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A 102-year-old shares her simple, science-backed skincare secrets — and they don't include antiaging creams

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- **Deborah Szekely is 102 years old and works three days a week.**
- **She attributes her fitness and plump skin to her lifestyle.**
- **She shared the things she does that have helped her reduce wrinkles and sun spots.**

From looking at her, you wouldn't guess Deborah Szekely is 102 years old. Three days a week, the centenarian works at the health resort in Baja California, Mexico, which she founded with her husband in 1940 — and she doesn't plan to stop until nature tells her to, she told CNBC Make It earlier this year.

She also seems to have avoided the sun spots and loss of skin plumpness that often come with age.

With people living longer than ever before, the market for antiaging products is growing rapidly: It was estimated to be worth \$41.2 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach \$60 billion by 2030, according to the market-research company Research and Markets.

But Szekely's secret to good skin isn't spending hundreds of dollars on creams that promise to turn back time. Instead, she credits her lifestyle choices and a few simple skincare products. This chimes with research: One 2023 review of evidence published in the journal *Cosmetics* found that a good diet, physical exercise, and getting enough sleep appeared to help skin health as people aged. Research also suggests that how skin ages is affected by genes, which are out of our control.

Business Insider spoke to Szekely to find out how she's kept her skin in such good condition.

Eating 'fresh, healthy foods'

"I give all the credit to a good diet and regular exercise. It's very important to keep moving. Even now, at 102, I walk a mile every day," Szekely said.

One review of studies published earlier this year in the journal *JMIR Dermatology* suggested that regular exercise could reduce age-related skin changes such as wrinkles and dry skin.

Diet can also play a role.

Szekely said she eats mostly "fresh, healthy foods," which she thinks has contributed to her great skin. She doesn't eat highly processed foods that contain more than three ingredients.



A 2020 review of studies published in *The Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology* indicated that a whole-food, plant-based diet could help prevent skin aging. The authors argued this could be because it reduces the number of carcinogens people ingest and lengthens telomeres, which are the DNA sequences at the ends of chromosomes that shorten over time and cause markers of aging on a cellular level.

Sunscreen is the best way to prevent skin aging

Szekely has a simple daily skincare routine, too.

"Here's my secret: You must thoroughly clean all the makeup off your face before sleeping," she said.

Her biggest skincare recommendation for younger people wanting good skin is to wear sunscreen. She wears a moisturizer containing sunscreen every day.

Dr. Derek V. Chan, a board-certified medical and cosmetic dermatologist in Manhattan, previously told BI that sunscreen is "by far the most important part" of an antiaging skincare routine. Using a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more every day can help protect against the aging effects of ultraviolet light, he said.

Many of Szekely's tips are in line with those her fellow centenarians have previously shared with BI when it comes to maintaining health, fitness, and skin quality later in life.