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LOSE 10 YEARS: A DO-IT-YOURSELF GUIDE TO PULLING OFF A HIP AND YOUNGER YOU!

I can still recall getting thrilled with my birthdays. I remember when I hit 13 and I officially became a teenager. I just can't wait to grow up and explore new experiences. I remember when I became 18 and officially joined adulthood, and I can't wait to explore opportunities in store for me. I remember when I celebrated my 20's and entered the workforce and got married, got lovely kids. And then I hit my late 30's, and then I realized that together with my birthdays are now wrinkles, lines and little gray hairs growing with my age. Then suddenly, my birthdays have become as less exciting as before. It's a totally different scenario when you start realizing you're not getting any younger. Then I said: *Nat, you've got to do something about this*.

I am writing this book to share with women in the same situation on how I have successfully concealed my age. I am now 37 years old, and every now and then, I receive compliments that I look younger. This is a surge in self-esteem for me, that despite of being a mother of two, a thriving career and lots of other stuff that need my attention, I am able to take good care of myself; and at the same time, a priceless reward for my effort to look after my well-being. It's even more pleasing when I need not have to spend thousand bucks from my pocket just to look younger. I am just your average woman, who gets broke every once in a while, you know.



Yes. Age is a force to reckon with. Why can't we just freeze time and stop aging isn't it? But perhaps, we will never have the power to stop the hands of time in this lifetime, or even in another. But let us not worry because always, there are surefire, affordable ways to cheat your age. But of course, as our title implies, within the limits of being age appropriate and still being respectable. We don't want to be tagged as "goat dressed as a lamb" right?

Now, let's begin the journey to being a younger looking goddess in her 30s, 40's, 50's and even 60's shall we?



I. FIRST STOP: PERK UP THE FACE

Almost all the time, it is our face that gets noticed first in each interaction with every blinking human being. As a first stop in my quest on keeping myself look younger, I made sure that I took good care of my face – from hair down to neck.

A. Keep Your Crowning Glory Aglow

Styling the hair will make huge difference on your look and consequently to your age. Below are some points I have considered, and now to pass on to you, on how I've made myself look younger through my crowning glory.

The Color

Some women look stunning on gray hair, but I personally prefer playing with colors. This is one of the steps I took - washing out my increasing gray hair and giving my crowning glory a lighter hair color. Say, Jane Fonda, Diana Keaton, Bette Midler, Barbara Streisand, Hillary Clinton and Barbara Walters. They look fabulous and most of all, younger in their light-colored hair don't they?

But how will I know the right hair color for me and my skin tone?

That's the same question that popped in my head. Thank goodness for technology.



There are now available websites that allow women to upload their pictures and try out different hair colors. Clairol.com for one does this. Simply upload your latest picture and you can test a variety of shades for you. I did this and ended up with a glamorous hair that best complemented my complexion

I also learned that it won't hurt to play with shades. However, it is still very essential to consider one's skin tone. The standard I believe is going with up or down two shades – and nothing more than that. Once I used five shades and it made me looked washed out since it didn't match my skin tone.



But to be clearer about this, here are some tips:

I would characterize skin tone as "warm" and "cool." You'd know your color is warm if you have golden, olive or dark skin and brown or dark eyes. Most Latinas, Asians and African Americans are considered having "warm" skin. If you are in this category, get golden shades like caramel and bronze in a darker shade than your skin. But never settle for black hair as this will wash you out. If you opt for a golden shade then make sure it isn't too light because your hair might turn orange.

"Cool" colored women are those who have fair skin and blue or green eyes. And if you are in this category, avoid gold, auburn or copper. It will only highlight your skin rudiness. Ash blonde and cool browns work best.

I've observed however that there are some exceptions as some women can pull off a dark, black hair (errr ...Demi Moore). If this is the case, then I suggest that you should keep it shiny and well-maintained by using conditioner to your hair. A long, black and shiny hair presents vitality and youthfulness.

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The wisdom behind lightening hair is that dark hair is likely to give emphasis to the lines of the face by throwing darkness into it. Light colored hair brings a certain young-looking radiance because it tends to brighten face and light up the skin tone.

As women also mature, the natural order of things make us lose pigment and pairing it with dark brown or dark black hair is an unlikely complement to our aging skin pigment. However, do make sure that the hair doesn't become too light because this can make you look trashy. As I pointed out earlier, the most crucial aspect is having the hair color going harmoniously with your complexion.

The next question is: how can we lighten our hair?

Sure. Salons are just there in every corner. But roots can grow immediately and going to the salon frequently (especially if you're a busy woman) can become a hassle eventually. Hence, I've found out ways to lighten hair the natural way just to maintain its color. Aside from this, I spend nothing and I don't have to expose my hair to chemicals most of the time. Just a disclaimer though, I first asked a professional to touch my hair and only resort to this natural process to maintain it and keep myself from going to the salon frequently. All I'm saying is, ask first a hair expert before you start lightening/altering your virgin hair.



How to lighten dark hair

Lemon juice is not the best solution for dark shade hair because it will leave nasty orange streaks. In this case, try henna powder instead available in health stores. Mix the henna powder with a light herb (like chamomile) and mix this with a boiling water to make a thick paste. As the solution cools down, apply it to your wet hair through comb. Put a plastic bag over your hair, and let it sit between 30 minutes and 2 hours. The darker the hair the longer it should be dyed with henna. Remove the bag and rinse your hair. If you don't want to wait for 2 hours, then you can opt to dry your hair under the sun. As a point of pre-caution though, henna can be a bit strong so you can try it to small section of your hair first to see how samples of how it might come about.

What I use meanwhile for my brown hair is cinnamon. Damped your hair moderately and apply a small amount of conditioner to make the cinnamon stick. Mix a small amount of conditioner to the cinnamon to make a thick paste. Evenly apply it to the hair by using a brush. Make sure that the brush is wet and has nice teeth to get the cinnamon gliding smoothly to hair strands. You can also opt to rub the paste all over the hair.

After applying the cinnamon, gather the hair in a loose bun and hold it together with a pony tail. For best results, leave the mixture overnight (6-8 hours). Use a saran wrap to cover the



hair. It is also advised to put a plastic bag all over the head for full protection. Rinse the hair the following day. For curly hair, use shampoo in rinsing.

If you are entirely not confident about yourself getting these instructions perfectly done, then again, I recommend you go to hair experts in the salons. There will be more work to do if you didn't get the hair shade you desire, and we don't want any of those sorts to happen. Like in my own experience, I had a professional to handle my hair color at the beginning.

I would also like to point out that maintenance is entwined with colored hair. You have to recolor your hair in a particular number of months or even weeks (depending in your hair color) as roots will grow. Covering a grey hair for instance with a permanent color will have you having it re-colored every 6 weeks. My roots become evident after 1 month. It's just a good thing that I've learned the trick of the cinnamon that I don't have to go to the salon every time my roots start bugging me.

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