

## MAKE A PLAN

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James H. Carraway, M.D.  
Eastern Virginia Medical School

Most of you who take the time to read a health-related article such as this one which appears monthly are oriented to constantly improving and altering your lifestyle and nutritional intake to give you a health advantage and improve longevity in your coming years. There are other areas which we discuss such as improving your appearance, your skin in particular, and maintaining a fresher or even younger look. Each one of us pursues our own set of goals in such a way that will enable us hopefully to be able to say that in 5 or 10 years we are better in the areas we have strived to maintain or improve. In order to achieve this, it is helpful to have a plan for a particular time segment coming up over the years of your life. Once you begin with a plan for one thing, you may begin to include other aspects of your life in this general plan.

Starting with the major issue of what you are currently doing, you can decide how long you wish to continue this and what level of involvement that would be. For example, if you have worked with the public as a teacher, sales rep, nurse, financial advisor, or one of many other jobs in which you are in daily contact with other people, then you have always had to be at least a little concerned about your appearance, your mood, and your energy level. If you think about where you want to be in your life at the end of a given time period, you need to be able to live and be well and be attractive enough to maintain and enjoy your time then as much as you are now. If your next 5-year plan includes retirement, travel, a new career, or something else, you need the energy and desire for social interaction to sustain this.

In my own personal approach, I try to look at what I want to be doing 5 years from now and try to live a lifestyle that will help me get there in the best way. My plan is very definite, but as all plans, not necessarily written in stone. If I can stay healthy with nutrition and exercise, maintain my appearance with good skin and hair care, and always be aware of what I am doing to maintain and nurture my brain, then I can achieve my goal of working for the next 5 years. I still want to be doing at that time what I am doing now with the same energy and enthusiasm. In other words, I want to have the mental prowess, the appearance, and the desire for social interaction that I have now, and to continue to practice plastic surgery as I do. Each of you, if asked, could or already does have your own plan.

If the major item on your life is maintaining your health, then part of your plan must be to look at your family history of disease so that you can alter or prevent any tendency for a particular disease process to slow down or stop you from achieving your 5-year plan. For example, if you have a family history of coronary artery disease or stroke, be proactive in finding a way to prevent the onset or progression of this. If overweight, then find a definite way to get to your ideal weight now, and maintain that so that you will still be at that level in 5 years. Know what your cholesterol numbers are, and with your doctor's

help and with your own research and reading, pursue a nutritional and exercise pathway to help achieve that desired good level of health. Be aware of what fats are good and which ones are bad, and even read some controversial points of view by holistic providers, vegetarians, older marathon runners, or any others who don't simply just rely on their physician's advice, but think "out of the box" about how to maintain their health. Be aware of your heart function, brain function, coronary artery calcium level, strength, balance, vision, and other ways to predict how your health compares to what it is now. We know from our reading and from listening to others that we as individuals can make our own difference, sometimes better than just by taking medicines.

If you have decided that you are committed to being healthy and feeling good in 5 years, then you need to also have an appearance that is in "sync" with this approach. Starting with your hair, if you are noticing loss of fullness and luster, then supplements, topical applications of certain hair growth stimulants such as Rogaine, laser treatments for promoting hair growth, and coloring along with a good hairstyle will keep you looking good.

The skin is the next area over which we have a great deal of control, and I tell my patients that no matter what the condition of their skin now that it can be better in 5 years even with the aging process. This is because we have the technology and preparations to assure this. When I opened my cosmetic surgery practice to take care of patients in their appearance, I would not have been forward thinking unless a skin care center was built at the same time and had the same importance as our surgical suite. This has proven to be true. Even if rejuvenative surgery is performed, the skin has to be maintained and progressive changes reversed so that a person can look better in 5 years than when I initially see them. Moisturizers, protective sunscreen preparations, nurturing skin supplements, maintenance of healthy collagen stimulation, and finally ablative procedures such as laser or other light treatments can allow you to achieve the goals which you desire. However, you do need a current assessment of where you are and some sort of expert advice about how you can do better with your skin in 5 years.

The next area of concern is your activity level, and you must be aware that after the mid-forties, your muscles begin to atrophy a little each year. Remember that it is your muscle activity that burns calories and gives you the energy and strength to do all you desire. Whether you plan to work or to retire and travel, you will need to maintain the ability to do so. Prevention of muscle atrophy comes only with the use of your muscles, and if you don't get this in your work, you need to get it in exercise.

Another area of concern is your facial appearance. If you are looking tired, your facial skin or your eyelids are sagging, or your neck is hanging loosely. Then it may be wise to do something to help that situation. Lines and creases can be smoothed with Botox or fillers to achieve smaller gains in improvement of appearance, and other procedures such as an eyelid "lift" or neck lift can be done. The main point here is that you need to think about how you will look in 5 years if you do or don't do what it takes to improve certain progressive features of aging. See your plastic surgeon of choice and at least get some information which will help you formulate this overall plan.

We can change every aspect of our dieting, but we can usually make a significant difference in all areas of our life plan including our ability, our appearance, our state of mind, and our feelings of self-worth. Make a plan in all of these areas, get expert help in determining what you really can be, and do what it takes to be better in 5 years!