



IF YOU'RE GOING TO
EXTREME MEASURES TO
LOOK AWAKE, AT LEAST
REMEMBER TO GET DRESSED

YOU LOOK TIRED

These three little words are the hardest ones to hear – especially when you're not *actually* tired. So how do we combat our increasingly fatigued faces?

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In terms of greetings to be abjectly avoided, "You look tired," is up there in the top rankings.

In fact, it's nearly as bad as the number one conversational misdemeanor of, "When are you due?" which more often than not elicits the response of "No, actually, I just had lunch," followed by some enthusiastic weeping in the toilets and bulk buying of Spanx. The thing with looking tired is that it may have no obvious basis; you might *feel* full of beans, but your face is letting you down. Enter 'tired face'; a no-frills way to describe an age-old, winter-induced issue of looking wearier than we actually are.

It goes without saying that

most of us would much rather look awake and refreshed, rather than mostly dead. And there's good reason. Researchers from Stockholm University found that people who appear tired are also more likely to be perceived as unhealthy and less attractive (that'll be the red eyes, dark circles and sallown skin) and since our faces contain information on which we, humans, base our interactions with each other, how tired we appear can affect how others interact with us. Margaret Thatcher was famously said to only sleep for four hours a night – a fact that speaks volumes in view of her popularity polls.

Another simple factor contributing to our tired faces is that we could just *be* exhausted;

a 2013 survey* of 1,000 people found that men tend to get a better night's sleep than women with 7% of them falling asleep easily, compared to just 3.4% of women. Technology is a prime culprit; we send an average of 100 texts from our beds a month, and 40%** of us take our phones to bed like a poorly chosen, constantly bleeping lover. Indeed 71.9% of women are affected by using technology before bed compared to 58.3% of men. The same study also found that women are twice as likely to lose sleep over their children and family's health as men. Next time he mentions how sapped you look, remind him of these facts.

So apart from sleeping properly, eating only raw



🔄 vegetables and not working (all of which are largely impossible), we decided to investigate why we look tired and what we can do to make ourselves look, well, awake...

1. CLOCKS GOING BACK AND FORTH

We think of sleep as a luxury but a 2013 study by Surrey University's Sleep Research Centre found that those who slept six and a half hours a night struggled the most with mental agility tasks compared to those who managed seven and a half hours sleep. That's great news now the clocks have gone back an hour; that one hour makes a colossal difference to our sleep quality, because we could be increasing our vital REM (rapid eye movement) phase, when noradrenalin – a stress-related chemical in the brain – is switched off. It's the only time this happens and it allows us to remain calm while our brains reprocess the day's experiences – in particular incidences that were emotionally draining. We tend to get more REM during the latter half of the night (after 1am) so if we're woken too early our brains may not have had a chance to fully process our emotions, leading to us waking up feeling stressed and anxious. Which is why investing in an app like Sleep Cycle (£1.49, iTunes) that wakes you up naturally when your REM has finished is the ideal way to preserve your radiance.

2. LOST SLEEP IS LOST, FOREVER

Myth expelled: lost sleep cannot be caught up on. It's not a mathematical formula that says eight hours of sleep a day, seven days a week can mostly be crammed into one mammoth Sunday lie in. Sleep expert Dr Neil Stanley explains: "Our bodies crave regularity so you should have a similar amount of sleep (seven to nine hours) a night. A new study from America's Center for Disease Control and Prevention has actually found that too much (more than 10 hours) or too little (below six hours) is linked to chronic conditions like diabetes, coronary heart disease and anxiety. With a greater risk when the sleep pattern changes abruptly, after the weekend for instance. That means that the risk peaks on Mondays, after our weekend lie ins, because it's more of a shock to our bodies. Scary, but there's a solution at hand: "Wake up 30-40 minutes earlier on weekends than you would usually to ensure that Monday morning shock to the system is minimised," Dr Stanley advises.

3. IT COULD BE THE HARSH LIGHT OF DAY

During winter the sky is white or grey



because the colder air, ice particles and water droplets form more easily and these scatter light of all wavelengths (and all colours) resulting in a whiter sky. Science lesson over. But the grey winter sky makes us look more sallow and tired than we actually are, and while we can't change the weather, we can use light-reflective serums or primers. Try Idealia Life Serum, £29.50, Vichy, which uses golden and red particles to brighten your face and diffracts the natural light as it hits the face. There's another sneaky way that winter light makes us look tired. A 2011 study of 5,000 women throughout the seasons found that circles and bags under the eyes appear significantly darker in the colder months. In fact, 82% of women have dark circles and puffy eyes in winter as opposed to 38% in summer. That's due to the

body's lack of vitamin D, a substance that is found in the body that increases bone density but must be synthesised by natural light. The lack of vitamin D makes us feel more lethargic and sleepy looking. To counterbalance it, psychologist Ken Goodrick advises: "Sneak out for a 10-minute walk outside at least once during the day or when you're at your most tired — bright light has a caffeine-like power to make you look alert," he says. "Get out even if it's grey: you'll get a lot more light exposure than you do in your office."

