

Excerpt: 'How Not to Look Old'

Style expert Charla Krupp offers practical advice, must-dos and fast fixes

TODAY

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Forget getting older gracefully. "How Not to Look Old" is the beauty and style bible every woman has been waiting for, a sort of cheat sheet of to-dos and fast fixes that pay off big time. It's written by style expert Charla Krupp. Here's an excerpt:

Forget aging gracefully

All right, I'm just going to come out and say it. Aging sucks. As my generation of women hits 40, 50, 60, we are for the first time discovering things about our faces and bodies that we never noticed before. Icky things like age spots, crow's-feet, gray hair, chin hair, marionette lines, saggy boobs, spider veins, bunions — need I go on? I don't think so. You know what I'm talking about. The question is: What are you — what are we — going to do about it? We're going to fight aging — and we're going to have a blast while doing it.

Whether it's by our sheer numbers (78 million strong — the largest demo group in history) or our sheerchutzpah, we baby boomers are pros at shaking things up as we hit each decade. We know how to do this. From rock music in the '60s, to "Me Generation" therapy in the '70s, to the "Let's Get Physical" fitness boom of the '80s, to the spa fad of the '90s, to the green movement of today, our generation has no problem rewriting the rules to suit our needs as we move through life's milestones. Now that we are going to live to be 100, our mission is to reinvent retirement and the golden years. While we haven't nailed that yet (for some of us, retirement is still a ways away), we already know that we're not going to just stand there like a bunch of Willie Lomans and accept our gold watch with a thank you and a smile at the retirement party. (If we even get the watch — or the party.) Neither are we likely to be sailing into the sunset spending our days and playing golf or tennis, or sitting around the pool with a cocktail in hand. What else aren't we going to do?

- We're not going to grow old gracefully (or gratefully).
- We're not going to celebrate our wrinkles (you've got to be kidding).
- We're not going to join the Women Who Have Had Too Much Work Done club (like our mothers and their friends).
- We're not going to look old.

The last is where this book comes in. "How Not to Look Old" is the boomer manifesto, a comprehensive plan of attack on aging, all those little beauty and style tweaks that you can (and should!) do to look Younger and Hipper — and still show up for work the next day. Younger and Hipper is a concept I'll use a lot so let's just say Y&H from now on. As opposed to looking like an Old Lady (OL, for short). Each chapter of this book is a list of To-Dos organized from head-to-toe, from "Cut Bangs" to "Step into Sexy Heels" and leads to even more things you can do to get gorgeous. If you go chapter by chapter and cross off the "To-Dos," you can look ten years younger, ten pounds lighter and ten times better. Maybe even more than ten years younger. At the start of each chapter, there is a Mirror, Mirror icon that shows the number of years this To-Do will set back the clock. Don't add all these up, or you'll be back in the womb! But use it to gauge the visual impact you'll get from doing this To-Do.

Ever wonder why some 50-year-olds look like they're 40 and some 50-year-olds look like they're 60? Today everyone wants to look ten years younger than they are. "Forty is the new 30; 50 is the new 40," etc. Looking younger is not all about lucky genes. It takes work. But too much work and the comments you'll be hearing will not be, "Wow! You look fabulous!" but rather, "Wow! What did you do?"

This book is not about Extreme Makeovers. I have nothing against plastic surgery. In fact, I have personal experience to share (see Chapter 6). But I don't think that plastic surgery guarantees that you're going to look young. You might not have any wrinkles after a facelift, but if you look like you had work done, you're obviously a woman old enough to have a facelift! So who are you fooling? A face frozen in time is the face of a Woman Who Has Had Too Much Work Done. As celebrity fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi recently said to me, "I think plastic surgery is the most aging thing in the world. If you want to look 70, boy, get a facelift. Get your lips done."

Another reason why there's no chapter on plastic surgery is that many of us just don't have time for downtime. Instant gratification is part of our DNA. We want fast fixes. That's why there's also no mention of the fact that diet and exercise are essential to looking younger and staying healthy over the long haul. Because there isn't a woman alive who doesn't already know that! Eating salmon or doing yoga are good things to do for sure, but they don't give you the instant results that the To-Dos in this book will. We want results. Real results. Visible results. Other anti-aging books tell you to run a bath, light a candle, chant and practice acceptance. Not this one. Because I've tried all that — and guess what? It doesn't work!

