



It's time for a Seniors Makeover

By Bruce Mahony

We all know that looking good on the outside can be more of a challenge as we age. We gain weight and become less active, and many of us also become less conscious about how we present ourselves to others. In my business I see this every day because I work with seniors.

I operate two Home Instead Senior Care businesses in Toronto. Home Instead Senior Care is the world's largest provider of non-medical home care and companionship services for seniors and this summer we are partnering with Victoria Principal, former star of the TV show *Dallas*, in a public education campaign designed to help seniors improve their lives.

Today we hear a lot about 'makeovers' and there's no reason why seniors can't have a makeover too. And this is what we're doing. The campaign will help older adults make positive changes on the outside that can impact not only how they look, but how they feel.

Family caregivers are usually the prime motivators who encourage their senior loved ones to look good and feel good by cultivating a better appearance. It's true that our caregivers often see seniors whose interest in their appearance has waned, but that's no reason to give up. These people just need some help and encouragement.

Caregivers can take seniors to a salon or barber shop for a haircut or shave, and then go to lunch. This kind of thing lifts their spirits. Of course, we can't forget that seniors who suffer from such conditions as dementia or Alzheimer's disease can have a lot of trouble just feeling 'normal'. This is why we tell our caregivers that while they can't change the situation, they can train people and influence their environment in a positive way.

Our senior care makeover campaign aims to make seniors feel better about themselves with a stress on appearance, attire, hygiene and diet. The slogan attached to the campaign is 'Feeling Good from the Outside In'.

"People need to be careful as they get older because they have less energy and there is probably a temptation to take shortcuts with one's personal hygiene," says Victoria Principal, who is the author of four books on skin care and who founded the skin-care line Principal Secret.

So let's start with hygiene. Victoria's passion for this subject came from her own skin-care mentor, her mother, and she says that seniors can't underestimate the importance of good personal hygiene. Then there is hydration. The loss of hydration is one of the biggest factors that impacts how seniors look and feel as they age.

"When we're born our bodies are 80 percent moisture and by the time we die that has decreased to 64 percent," Victoria says. "So when I talk about skin looking beautiful and youthful, it's about skin that's so healthy it acts younger. That's very different than just trying to look young."

Diet and dress are important too. As part of our campaign, we have produced a senior makeover guide, complete with before-and-after photos and some simple tips. Seniors can do these tips on their own or seek the help of family caregivers. You can obtain this guide free of charge from any Home Instead Senior Care office in Canada by calling 1-866-453-6824.



There is no doubt that many elderly have serious and sometimes debilitating conditions to deal with. But you can suffer from various ailments and illnesses and still be able to have healthy skin, healthy styled hair and good teeth. A good attitude is important too.

There is plenty of evidence that the world's aging population does care about looking good on the outside. According to Global Cosmetic Industry (GCI) magazine, sales of anti-aging cosmetics increased more than 100 percent between 1997 and 2004, and jumped more than 11 percent from 2003 to 2004. Those numbers send a strong message to caregivers who can have a big impact helping a senior age gracefully.

The family or professional caregiver can play a valuable role in providing seniors with the support they need to accomplish their goals. Keep in mind that many seniors aren't only physically fragile, but they can be emotionally fragile too. So all the more reason they need support.

Now, how about those tips? Here are some for women, and also for men.

TIPS FOR WOMEN

1. Make-up shouldn't be a mask. Less is more. First apply a sheer foundation that matches your skin tone, followed by a moisturizing concealer around the upper and lower lids of the eyes. (Avoid perfume, mineral oil and wax products.)
2. Keep hair healthy with regular cuts or trims at least once a month. Use a shampoo that doesn't strip the hair or scalp. Follow with a leave-in or rinse-out hair rinse that coats the shafts of the hair.
3. Base your wardrobe around black, brown and taupe. Think monochromatic – the same colour on the top and bottom – because it elongates and slims. Use colour around the face. For example, combine a black jacket and black pants with a pink scarf.

TIPS FOR MEN

1. Exfoliate on a regular basis. It will make shaving so much easier and you'll look healthier because of your fresh skin.
2. Never use aftershave. It contains alcohol and fragrance and neither of these things belongs on the face.
3. Moisturize the face and neck every day (and don't forget your body).

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Editor's Note: To learn more about Home Instead Senior Care, visit www.homeinstead.com.