

# Here's looking at you

## Making the most of your appearance

**Like it or not, we judge most people on their appearance. Long before you open your mouth, someone meeting you for the first time will have come to all sorts of conclusions about the type of person they think you are, based on what you look like.**

It's true - you only get one chance to make a first impression. You may be familiar with the research that shows that at a first meeting you are judged 55% on your appearance, 38% on your tone of voice, and only 7% by what you actually say.

So, as an *in my primer*, making the most of your appearance is absolutely crucial. Whether male or female, you are a walking advertisement for who you are and the attitudes you embody, so if you want to be seen as *in your prime*, you have to look that way.

It's not shallow, or trivial. If you look like an old fogey who doesn't care about their appearance, then that's how you will be perceived. Someone who looks scruffy and unkempt is perceived as having that attitude to everything in their life.

Of course, that's true at any age but today in our society it's easy for others (younger people in particular) to lump you in the category of 'old' if you don't take positive steps to look your best. *Keeping up appearances* is truly an apt expression – by looking stylish, elegant and meticulous, you show that you are energetic, aware and that you still value yourself and the good opinion of others.

By no means are we advocating that you try and look 21 (or even 30!); there's nothing more pathetic than someone who is obviously desperate to hang on to their youth and who shows it by acting and addressing totally inappropriately. It's embarrassing beyond belief.

What we do recommend is that you commit to **making the effort** to making the best of every aspect of yourself. And it is an effort. Like everything else worth having, it requires constant attention to detail and hard work. But the rewards are enormous in terms of your own improved self-

esteem and the opportunities which will open up to you.

Making the most of yourself requires willpower, effort and determination. We know that these are attributes that most *in my primers* have by the bucket load – so you just have to decide how best to use them to get the particular results you want. To help you, here are some suggested areas:

### Stylish and contemporary

One of the biggest advantages of being *in my prime* is that you're no longer obliged to be a slavish follower of fashion. In fact, it's far better to wear what suits you and what you feel comfortable in. But this *doesn't* mean entering a time warp in which contemporary style by-passes you completely.

Colours, shapes, styles, and designs all change over the years – whether in clothes, hairstyles, or home design. So although you don't need to reflect 'the latest', you do need to keep up. If your appearance and surroundings are shouting 'eighties' or 'nineties', then it's obvious that you're a person that just doesn't have an interest in what's going on today. Perhaps not a problem for you (*'there's much more to me than that'* you say) but if you're trying to impress other people you won't get past first base (see the first impressions point earlier).

### Size and shape

By this time of your life we have all had to come to terms with our natural shape. If you're stocky, short-waisted or hairy, well, so be it. You can only work with what you've got. But that doesn't stop you making the most of yourself. Naturally stocky doesn't mean fat. Short-waisted means finding clothes that suit your shape. Naturally hairy (man or woman) means keeping it under control.

Again, not to do so is just a public admission that you don't really care about yourself. And at this age, that goes hand in hand – whether you like it or not – with *'old person who no longer cares...'*

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## Posture

Now's your final chance to stand up straight and look like you mean business before you slump into old age. Perhaps you've always had poor posture, but now is the time to take corrective action. By making a positive effort to stand, walk and sit better, you will appear more youthful, more active and more alert. And it should prevent you from back, bone and muscle problems in later life.

Don't just look in the mirror, get someone else's opinion on this. Do they think you stand and walk like a young person or an old one? Have you (please no) started grunting or groaning when you sit down or get up out of chairs? Do you struggle to tie up your shoe laces? Do you look for support from banisters or rails instead of bounding up stairs? If so, get a grip. Stop it. You're not old yet!

## Clothes

Stylish, contemporary flattering clothes are the easiest way to demonstrate to the world that you are youthful, elegant and *in your prime*. There's no need to ditch comfort entirely, but you're not yet at the age where it should be your only criterion.

If you suspect that your wardrobe could do with a revamp, start looking at what other people of this age are wearing – particularly celebrities and media personalities. Look at magazines, TV programmes and films. Go to the shops and just look at what is on offer. Try things on – things that you wouldn't normally choose in a million years. Pay a visit to department stores which offer personal shopper facilities and see what they choose for you. Also, consider investing in a consultation with a colour analyst such as [www.houseofcolour.co.uk](http://www.houseofcolour.co.uk) or Colour Me Beautiful [www.cmb.co.uk](http://www.cmb.co.uk)

## Hair

Your hair really is your crowning glory and next to clothes, it is probably your biggest indicator of the trouble you take over your appearance. Here men and women differ in that many men may be suffering from hair loss and may not feel comfortable about changing their hair colour.

Fine. That's no barrier to ensuring that what hair you have is clean, dandruff free, regularly trimmed and in good condition.

For women, this applies equally with the additional point that like clothes, your hairstyle should be contemporary (not the same style you wore twenty years ago), and that hair colour should be appropriate to your image. Remember, for men, grey is distinguished. Generally, for women, it is simply ageing. (Of course, if you do colour your hair, *keep it up*. No roots or patches of grey!)

## Eyes

If you've had good eyesight in the past, now is the time you may find you need glasses. Even if you've had to wear glasses throughout your life, you are probably now experiencing changes to your vision.

Don't fight it. Get your eyes checked regularly (for symptoms of disease as well as anything else) and if you have to wear glasses, go for contemporary frames and – like the rest of your wardrobe – change them regularly. 'Old' style glasses are an instant giveaway that the wearer doesn't care about keeping up.

Consider contact lenses - they're more youthful than glasses and new developments mean that they're easier and more comfortable than they've ever been.

## Teeth

Hopefully, you're not now echoing the Pam Ayres poem – '*I wish I'd looked after my teeth*', but now is definitely the time to do so. Brush, floss, visit the dentist regularly. Hold on to what you've got.

By this time of life teeth may be discolouring, so look into teeth whitening procedures and also, if you can afford it and your teeth have always been a bugbear, think about cosmetic dentistry – it's never too late to have a sensational smile.

## Nails

Men or women – nails are again a huge indicator of the care you take. They should be clean, neatly trimmed and appropriate in appearance. If you bite them – STOP.

## Cosmetic surgery

This is very much a personal choice, but shouldn't be ruled out if you have the money, have done the research and are clear about what it will actually do for you. Plastic surgeons are not magicians. If you are overweight, you would probably do better to lose weight by traditional means. If you drink or smoke you should probably stop and see how that improves things before you embark upon a facelift. Whatever you do, bear in mind that things can go wrong – you must be aware of the risks.

## General grooming

There's nothing so attractive at any age as someone who is obviously clean, smells good and who wears fresh, well maintained clothes. Coordinate your appearance, nourish your skin, disguise your bad points, emphasise the good. Not only will you look much better, you'll be amazed at how much better and more confident you *feel*, too. Totally *in your prime*...