



# STICK OUT YOUR NECK...

... and take care of this vital but oft-neglected part of your body

by **Veenu Singh**

**I**T HOLDS up the head and is a convenient place to hang pretty pieces of jewellery from. But it's more important than we think.

## NECK TO NECK

"The neck area does not have much fat, so it is prone to wrinkles," says Dr Vinay Singh, MD and senior consultant dermatologist with Max Healthcare. "Bad posture, heavy jewellery and sudden weight loss can cause the skin of the neck to become loose." The skin of the neck is also thin, adds Sneha Sriram, head dermatologist, Kaya Skin Clinic. "So it is susceptible to sun damage and ageing because the sun can penetrate deeper into the deep skin layer," she says.

Certain diseases also cause the skin of the neck to change colour. "A person suffering from diabetes could become insulin resistant," says Dr Singh. "So, the skin of the neck may become thick and dark."

## SKIN IS IN

"Stop thinking that your face stops at your chin," says Vandana Sundra, director of Eminence, an organic skin-care brand. Apply a nourishing cream to your neck and throat every night, using upward strokes, she says. Drink as much water as you can and, to avoid flabby neck muscles or a double chin, hold your head high with your chin up and slightly forward.

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ELIZABETH ARDEN

**DO A FEW EXERCISES TO STRETCH YOUR NECK AND TIGHTEN ITS MUSCLES**



## STAND UP STRAIGHT

Our posture has a major effect on the muscles of our neck. Apart from spondylosis, a largely sedentary lifestyle makes the neck muscles weak and prone to creases, say experts. "Set your computer screen at eye level and when you read, look straight ahead," says Dr Singh. "Also, consciously hold your head up while walking."

## SLEEP STUDIO

Many of us like sleeping in a pile of pillows. This accelerates the onset of wrinkles in the neck. "Make sure your pillow is neither too hard nor too small for your head," says Meeta Awatramani, training manager, Clarins. "When lying on your back, put a 2 to 4 inch cushion beneath the groove between the back of your head and neck. This will lengthen the neck, improve breathing and limit the formation of wrinkles."

## EXERCISE ROUTINE

Do exercises to stretch your neck and tighten the muscles. "Breathe slowly and bring your neck down to rest on your chest. Then raise your head slowly and bend it backwards as far as you can," says Sriram of Kaya. Next, breathe deeply and turn your neck to each side as far as you can without moving your shoulders and body.

"Repeat these exercises at least 10 times daily," suggests Awatramani. Now, sitting on a chair, stretch your neck upwards as much as you can and make a pout as if you are about to kiss. "Repeat this four to five times daily," says Sriram.

## TAKE CARE

"Use masks like blueberry, coconut, chocolate and peach as they improve hydration," says Sundra. Use anti-ageing creams with ceramides if your neck is already wrinkled. "These accelerate the production of collagen. Avoid creams with retinol," warns Sriram.

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