

CHAPTER NINE

GETTING PHYSICAL

Challenges are gifts that force us to search for a new center of gravity. Don't fight them, just find a different way to stand

—Oprah Winfrey

If you are looking in the mirror and do not like the woman looking back at you, then fix it or change it. Maybe you have spent a lot of time in the sun and damaged your skin. Make an appointment for an evaluation with a knowledgeable professional and find out your options. If you want to welcome your new wrinkles as you age, that is your prerogative, but they have no business on my face! I opted for a facelift, but that was my personal decision and not necessarily one you would choose! If you smoke—well, you already know those statistics, so quit right now while there is still time for your body to repair itself.

It is always fun to visit a makeup counter and get a makeover. Maybe you are stuck in the seventies and need an update. Maybe permanent makeup is an option. It certainly is fun to get up in the morning looking vibrant instead of like a faded photo. Well, what are you waiting for? Get to it! If your teeth are yellowed or stained from coffee, red wine, or nicotine, get them whitened; it literally takes years off your appearance. If you

cannot afford to have them professionally whitened, check out other options online or at your local pharmacy. Now smile—you are a princess!

What about your hairstyle, is it flattering or dragging you down. Gravity does enough of that for us. Nothing revs up a look more or lifts our spirits like a saucy new do. If you are happy with au natural that is your choice as long as you have a great cut and style that compliments you. Sometimes a few highlights spark up dull hair or maybe you need a richer color. I changed my look recently when Katie Holms donned her new-cropped bob. I even changed my color to a lighter, brighter red. What fun I have had shocking friends and family. I love it! How about your wardrobe, is it perky or downright dowdy? Ask someone you trust, *really trust*, his or her opinion of your look. Maybe the new you might need a shopping spree. I do not want to dress as if I am twenty-five years old, but I do want to look the best I can for the age I am. It does not necessarily take a lot of money to spark up your look and you certainly do not have to do it all at once.

DIET AND EXERCISE

Diet and exercise are very personal issues and no one can tell another what to eat and how to work out. In this chapter I've included suggestions to encourage you to take a serious look at your current lifestyle habits. As we get older, we deserve to be in the best health possible. Check with your physician to see what she may suggest to put you at optimal health—which is feeling great and looking fabulous!

Our thoughts, diet, and exercise are three of the main things that keep us in control of our life. You will see how each part of our frame plays directly off the other sides. All sides must be in balance in order to make the perfect framework of a total person. If one side is missing or unbalanced, the other sides suffer.

The things I do physically—such as exercise and good nutrition—help keep me mentally sound. What works for me may not necessarily work for you, but I will give you some ideas that may be helpful to get you started.

I spent the first several years of my life never having to

worry about anything I ate. I was blessed with a tall thin frame—until menopause came along. Overnight I could no longer eat anything or any amount I desired, and I must admit I was shocked. I had to take another view on comments from women who said, “I hardly eat anything and still gain weight.” I used to think, “Yeah, right; I bet you are secretly chowing down.” What a rude awaking I had, and yes, I am ashamed at my insensitive attitude toward other women struggling with weight gain. Here is the total truth: Unless you put exercise in the equation, you will never be in charge of your body.

Now is a good time to get moving! If you start easy and do not try to tone up and slim down overnight, you will soon be on your way to better health and vitality. If it fits in your budget and you can at all swing it, do hire a trainer. Even if you can only manage one or two sessions, it will be worth it. They will teach you the proper way to hold and maneuver weights so you will not have muscle strain or other injuries. Always check with your doctor before starting any type of exercise.

10/10 CHANGE PLAN

Let's start with my 10/10 Change Plan—ten minutes of cardio and ten minutes of weight-bearing exercise. Whether walking outside or on a treadmill, the important thing is that you are moving. Start with an easy slow stride to give your body time to adjust and warm up, then gradually increase your speed to three miles per hour. Do not attempt to begin by running, as you may injure yourself, and this is exactly what happens to some who try to run a marathon their first time on a treadmill. They literally cannot walk the next day and never attempt to exercise again.

My friend Karol shared this hilarious story with me that could have easily been a disaster. Karol was walking fast on the treadmill at her gym, when for some reason she let go of the handles. She flew backwards at the speed of light with her bottom leading the way. Fortunately, she landed on her bottom instead of face down on the treadmill. The only thing hurt was her pride. Be very careful and hang on!

In my early days of speed walking, I had read that if you pump your arms in a slightly bent position, parallel to the ground

about waist high, it would tone the backs of your arms. Well, I am telling you, do not even think about it. I could not move for days and my ribcage felt like someone had used it for a punching bag!

My sister Carol told me her story of an overzealous try at walking. She started walking slowly and decided that if she put three-pound weights on each arm, it might help her get in shape faster. Well, that went all right the first few days, so she thought maybe it would even be better if she strapped weights on each ankle. By the time she had walked one mile, she was so exhausted that her gait became a slow motion drag. She barely made it home before collapsing. The next day she could not move. She injured her neck and back and was unable to resume walking for a month. I tease her about why she did not hide the weights under a tree and come back with her car to retrieve them. Start out walking easy; no weights strapped on your body!

Once you have gotten into a routine and you feel comfortable, pick up your pace. Who knows, you may love the wonderful invigorating way you feel after a long brisk walk, and may decide to try running. I personally enjoy walking and love being out early as I live in southern Florida and it can get very hot later in the day.

If you want to reshape and strengthen your body, incorporate weight lifting into your schedule. Start with two- to three-pound weights and go easy on yourself. The following exercises, using only free weights, will have your body firmed up before you know it. In six weeks, you will be able to see a marked difference.

Do free weights only every other day so you do not over tax muscles. If you can only manage three times a week, that is all right, as long as you are consistent, you will still see a difference. Not only will you see a difference, I guarantee you will feel a difference.

Follow the simple weight lifting directions below and you will be on your way to taking charge of your body. You deserve to look and feel good!