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# OFF DUTY

**Dennis Quaid's Robot**  
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FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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Saturday/Sunday, March 14 - 15, 2020 | **D1**

In the past, reaching 50 wasn't exactly cause for celebration for women, but...



Bette Davis at 50



Rita Hayworth in her 50s



Betty Grable at 52



Lucille Ball at 50



Marlene Dietrich at 51



Josephine Baker in her 50s

...thanks to antiaging tech and age-defying icons like Jennifer Lopez and Jennifer Aniston, that's changing.

Is looking like J. Lo an inspirational goal for the rest of us or an unrealistic fantasy?



Ella Fitzgerald in her 50s



Vivien Leigh at 51



Wallis Simpson at 50

## The New Face of 50



Jennifer Lopez at 50



Jennifer Aniston at 50



Salma Hayek at 53



Halle Berry at 50

GETTY IMAGES

BY DANA WOOD

**Q**uestion for you, me and every other woman who has blown out 50-plus candles on recent birthday cakes: Did we honestly think Jennifer Lopez would look anything but spectacular when she reached our age? This is a former "Fly Girl" who just delivered an entirely plausible performance as a stripper in 2019's "Hustlers," then imported an iteration of her trusty pole to the 2020 Super Bowl half-time show and, Spandex-clad, stunned viewers with her gyrations. You don't do either of those things at ages 49 and 50, respectively, without a mammoth amount of prep, and, in Ms. Lopez's case, years of herculean determination to stay not just youthful, but stripper-hot. While Ms. Lopez might be an outlier, she's certainly not the only Hollywood woman redefining what the 50s can look like. Catherine Zeta-Jones (50), Jennifer Aniston (51), Salma Hayek (53) and Halle Berry (53) are all also driving the conversation around shifting beauty standards.

And shift those standards have. Plop a picture of Ms. Lopez and her muscled thighs next to an image of Wallis Simpson, a renowned sylphlike beauty of her time, and it's clear how much we have come to value chisel, effort and dewy glow over modesty and decorum. But, as role models for women approaching menopause, are these toned, wrinkleless superstars aspirational or unrealistic?

For every post-Super Bowl pearl-clutcher who felt Ms. Lopez's skimpy get-up weakened the fabric of moral society, or affronted essayists like Jennifer Weiner, who bemoaned that the bar for 50-year-olds had been raised too high, there's another woman who's happy to cut herself some slack. "There are people who are so superhuman that I have no way of pondering them as a focal point of jealousy," said Maryellen Gordon, 58, a brand consultant in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Other women, some a decade-plus older than Ms. Lopez, admit they reacted to her Super Bowl performance with a complex stew of emotions including envy, admiration and a desire to push themselves. "I can't in hindsight say I found watching the Super Bowl depressing," said Hollywood, Fla.-based publicist Karen Dennis, 63.

"But watching J. Lo did force me to look in the mirror and reassess my face and my body. Sometimes those wake-up calls are good...I did work out harder in the gym the next morning."

More than anything else, "working harder" is at the crux of "the new 50." Celebrity fitness routines are nothing new, but daily, strategized workouts that are broadcast to the public are. And thanks to social media, particularly Instagram and YouTube, we're privy to how stars etch six-packs into their abs and yoga-sculpt their enviable upper arms. Ms. Lopez chronicled her campaign to get stripper pole-ready for "Hustlers" in a series of low-fi, jaw-dropping videos. The fitness pros who train celebrities over 50 are influencers in their own right: Jennifer Aniston's trainer Leyon Azubuki boasts over 45,000 followers on Instagram and shares details of their workouts via social media.

For those of us who wince at each incremental increase in our gym membership fees, isn't a personal coach out of reach? Fitness director David Kirsch, who's worked with Ms. Lopez for years, dismisses those who ascribe her fabulous figure to pure wealth. According to him, the building

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## STYLE &amp; FASHION

## This Is 50

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blocks of beauty—a solid exercise regime and diet—are democratic. “The haters say, ‘She has unlimited wealth, she has chefs, she has trainers.’ And I say, there are ways to move your body that don’t cost a million dollars...It’s easy to make smarter food choices. And there’s a plethora of information out there. Jennifer talks about what she eats.”

Ample research supports Mr. Kirsch’s belief in the importance of eating well at this life stage: Encroaching menopause and a corresponding plummet in estrogen stack the deck against women in their 50s hoping to stay slim. And those extra pounds like to weld themselves to our midsections. “Central fat distribution” is the Mayo Clinic’s unromantic term for this phenomenon, and, according to its cheery 2017 study, “Weight Gain in Women at Midlife: A Concise Review of the Pathophysiology and Strategies for Management,” we can expect to pack on an average of 1.5 pounds every year of our fifth and sixth decades. Since all the SoulCycle classes in the world won’t undo the damage wrought by Dorito munching (increasingly, the data points toward the inefficiency of exercise as a weight-loss tool), it’s smart to direct your willpower toward nutrition.

## ‘You can’t start these treatments at 49 if you want to look great at 50.’

Of course, you should still exercise and avail yourself of all the other benefits it confers, namely heart health and stress management. Just factor in what makes the most sense for a woman in midlife. Consider adding strength training to the mix to counter bone loss, and maybe even take up a sport to widen your social network. Diving into tennis in my 50s has boosted both my concentration levels and my friend circle. Do I love how my legs look in those microscopic dresses? Not especially. But I’m way too fixated on adding topspin to my lob to fret about errant spider veins.