What works is going to the dermatologist and if necessary, making her your new best friend. From Botox to fillers, peels to lasers, there are so many noninvasive options in our beauty arsenal these days. I only care about What Works. That's why I've called upon my friends — some of the best beauty and fashion wizards — to share their secrets throughout this book: not ridiculous, over-the-top ones, but advice we all can put to use. I know they have the real deal — many of these pros have worked their magic on me. So, although they hail from New York City, as do I, their suggestions transcend all geographic boundaries, all types of women, and yes, all price points.

At this stage, we don't take kindly to spending \$200 or even \$35 on a wrinkle cream and then finding out six to eight weeks later that it didn't make much difference: that those little lines bleeding off the top of your lips have not disappeared. In my former years, I was Glamour's beauty director and the editor-in-chief of the late beauty website *eve.com*, and I've made a career out of being a beauty guinea pig. There's nothing I won't put on my face in the name of beauty. Magazines are packed with advertisers' products, and we're inundated with commercials and ads, but how do you know what really works? At the end of most chapters, you'll find my Brilliant Buys, the results of my heavy lifting. I personally tested more than 600 beauty products, all of which had already landed on the Best of Beauty lists of the major magazines. I am a very tough customer. To make the cut, my Brilliant Buys had to: 1) deliver results 2) be user-friendly 3) look good enough to keep on your bathroom shelf and 4) not be insanely expensive. Somewhere along the line, we learned that the more money you spend, the better the results. I'm here to tell you that that is simply not true. Some of the best cleansers, moisturizers, mascaras, foundations and shampoos can be found at Target.

The older you get, the more you need maintenance. This book is very much about maintenance; in fact many of the To-Dos are offered up in a High, Medium or Low Maintenance menu. In Nora Ephron's hysterical book, "I Feel Bad About My Neck," she writes about maintenance: "Maintenance takes up so much time in my life that I can barely sit at my computer. You know what maintenance is, I'm sure. Maintenance is what they mean when they say, 'After a certain point it's just patch, patch, patch.'" The daily, the weekly, the monthly patch, patch, patch is the difference between a 50-year-old who looks 40 and a 50-year-old who looks 60. The truth is: We cannot afford to let ourselves go!

For our generation, looking younger isn't just about vanity (OK, let's admit sometimes we are a little vain). Looking good is about our personal and financial survival. We are the first generation of women in which the majority of us went to college and then to work. But many of us do not have husbands (rich or otherwise) to support us. Many of us do not have kids to take care of us, or kids who want to take care of us. Many of us are on our own, and we need to stay in the workplace until we say it's time to go.

And let's not fool ourselves: looking good is key to keeping that job. Studies on attractiveness over the years have shown that people who are prettier, younger, slimmer are more likely to get the job and keep it — as well as win friends, influence people and keep their partners interested. In her groundbreaking studies in the '70s and '80s, *Overview of the Psychological Effects of Physical Attractiveness*, psychologist Ellen Berscheid concluded people believe, "What is beautiful, is good," i.e., we attribute positive qualities like kindness, sincerity and warmth to people who are good-looking and negative qualities to people who are not. Alex Kuczynski in her book "Beauty Junkies," analyzes a number of attractiveness studies and concludes: "To get a good job in the United States, the scientific data suggests you now not only have to be relatively trim and good-looking but you have to be young."

Looking younger will keep you in the game longer when everyone around you is a kid. It's a no-brainer. Many of us have had the experience of being at work and realizing that we are the oldest person around the conference table ... and not by a few years. We've reached the age where some of our colleagues are young enough to be our kids. We have to look younger to at least help level the playing field.

But shouldn't we be showing off our wrinkles? Shouldn't we be proud to go gray? Yes, that would be awesome in an ideal world. But that's not the way the world is today. Only when women who look as "good"

as Morley Safer and Andy Rooney are allowed to thrive well into their 70s and even 80s on the public stage, will it be safe for us to let ourselves go without endangering our livelihoods and our legacies. Until then, to keep our paychecks and our self-esteem, we need to look young, we need to look current. And the stakes have been raised so high that we need to look fabulous.

