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*By Karen Asp*

Crow's-feet camping out on the open space around your eyes? Don't rush off to the dermatologist—get thee to a yoga class.

We all know yoga can relieve achy joints, soothe stress, and improve flexibility, but now you can add wrinkle prevention to its litany of therapeutic effects. In the past year, face yoga has gotten a brand new twist with classes popping up across the country. For instance, you can take Happy Face Yoga in Atlanta, Yoga for the Face at the Lake Austin Spa Resort in Austin, Texas, and Yoga Face in New York City. But can yoga really make your face look younger?

Annelise Hagen, creator of Yoga Face and author of *The Yoga Face* (Avery, 2007), says yes. "People who have been coming to my classes for a while look more toned and less saggy in their face," she says, adding that the facial muscles shouldn't be treated differently than other muscles in the body. "If you train the rest of your body, why not your face?"

That's exactly why Gary Sikorski created Happy Face Yoga classes. "When you strengthen the muscles in your face, you bring a youthful vitality to it," he says. In fact, after one of his students practiced the exercises regularly for six weeks, her children thought she'd had a facelift.

Anecdotal evidence aside, what do the experts say? "Over time, your facial muscles atrophy for many reasons, but one is disuse," says Doris Day, MD, a board-certified dermatologist in New York City, clinical assistant professor of dermatology at New York University School of Medicine, and author of *Forget the Facelift* (Penguin, 2006).

Because you use the same facial expressions every day, you're engaging only a few of the 26 paired muscles you have in your face. Moreover, these repeated expressions crease the skin in the same places, which causes wrinkles to develop and deepen.

By doing facial exercises, especially ones that lift and firm the face, you can tone up muscles that have atrophied, Day says. Unfortunately, though, you can't erase the wrinkles you have. "But you can prevent other wrinkles from forming and possibly decrease the need for future cosmetic procedures," she says, suggesting you do these exercises three to five times a week.

Want to try out one of these exercises at home? Hagen recommends one called the Lion Face. As you inhale through your nose, clench your fists and scrunch all of your facial muscles as if you've just sucked a lemon. Then exhale through your mouth, forcefully sticking out your tongue, rolling your eyes up, and thrusting open your hands. Repeat three times several times a week.

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