4. IT'S THE WAY YOU BREATHE

When we breathe naturally it tends to be shallow and quick, meaning that we aren't taking in enough oxygen. This means we have higher levels of

carbon monoxide in our blood which can make us more tired. That's why we yawn too — it's a way of us taking on more vital oxygen in a longer slower inhale. When we don't get enough oxygen in our blood our heart rate and blood pressure increase too, all of which causes untold stress on our bodies. This also affects our faces as bad circulation (caused by the lack of oxygen) results in fluid building up within the tissues around the eyes, leading to bloated Halloween-esque faces. Sleeping on your side or stomach can encourage fluids to collect under your eyes so try to sleep on your back, at least for the few hours before you have to get up. Stress expert Neil Shah also suggests that we should practise deeper breathing to ensure our bodies are oxygenated as they should be. "Practise breathing from your diaphragm several times each day — when you're feeling tired, put your hand over your abdomen and inhale, and focus on making your stomach move," he says. This ensures that you take in more air with each breath. "Try and do this periodically throughout the day and you'll notice that you look and feel more clearheaded."

5. WE ARE FAR TOO STATIC

Poor posture doesn't just make you look tired; it makes you physically wearier too. "When the joints aren't aligned properly, the whole body has to work so much harder," says Sherry Brouman, a physical therapist in Los Angeles and author of *Walk Yourself Well*. A slouched-over posture puts extra strain on your hips and back making you feel more tired than you actually are. There's a simple way to adjust your standing posture, Brouman says: "While gazing down — without craning your neck — you should be able to see the tops of your shoes." But just walking around instead of staying stuck at your desk helps implicitly. Sitting in one position for long periods of time can drain our energy levels; a study by the Aeromedical Research Laboratory found that people who were tired performed better standing up than sitting down. Your body also links any inactivity (like sitting down for hours) with sleep, and, finally if you're staring at a computer screen for 10 hours on the trot (hello life), you blink less, leading to dry eyes, eye strain and fine lines around the eyes — all of which makes us look tired, when actually we're just work-laden. Take one minute of every hour to walk around, have a break and move — you'll see and feel the difference immediately.

OTHER WORDS WOMEN DON'T WANT TO HEAR. EVER

"You look tired" is not the only culprit

- ◆ "Love that dress — it's so forgiving."
- ◆ "Having a large nose is a sign of character."
- ◆ "I'm so jealous; I'd love to have a proper bum like you."
- ◆ "You really look like your dad you know."
- ◆ "Are you growing your eyebrows?"
- ◆ "Christ, how big are your feet?"
- ◆ "But that's not your natural colour, is it?"
- ◆ "You're looking so well."
- ◆ "That lipstick choice is brave"

6. LEVELS OF HYDRATION

Drinking too much water before bed causes inevitable bathroom issues and disrupts our sleep. But “dehydration during the night causes waking and can even lead to panic attacks,” explains Dr Stanley. Keeping a large glass of water by your bed and drinking half before bed and half in the morning should ensure you’re hydrated but not *too* hydrated. It’s not just night-time hydration ruining our appearance, though. Even mild dehydration can make us look and feel lethargic; in fact, by the time we ‘feel’ thirsty, we’ve already lost 2-3% of our bodily fluid. Our blood volume lowers, meaning we don’t get as much blood to our brains and our heart has to pump faster. While our body is working overtime, the blood (and colour) is diverted away from places that don’t need it, like our faces, causing us to look ultra-drained. We’re told to drink eight glasses a day but that’s just a guess; the real amount depends on your weight, height and activity level. The hydration calculator (h4hinitiative.com) will tell you your precise daily water quota.

7. KEEPING THE VOLUME TOO HIGH

Noise equals stress. Your pulse rate and blood pressure increase, your adrenaline surges and it puts added burden on your entire nervous system. It’s a huge issue in fast-paced, lively offices (welcome to

Stylist) so investing in decent noise-cancelling earphones or

wax earplugs give you a little more headspace and reduces any wrinkle-inducing stress levels. Ultimately, you have to work harder if you’re trying to do your job and combat the effects of a noisy stressful office – all of which drains you even further. If noise at home is affecting your sleep, consider investing in a white-noise machine that creates a sound akin to water rushing to help soothe you into slumber. Heavy blackout curtains can also help shut out the din of passing traffic, but sleep guru Anandi has another noise-cancelling trick for a restful night: “The one noise that can comfort us is humming. Hum for 15 minutes before bed as it stimulates serotonin leading to a great, and hopefully blissful, night’s sleep.”

