to calm yourself.

**Wash your face right when you get home.** Doctors say that women often skip their nightly anti-aging skin-care regimen when they're stressed or tired, so don't wait until you're zonked. "My patients tell me this really helps them keep up with their routines," says Jessica Wu, M.D., an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the University of Southern California and author of *Feed Your Face*.

**Have more sex!** "It releases beta endorphins, which help protect skin's collagen, and oxytocin, which lowers the stress chemical cortisol," says Amy Wechsler, M.D., a New York City dermatologist and an adjunct assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College. Okay, we know, twist his arm...

**Try an ultra-low-impact workout.** Exercises like yoga can calm your nerves, but if you're not rolling out the mat for 90 minutes, don't worry, says Blum: "It's less about how long you exercise for and more about doing it regularly, which trains your body to relax quickly." Just 10 minutes of yoga stretches five times a week can lower cortisol levels (see page 66 for some quickie moves). Prefer a no-impact workout? Try meditation. Sit for 10 minutes, eyes closed, taking deep breaths and relaxing every muscle in your body. To shush your internal to-do list, "repeat a calming phrase, like 'I am at peace,'" Blum says.

**Massage away the lines.** A five-minute facial rubdown makes skin instantly firmer—if you hit the right spots. "You have to massage the lymph nodes in order to drain the water that causes puffiness," says facialist Joanna Vargas of Joanna Vargas Salon in New York City, whose clients include Rachel Weisz and Sofia Coppola. On each hand, hold your index and middle fingers together. Starting right below each ear, rub in circular motions down each side of your neck to your collarbone; repeat five times. Next, look up and do the same motions starting under your chin, massaging right under your jawbone out to your ears, then down the sides of your neck; repeat five times. If your under-eye area is swollen, gently massage the skin from the inner corners to the outer corners, then from your temples down the sides of your face. Final step: Check out your glow in the mirror. —GRACE GOLD