



FACIAL EXERCISES MAKE YOU LOOK YOUNGER NO KNIFE REQUIRED

While New Year's resolutions often center on exercising more often to strengthen your arms or tone your tummy, there's another part of the body you may also want to work out — namely, your face. A new study published in the journal *JAMA Dermatology* shows that regularly doing facial exercises — yes, working out your face — can actually make you look younger. In the study, researchers found that women ages 40 to 65 who did a 30-minute daily facial exercise program for eight weeks, followed by doing the same exercise program 3-4 times a week for 12

weeks, had younger looking skin, including fuller, firmer cheeks. As your face ages, you lose the elasticity and fat that helps keep your skin firm. Exercises can strengthen the facial muscles, and those firmer muscles can help the shape of the face appear fuller and more youthful. "Growing the underlying muscle fills and stretches out the saggy facial skin, which with age becomes less elastic and with less fat underneath to plump it up," lead study author Murad Alam, MD, vice chair and professor of dermatology at Northwestern University

Feinberg School of Medicine and a Northwestern Medicine dermatologist, explains to Yahoo Lifestyle. "The growing facial muscle partly counteracts the age-related effects of the sagging skin and thinned-out fat." Though more research is needed, dermatologist Kristina Goldenberg of Goldenberg Dermatology in New York City agrees facial exercises can help — which is great news if you're freaked out by needles or scalpels and are willing to put in the time. "If done consistently, facial exercises may increase muscle tone, giving a more

plump and youthful look," she tells Yahoo Lifestyle. "Facial exercises may help correct some volume loss that occurs with age." Even the researchers were surprised by how effective the facial exercises were. "I was surprised that there was an overall result, and that it was statistically significant," Alam says. "I expected a few people to benefit and others not to, and for the results to be much more uncertain. In fact, we did find significant benefits, and our patients were quite enthusiastic across the board. Finally, I was surprised that the effects appeared to

continue to improve over time — they were better at 20 weeks than at 8." So does this mean you can kiss fillers and Botox goodbye? Not necessarily. "We don't want to throw away neuromodulators and filler and lasers," says Alam. "The contour improvement from facial exercise is likely modest but real, and may augment the highly effective, minimally invasive therapies that are currently used for wrinkle and volume loss replacement. But facial exercises will not replace these more effective therapies." Goldenberg also notes there

can be a downside to some facial exercises. "Certain facial movements, if done repeatedly, can actually intensify the appearance of wrinkles," she says. "For instance, repeated movement of the muscles on the forehead can worsen wrinkles and make the '11' lines between the eyes more visible. Facial exercises that involve excessive smiling can intensify the lines around the eyes, known as crow's feet and laugh lines. Lastly, exercises that involve puckering of the lips may worsen lines around the mouth known as smoker's lines."

SCIENCE SAYS THIS COMMON FOOD CAN FIGHT AGING AND THE ODDS ARE YOU ALREADY LOVE IT

For eons, humans have wondered how to live longer. Of course there are some things that can help—diet and exercise, preventive medical care. But now if you love good food, there's a little more good news for you.

Researchers at Pennsylvania State University say they've found that a simple food that most of us eat—ordinary mushrooms—contain high levels of two antioxidants that are theorized to fight medical conditions associated with aging, like cancer, coronary heart disease and Alzheimer's disease.

Their results were published last month in the scientific

journal, *Food Chemistry*. It's an intriguing scientific discovery that, if it's not quite the fountain of youth, could nevertheless yield further dividends and help us to combat the effects of aging. So with a skeptical but not cynical eye, let's examine what the researchers found, and what it might mean for our diets and longevity.

The free radical theory of aging
The researchers at Penn State were looking at the prevalence of two antioxidants, called ergothioneine and glutathione, which they discovered are found in much higher levels in mushrooms

than in most other foods.

We care about these antioxidants because they could be the key to reversing some aspects of the natural aging process.

When our bodies convert food into energy, the process has a byproduct: the production of highly reactive oxygen atoms with unpaired electrons. These particles travel "through the body seeking to pair up with other electrons," as a university press release described, causing damage to "cells, proteins and even DNA" in the process.

The phenomenon is referred to as "oxidative stress," and

the highly reactive oxygen atoms are called free radicals. The free radical theory of aging, then, suggests that this process is what actually leads to our bodies' components deteriorating over time. In other words, it's not simply a function of time, but of things that happen naturally over time.

So to recap: free radicals spur aging according to this theory, but antioxidants can theoretically counteract the free radicals. And the researchers say they've now discovered that mushrooms contain sky high levels of antioxidants.

So, eat mushrooms?
Is it that simple? Eat a little

more mushroom risotto, and live a bit longer?

Researchers say the take-aways here require more research. Meantime, they said they found that certain varieties of mushrooms have sky-high amounts of ergothioneine and glutathione, while others are lower—albeit might higher than most other foods have.

The top varieties for antioxidants? Porcini mushrooms.

"The porcini has the highest, by far, of any we tested. This species is really popular in Italy where searching for it has become a national pastime," said study author

Robert Beelman, who is professor emeritus of food science and director of the Penn State Center for Plant and Mushroom Products for Health.

"It's preliminary," Beelman continued, "but you can see that countries that have more ergothioneine in their diets, countries like France and Italy, also have lower incidences of neurodegenerative diseases, while people in countries like the United States, which has low amounts of ergothioneine in the diet, have a higher probability of diseases like Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's."

Beelman is careful to say they don't know for sure whether the relationship between the incidence of these aging-related diseases is correlative or causative.

"But, it's something to look into, especially because the difference between the countries with low rates of neurodegenerative diseases is about 3 milligrams per day, which is about five button mushrooms each day."



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