

# REACH THE BEACH

By Monica Sellecchia

Ahhh summertime...a time when over 60 million Americans travel to the beach to enjoy the sun, ocean and sand and, most importantly, to show off the beach-ready bodies that they've been working on all winter. Though you may think this article is about losing weight and getting fit, it isn't. Aside from your physique, there are other important things to remember when getting beach ready, like your skin, hair and general health.

Lying in the scorching sun all day does more than give you a tan or a sunburn – it could contribute to premature skin aging, skin damage, and skin cancer. Since the SPF system was developed in 1962, people have been applying SPF 15–100 sunscreens on their skin. Applying sunscreen is still important, but what if there were things that we could eat that could improve our skin health from the inside out?

Foods rich in Vitamin C and E (known antioxidants) help reduce wrinkles, improve skin texture, and reduce the appearance of scars and rough, dry skin. Take olive oil (rich in Vitamin E), for example. In 2012, researchers found that individuals with a higher consumption of olive oil showed 31% fewer signs of aging compared to people who ate less than 1 teaspoon of olive oil a day. 1 What else is in olive oil that helps your skin? Well, about 75% of the fat in olive oil is monounsaturated fatty acids, which may play a role in creating a youthful look.

Tomatoes support olive oil in the battle to prevent sunburn and sun damage. Even though it's not a replacement for sunscreen, tomatoes and tomato paste, consumed daily with olive oil, provided 33% more protection from sunburn than if only olive oil was consumed. Not to mention, the antioxidant lycopene found in tomatoes improves the skin's natural SPF.

When it comes to beverages, that Pina Colada you've been sipping on isn't doing you any good, so why not stick with water? Water is the best way to keep your skin hydrated, and when your skin is hydrated, it's less likely to wrinkle. Instead of reaching for sugary drinks like mixed drinks, juices, sodas or sports drinks, reach for a glass of water. Sugar can affect collagen (the protein that holds our bodies together) and cause our skin to sag and wrinkle. Nobody wants that! All kinds of foods, from eggs to sunflower seeds to soy to sardines to green tea, can play a part in keeping our skin healthy and potentially lessen the harmful effects of the sun.

Aside from skin health, your general health could suffer while at the beach. Calories, hydration and exercise are things to keep in mind when considering your health.

You can make the most of your time at the beach AND hone in on healthy habits! Here are 6 habits to remember before you hit the sand:

## 1. Load up on sunscreen.

Take the time to choose the right SPF and sunscreen just for you. Once you reach the beach, don't forget to apply a thick layer of sunscreen. Apply it 30 minutes before you head into the sun and lather up every

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two hours for optimal protection. Check to see if yours is water-resistant.

## 2. Cover Up.

Cover-ups are more than for just looking cute. You've got to know when it's time to call it quits and cover up. Bring hats, sunglasses, dark clothing and even an umbrella to protect your skin and stay cool when things get too hot!

## 3. Bring Your Own Snacks.

If you pack healthy snacks like fresh fruit, nuts, veggies, crackers, popcorn, or hummus, you'll be less tempted to go for the sugary, fatty foods that the boardwalk tempts you with. Just watch out for the seagulls...they're vicious!

## 4. Get Moving.

It's tempting to just lay in the sun all day, but walking, jogging, swimming, biking or throwing a Frisbee could help you burn off some extra calories and will keep you feeling energized and upbeat!

## 5. Stay Hydrated.

Drink water throughout the day, especially if you're sitting in the sun all day. The recommended daily intake of water is anywhere from 64 fl.oz. to 100 fl.oz., depending on if you're a man or woman and if you exercise on a daily basis. Adding mint to water or iced tea can help your body stay cool!

## 6. Drink Smart.

Some drinks can contain from 400–600 calories or more! Skip cocktails made with sugary mixers and stick to wine, spritzers and low calorie beverages. Remember alcoholic beverages can dehydrate you, so if you must drink alcohol, drink a glass of water in between beverages.

Though getting extra sleep and taking advantage of the relaxing ocean sounds didn't make the list, they are very important in the quest to maintaining optimal health at the beach and beyond. Taking care of your body from head-to-toe this summer will not only make your time at the beach more enjoyable, but it will also make you less regretful once winter hits and you're left dealing with weight gain and skin issues from the summer.



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