Should I ever want to rid myself of those “old lady” veins, or have a constellation of age spots lasered off my face or my forehead de-furrowed, I need only head to the dermatologist, where a bewildering array of antiaging treatments awaits. Indeed, so much is on offer today that it’s entirely too easy to fall into the cosmetic-procedure rabbit hole, trying each new alleged youthifier as it crops up.

While he offers his fair share of hyped wonder treatments (including something called a “Silhouette InstaLift”), Beverly Hills dermatologist Dr. Harold Lancer, who has monitored Ms. Lopez’s pores at close range for several years, advocates first landing on a simple, effective skin-care regimen and

sticking with it. Dr. Lancer said it’s Ms. Lopez’s ability to stick with one routine, and not get distracted by every new shiny miracle cream she encounters, that makes her skin so enviable. “Patients will oftentimes use her as an example of what exemplifies their goals in a healthy, radiant complexion,” he said.

But what about deeper wrinkles? Sagging jowls? And that crepey, droopy, 4-inch expanse of awfulness parked between the chin and the clavicle? The late, turtle-neck-loving Nora Ephron certainly isn’t the only woman to feel bad about her neck.

On the wrinkle front, neurotoxin

Botox is still the standard treatment, although a similar compound—Jeuveau, approved by the FDA just last year—is gaining steam. For more intensive facial de-aging, e.g., the tightening of a flaccid jawline, here’s what doesn’t factor into “the new 50”: major face-lifts. “There has absolutely been a paradigm shift in our understanding of aging and how we treat it,” said Manhattan plastic surgeon Dr. Adam Kolker. “It used to be that nipping and tucking and pulling things tight was the solution. Now there is an understanding that as we age, we lose volume, and that doing a full-blown face-lift—the face-lift of 15 years ago—just simply

doesn’t look natural. It looks tight.”

Its successor? Judicious use of fillers, said Dr. Kolker, as well as new radio frequency technology that promises to tighten the skin on both the face and body and has emerged as a genuinely promising option among the baffling multitudes of new cosmetic procedures. “Radio frequency microneedling has really given our skin texture and tone and the ability to remodel and ‘prejuvenate,’” said Los Angeles dermatologist Dr. Ava Shamban.

Though “prejuvenate” is cutesy jargon, the underlying sentiment—to get in front of aging with minimally invasive treatments rather than tackle a major overhaul down

the road—is shared by numerous beauty experts. “This is a process,” said Dr. Kolker. “It’s a routine that needs to be developed before the signs of aging set in. You can’t start these treatments at 49 if you want to look great at 50.”

While that might sound daunting to some women, others, like 55-year-old model and writer Veronica Webb, genuinely enjoy tinkering in the name of looks maintenance. “I love fashion, I love beauty, I love the self-expression involved with all of it,” said Ms. Webb. “When I see any woman who looks great, who takes the time to put her best face forward, it makes me happy. It lifts up the whole situation.”

## Putting a Price on Youth

Defying time is expensive, especially when top-notch specialists are involved. Here, an estimate of what the youthful new 50 (for a generic celeb) could cost

## Nutrition

\$23,200 to  
\$44,800+ per  
year

Healthy eating needn’t break the bank, but under a nutritionist’s guidance, food could cost \$400 a week. Personal meal plans and support up the price.

## Face

\$8,500 to  
\$50,000 per year

Laser facials, fillers, skin-tightening Ultherapy, chemical peels and thread lifts are just a handful of the procedures calculated to maintain a flawless face.

## Makeup

\$500 to \$2,000+  
per session

Whether you summon an elite face-painter every morning or just for special events, immaculate maquillage proves that pain is beauty—financially speaking.

## Fitness

\$50,000 to  
\$150,000+ per  
year

You could sweat under the supervision of a top-tier pro for about 90 minutes a day, six days a week to get—and keep—a goddess-like physique.

## Hair

\$12,000 to  
\$110,000+ per  
year

Between color, highlights, cuts, extensions and blowouts executed by A-list stylists, your annual hair bill could exceed the cost of a sedan.

## Body

\$11,000 to  
\$39,000 per year

Cellulite treatments, fat-freezing procedures, laser treatments and more are potential investments for achieving ageless skin all over and a firm form.



PAUL RYDING



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Theory

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## Holding Back the Years

Three in-the-know, 50-something women share their beauty and body hacks



## Veronica Webb, model, writer, 55

**The face** On her blog, she chronicled her 2019 facial rejuvenation, which involved an unexpected benefit: Jaw Botox helped her stop grinding her teeth.

**The body** A proponent of “bio-hacks,” Ms. Webb had the radio-frequency treatment Trusculpt Flex to tighten her tummy. Other methods: SoulCycle, 305 Fitness, jumping rope and YouTube tai chi.

**Beauty motto** “Sweat takes you to a certain point, and then science has to help you cross the finish line.”



## Amy Wechsler, dermatologist, 50

**The face** She injects herself with Botox and Jeuveau, and less often, her physician’s assistant administers fillers. In addition to sunscreen, fragrance-free moisturizer is key. “Dry skin appears wrinkly.”

**The body** She swears by a workout that incorporates BFR (Blood-Flow Restriction) that she does privately with physiotherapist Steven Villagomez.

**Beauty motto** “I practice what I preach, but I make sure it’s done really naturally.”



## Maria Cornejo, fashion designer, 57

**The face** She uses Odièle Rose Serum, Drunk Elephant Virgin Marula face oil and Vintner’s Daughter serum, plus potions by dermatologist Rosemarie Ingleton.

**The body** She often walks over the Brooklyn Bridge to her Manhattan office from her Brooklyn home, and semiprivate Pilates classes fulfill a need to disconnect from her hectic schedule.

**Beauty motto** “When you’re happy and rested, it shows in your face.” —edited from interviews by Dana Wood