

BEAUTY



25 YEARS OLD
FERRANDA LA PUENTE,
NUTRITION COACH

"I have young and older friends who I see who are so happy with being old, with their wrinkles and their gray hair, and I think it's something beautiful. I think beauty changes along the way."

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"Anti"-aging? We are pro-aging. (Consider the alternative!) So: Who do you want to be when you grow up? A 90-year-old who can sling her leg over her head, or someone who sweats every new wrinkle? And: How do you get there with your body, mind, and sense of humor intact? Our guide to taking the best care of yourself, head to heart, skin to bones, on what we hope is a very long journey.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY RYAN PFLUGER



70 YEARS OLD
LESLIE BORNSTEIN,
DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER

"The thing I miss is not remembering that I was beautiful. I do remember that looking at me with the primary appraiser's eye and saying, 'Attractive, yes, but beautiful?'"

THE LONG GAME

BEAUTY

SCIENCE

WHAT I'VE (UN)LEARNED

Fat used to be a killer; now it's good for you. Brain cells were once thought finite; no more. In the decade that **Gretchen Reynolds** has been writing her influential fitness science column, oh, how the tables have turned

Ten years ago, when the world was a younger and maybe simpler place, when we still believed that chairs were not homicidal and that saturated fat stopped our hearts, I began writing a column for the *New York Times* about the science of health, fitness, and the human body. At the time, I fastidiously removed the skin from chicken breasts, never bought bacon, and felt guilty about eating cheese. I exercised regularly and at length, running and cycling for hours every week. I stretched before workouts and wore heavy running shoes designed to keep my foot from moving much when I ran, since a sales clerk—a clerk!—had once told me that I overpronated. I hydrated by keeping a large bottle of water on my desk and easily exceeded eight glasses a day. My ergonomic office chair had lumbar support so that I could sit and write comfortably for hours. In the mornings before settling down to work, I swallowed a multivitamin, ate a dry bagel, drank my coffee black to avoid dairy,

and grunted through 50 sit-ups to flatten my belly and strengthen my back. Then, because nothing gold can stay, one of my earliest columns was about new research showing that sit-ups have little impact on stomach muscles and frequently damage the back. (If *it* crunches that seem to effectively and safely strengthen core muscles, according to spine experts.) Another was about how too much water can, under certain circumstances, kill you. (Thirst is an exquisitely accurate guide to hydration needs. If you are thirsty, drink. If not, don't. No one needs to stay ahead of her thirst. Would you try to stay ahead of your hunger?)

Over the next several years, I wrote about the high incidence of injuries associated with wearing heavy, motion-control running shoes like mine. (Pronation, the inward roll of the foot during a running stride, until recently was thought to cause injuries if you did it too much. But new research shows that pronation does not seem to contribute to injuries; trying to immobilize the foot with clunky, motion-control shoes does. Choose a running shoe because it feels comfortable.) I wrote about a neglected cardiac-health study conducted from 1966 to 1973 that researchers resurrected and reanalyzed 33 years later. In it, men with heart disease who switched from a diet fairly high in artery-clogging saturated fat to one that emphasized unsaturated oils—remember safflower oil!—were significantly more likely to die of heart

failure than men with comparable heart trouble who continued to eat butter and red meat. And there was the stretching kerfuffle. In the very week that Barack Obama won his first term in the Oval Office, I wrote a column explaining that, according to the best new science, stretching before most exercise would not improve performance or reduce overuse injuries much, if at all.

Obama won on November 4, 2008. History was made. The most widely read and e-mailed story on the *New York Times* website that day, though, and for weeks afterward, was mine, about why not to stretch. People were astonished that something they had done for so long and never considered to be up for review was suddenly—*poof*—unnecessary and probably counterproductive. (A large-scale, three-month study conducted by the USA Track & Field organization in 2010 found that recreational runners who stretched were just as likely to get injured as those who did not. Stretching seems to send a signal to the brain that you are about to over-extend the affected muscles; the brain sends a signal back telling that muscle to tighten. You wind up less limber, rather than more. Better to warm up before exercise by moving your limbs through their full range of motion and jogging for a few minutes. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't stretch after exercise or at some other time during the day, only that stretching before most forms of exercise—including gymnastics, dance, and hockey goal-tending—is not useful.)

I got anguished e-mails from youth soccer coaches asking if they'd harmed their charges by having them stretch before games. (Not likely.) I got hate mail from people asking how I could presume to understand human physiology and flexibility better than their personal trainers did. I got giddy notes from people telling me how much they'd always hated stretching. Me, I've quit stretching before I run.

MY COLUMN, **PHYS ED**, has become as popular as it is—and it's among the *Times* website's most-viewed stories almost every week—because each of us cares so much about the only body we will ever own and wants to do right by it, but can't make sense of the contradictory health advice we constantly receive.