“SNEAK OUT FOR A 10-MINUTE WALK AT LEAST ONCE DURING THE DAY – BRIGHT LIGHT HAS A CAFFEINE-LIKE POWER TO MAKE YOU LOOK ALERT”

8. AN OUT-OF-DATE BEAUTY ROUTINE

In the winter everything is darker – from the evenings to our moods – but few of us adapt our beauty regimes accordingly (a study*** in 2012 revealed that the average woman will only make changes to her signature look every 12 years). Seasonal beauty grooming is key. Ensure your foundation has a brightening effect in the darker months by using a primer like Clinique Superprimer Colour Corrects Dullness (£20 each). The slight pink tones lift and enhance the nuances of natural skin. It’s also important to adapt your colours. “Brighter shades in winter clash with the greyer skies,” says Illamasqua creative director make-up artist Alex

Box. “Embracing darker shades creates a contrast with any skintone brightening our faces.” Our skincare should change too; Cosmetic Doctor Dr Frances Prenna Jones advises an extra dose of exfoliation if we’re looking weary. “Use glycolic acids. These fruit acids dissolve the top layer of dead skin cells and resurface the skin by allowing the active new skin cells underneath to spring to the surface for plumper and brighter skin.” Try Glycolic Fix, £12.95 for 60 pads, Nip + Fab – pre-moistened glycolic pads that provide a brighter skintone in one (clean) sweep.

9. YOUR THREAD COUNT MATTERS

Cotton bedding fabric is made of thousands of random fibres

twisted into yarns with tangles that protrude from the fabric’s surface. The higher the thread count, the more fibres are packed into the fabric’s construction which leads to thicker, stiffer sheets. If you wake up with raw or sensitive skin on your face, it could be that your thread count is too high, causing irritation. Dyed bed linen can also add to this facial aggravation, (exacerbating the tired appearance of your skin) so opt for low-thread count white linen if tired-looking, blotchy morning skin is becoming a concern. Sleeping on your side or back is preferable too; lying on your stomach pushes your face into the harsh cotton causing more inflammation still. The ideal choice is silk sheets that glides across

the skin – amino acids found in silk could prevent premature ageing.

10. SUGAR OVERLOAD

We know that sugar is the nemesis of beautiful skin. Renowned American dermatologist Dr Nicholas Perricone confirms this: “One of the reasons inflammation occurs in the skin is from a rapid rise in blood sugar, which causes biochemical changes in the cell that results in accelerated ageing. When blood sugar increases, sugar can attach itself to collagen in a process called glycation, making the skin stiff. Losing the elastic resilience of young skin will give you deep wrinkles and make you look old.” It’s hard enough to avoid office treats as it is, but your sleep-deprived brain finds it impossible to resist. People who have gone without enough sleep release higher levels of hormones that let the body know it’s time to eat – and fewer hormones that signal being full, according to the University of Chicago Medical Center. Research from Uppsala University in Sweden also shows that the sleep-starved select bigger portion sizes. If you want to wake up looking peachy follow Dr Perricone’s advice: “The amino acid tryptophan helps the body get regular sleep. The best sources include salmon, turkey, cottage cheese and grapes – which are brilliant for your skin too.”

In a sizable nutshell that’s why we look tired even if we’re not. So the next time a well-meaning colleague comments on your lack of sleep, it could just be a sign that your life is out of sync.

ENSURE YOU HAVE A GOOD FACE DAY

Help yourself look more vibrant with the following products...

JAWBONE UP

Keep this wristband on all night to monitor your micro movements, determining when you are in deep or light sleep. Over time it will reveal your sleep patterns and an alarm can wake you at the right time in your cycle. **£99.99, jawbone.com**



BLISS TRIPLE OXYGEN INSTANT ENERGIZING MASK

Quick enough to apply at work, this five-minute mask foams up after being applied and promises to inject a rosy glow into sallow, tired complexions. **£39.90, blissworld.co.uk**



SILKSKIN PILLOWCASE

Pillow marks on your face: not very professional. This pure silk pillowcase lets skin breathe, allowing night cream to penetrate and keep your face hydrated. **£44, silkskin.co.uk**



BEACH BOMB BY BLUSH TERRYBLY

“The hyaluronic acid in this blusher genuinely lifts your skin, and this shade suits most skintones,” says Stylist’s beauty and features writer Anita Bhagwandass. For those days when more sleep isn’t an option. **£53, uk.spacenc.com**