Make no mistake: This doesn't mean we need to look 20! You need to look youthful, like you're still swimming in the stream of all things current. You're going to look "out of it" if you show up in a fussy suit when everyone else at the office is in jeans. You're going to look OL if you have a helmet head loaded with hairspray when everyone else has long, lush locks. How do you, then, look current, without wearing a miniskirt, flip-flops and an iPod in your ear?

"How Not to Look Old" is about looking young without looking ridiculous. Unapologetically written for our generation, this is your cheat sheet that cuts through the clutter of what's in, what's hot, what you must have this season, in other words, what you are presented with when you pick up most fashion magazines, which are nearly all targeted to the 18-35 set. The problem is that what looks good on Scarlett or Lindsay or Paris will probably not look good on you. And even though I spent my career as an editor, working in the trenches of fashion magazines, such as "Glamour," "In Style" and "Shop Etc.," I am not, by any means, a fashionista. In fact, I am the one who sits in on the fashion runthroughs and says about the bag for \$7,500, "Do you know anyone who's going to buy that?" Maybe it's because I grew up in Wilmette, Illinois, and my husband is from Kansas City, and I go back to both places a lot. I know that what plays in New York and L.A. will not necessarily translate. We're bombarded with inappropriate fashion and it's not just from magazines. As I'm writing, I'm watching a morning TV style segment showing crotch-high minidresses and short-shorts suits for spring. Hello? What about us? Anything this season that we might possibly put on without looking ridiculous? Part of the mission of this book is to reinvigorate the term "age appropriate." Every single beauty and style tip here is presented with that in mind. Look at the photos and you'll know what exactly what's Too Young/Too Old/Just Right.

Despite all our good intentions, there are little things we all do that can betray our best efforts and scream OL to the outside world. Right now, for instance, are you ...

- In dark lipstick?
- Wearing an eyeglass chain around your neck?
- Covering your face with a mask of foundation?
- Wearing granny pants? Mommy jeans?
- Wearing a bra that doesn't boost the girls up halfway between your shoulders and your elbow?

From now on, you'll be on high alert to the telltale signs that can creep up on you and threaten your look if you're not paying attention. Each chapter starts with a "shout out" called "Nothing Ages You Like," covering things like:

- Too-long hair that's parted down the middle
- A solid block of hair color
- Gray or white brow hairs
- Half-glasses
- Obvious lip liner
- Too-white teeth
- Dragon-lady nails

The point is, if you've been outlining your lips the same way since college, you're past overdue for a change. And throughout the book, you'll find "The Newer Way To ..." do everything to make you look modern, not stale.

Before many of us can climb out of our beauty and fashion ruts, we need to escape our comfort zones. And

do that successfully, we need a new mindset. Think, "You, only in a gorgeous new dress." We're not talking inner beauty here. We are only paying attention to your outer beauty, the package you present to the world. Think this is superficial? Sorry, but this is the real world. People every day size you up in a nanosecond, making judgments that could affect your future based on whether your nails are too long or your skirt is too short. You can't afford not to look your best every time you step out the front door.

You know that the benefits of looking younger and better are not superficial at all. I hate to use this word because it is so overused, but it is "empowering" to pass a mirror and think, "Wow, I look great!" It gives you a lift. Every time I walk out of the hair salon blown-out and blonder, I swear, I feel like I could conquer the world! Our looks and our self-esteem are inextricably wired. You need to invest time and money and interest in you, because if you don't look good, you don't feel good about yourself. And if you don't look and feel good on a daily basis, no one close to you is going to feel good either! If you have any doubts about the "Look Good, Feel Better" connection, volunteer at a women's organization such as Bottomless Closet or Dress for Success and see how a new outfit can make a down-and-out woman suddenly feel optimistic and hopeful about her future.

"How Not to Look Old" is about looking Y&H, but to truly be Y&H, you need to embrace a youthful attitude. You need to jump into life and wrap your arms around change. Whether it's beauty or fashion or life in general, what is truly OL? Being so invested in the status quo. I hate it when people say, "That's not the way it's done." So? Are you saying that you can't ever change the way that it's done? Why not? Only OL people make a Big Deal about change. That's not going to be you!

What is truly great about coming of age at this particular point in time, is that unlike our mothers, we have so many things we can do to look Y&H before resorting to extreme measures and joining the Women Who Have Had Too Much Work Done club. What follows is The To-Do List to end all To-Do Lists. Here's to looking younger, feeling better — and winning the battle. If I can do it, so can you.

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