I understand. I get confused, too. But I have learned over the years to ask certain questions while I skim through any scientific study or related media coverage, especially if the results are shocking. Did the study include men and women? Commonly, health research looks at only one gender, and most commonly, it's men. Were people involved at all? Animal studies are essential to health science. (A lab mouse can complete its entire life-span, from newborn to geriatric, in two years, a compressed timeline that allows scientists to investigate aging, drugs, and many other aspects of biology in ways that are impossible with long-lived people.) But a lab rat's or mouse's brain, physiology, psychology, and waistline are not precisely the same as a person's, and many of the results from past animal studies, especially those related to weight loss, have not translated well to humans.

Finally, and this is important: Was it a randomized controlled trial, in which some people tried an intervention, such as a new diet or workout, while others, serving as a control group, did not? This is the only type of study that can show causation, meaning that the intervention actually caused an outcome, such as weight loss or improved blood pressure.

In that vein, were you a participant on Season 8 of *NBC's The Biggest Loser*, and did you drop more than 100 pounds through an absolutely punishing program of calorie restriction and endless exercise? No? Then the results of a much-publicized and discouraging recent study of metabolic slowdowns and weight regain among Season 8 contestants aren't directly applicable to you. This was a very

READY, SET, GO A decade-by-decade playbook for being healthier in the years to come. By Corrie Pikul

20s

You look amazing, thanks to your radiant skin, lustrous hair, and sparkly white teeth. This can also be a supremely self-conscious decade; make sure to appreciate your beauty!

IT'S TIME GET YOUR FIRST CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING. CDC guidelines recommend that women ages 21 to 65 have a Pap smear every three years.

GET THE HPV VACCINE IF YOU HAVEN'T YET. Human papillomavirus can lead to cervical cancer. The three-dose vaccine is recommended for women 26 and under.

KNOW YOUR FAMILY HISTORY. Now's the time to find out who among your parents, aunts and uncles, and grandparents had cancer, heart and cardiovascular problems, fertility and pregnancy issues, or other serious conditions.

IF THAT HISTORY INCLUDES BREAST CANCER, CONSIDER GETTING THE BRCA1 AND BRCA2 TESTS BY AGE 25. This will show if you have a genetic predisposition for breast and ovarian cancer.

TAKE HEART HEALTH SERIOUSLY. Get tested for total cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, and body mass

index (BMI). High blood pressure in your twenties may lead to gestational diabetes in your thirties, which may lead to heart disease in your fifties.

GO TO THAT FRIEND-OF-A-FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY PARTY. A study published in *Psychology and Aging* showed that those who'd had an active social network in their twenties felt less lonely or depressed in their fifties than those who'd kept their circles small. "By having a wide variety of social interactions when you're still establishing your identity, you're developing interpersonal links you'll take with you throughout life," says study coauthor Cheryl L. Carmichael, PhD.

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30s

Your body may not feel or look so different from 10 years ago, but in good ways, you feel older. Many women hit a lot of milestones this decade—marriage, career achievements, children, coming into their own, confidence-wise—which can be exciting and stressful.

IT'S TIME ASSESS YOUR FERTILITY (IF YOU WANT KIDS). If you've been trying to get pregnant for a year, ask your gynecologist to test your ovarian function, hormone levels, and other relevant factors. (And have a

would-be father get a fertility test) If you're considering freezing your eggs, doing so before age 35 increases your chances of a positive outcome.

BE WELL-HEELED. High heels shorten your calf muscles, which can mess with your gait and cause pain even when just walking. Flats can lead to back pain. Flip-flops are ugly names, as they can cause both

flips and flops. Vary your heel height; always buy well-made shoes, and never wear shoes that don't fit. A too-small shoe can wreck just about everything.

FIGHT DEPRESSION NOW. Major depressive disorder is most likely to deepen its shadow during the childbearing years. "The more episodes of depression you have, the more likely you are to have them again," says Rita Norcross, MD, PhD.

GO FOR SOCIAL QUALITY. The same study that recorded the benefits of a wide social network in your twenties also found that it's the quality of relationships in your thirties that is most beneficial for well-being in your fifties.

40s

In the United States, the average age that women enter perimenopause is 47—but the average age of the last menstrual cycle is around 51



1 GENESIS HEIL, STUDENT
"By the time I'm 22, I want to see more people in the industry, and I want to be one of them."

2 SARAH SAMNAL, PHOTOGRAPHER/DESIGNER
"By the time I'm 20, I'd like to be running my own business and have a dog!"

3 ALEXANDRIA TARVER, PAINTER
"By 33, I want to keep things fun and keep painting. As long as I'm still painting, painting is what I want. It's the happy."

4 CHARLOTTE KING, EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH
"By the time I'm 24, I'm going to start thinking about having a family."

5 ANABELLA KOLEVA, FASHION STYLIST
"By the time I'm 24, I will have gone shopping hand in hand with my partner—the love of my life!"

6 HAIDEE MATTU-BAIACHI, BIRDS
"By the time I'm 25 years, I hope to have a baby and spend more time with my dog."