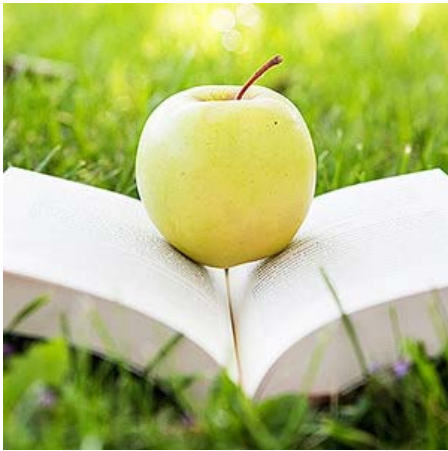


## 25 Things I Know Now That I'm 60

With age comes wisdom and a lot of smart life advice.

By Sally Stich



### What I Know Now

Before I turned 60, I had moments of dread unlike any big birthday before. The others had a fun factor—at 50, the jokes were about reaching the half-decade mark. At 55, I was double nickels. The only “joke” about turning 60 was my proximity to declining health. Not funny at all. But, as I discovered, turning 60 is a huge milestone—one to be embraced. It’s the beginning of a decade informed by wisdom, self-acceptance, love for family and friends, and best of all, great discounts that make me proud to be my age.

Here are 25 things I learned when I entered my seventh decade. >>



### 1. Patience, patience, patience

At this age, I understand that patience is the greatest virtue. That 16-year-old waitress who messed up my order could’ve been my daughter. That elderly gentleman driving 25 miles per hour reminds me of my dad. Now, I think twice before I snap, hoping that when I goof up or drive in two lanes, someone will grant me the same gift.



## 2. Toxic relationships aren't worth it

The clock's ticking, and I'm not wasting one more minute on people who bring me down, like the friend who is always complaining that I'm not supportive enough or the family member who always belittles me. Take my lead and say "Adios!" out loud or mentally wave good-bye. Either way, vamoose to people who nurture negativity, hit below the belt, or blow you off when something better comes along.



## 3. Let the five pounds stay there

Long shirts or tunics your best friend? Good for you! I no longer obsess over those last five—the hardest to lose—because it's simply not worth the deprivation. I even squeeze into Spanx for special occasions. At this age, disguise is a quick and welcome antidote to reality.



## 4. Senior discounts rock

Two bucks here, 30% off there—it adds up, and it seems almost naughty to get a senior discount when I feel so much younger than my age. Go to [Gift Card Granny](http://www.giftcardgranny.com/) (<http://www.giftcardgranny.com/>) for a list of 196 discounts for seniors.

## 5. Being called "Ma'am" makes me feel old

Truthfully, when you call me "ma'am" it makes me feel like I'm



my mother-in-law, who *is* old. And don't call me "young lady" either. It's condescending. I don't need any special title just because I've hit 60. I'm still 40 inside my head.



## 6. Forgetting something does not mean Alzheimer's

Every time I forget a word or a name, I'm convinced I have Alzheimer's. My friends are convinced they are getting Alzheimer's, too. It seems to be the biggest worry amongst people over 60. (For the record, I don't have Alzheimer's because I researched [the difference between normal memory loss and Alzheimer's](http://www.scanhealthplan.com/) (<http://www.scanhealthplan.com/>), and you can, too.) Forgetting things is a normal part of aging. It's when we can't remember how to do daily tasks or something that just happened, that we need to worry.



## 7. "Organ recitals" are very popular

I'm not talking about music, I'm talking about, "My back went out," My cholesterol's too high," I'm having a colonoscopy tomorrow," "My blood pressure is off the charts." I personally don't enjoy this kind of banter—it's boring and aging—but I've learned that it comes with the territory. People like to talk about their ailments. The best thing you can do: sit politely (or excuse yourself for a glass of water) until the subject changes.



## 8. Sunscreen = good, sun = bad

I look at my skin and my hands and see brown spots (or age spots). These are the result of too much sun and not enough sunscreen in my youth (along with the use of foil reflectors—what was I thinking?). I've reversed the my formula—less sun and lots of sunscreen. I've also discovered that a good foundation can hide those spots.



## 9. Facebook isn't a waste of time

I suddenly delight in connecting with pals from my past, more so than ever before. Sure, I have wonderful friends in my adult life, but there's something uplifting, energizing, and meaningful about finding an old friend on Facebook, a friend who knew me when I was in my formative years. If you're not on Facebook, you're missing something.



## 10. Not planning for the inevitable is stupid

I've started thinking about things like long-term care insurance, estate planning, and end-of-life issues more seriously than ever before. Why? I have friends whose parents have recently died and left everything a mess. I vow to get everything in place so my kids don't have to make tough decisions while weeping over my hospital bed. A good place to start? [HelpGuide.org](http://helpguide.org) (<http://helpguide.org/>) for medical directives, and the [government web site on long term care](http://longtermcare.gov/) (<http://longtermcare.gov/>).

## 11. Being an



### over-achiever doesn't matter

Good grades in college, career success—the past doesn't matter to me as much now. My mind is all about the present. Where once I did most activities to bump up my resume, now I choose [activities that keep my brain stimulated \(http://www.lumosity.com/\)](http://www.lumosity.com/), which in turn makes me stimulating—and hopefully good company. At this age, I want to be current, not a dinosaur.



### 12. Romance still exists

As empty nesters, my husband and I split a whole cherry pie for dinner, if that's what we want. We sleep in till 10 a.m., if there's no compelling reason to get up. We are all about *us* as often as we can be. We've figured out that sharing the little things together keeps the spark alive.



### 13. Being proud of my kids isn't boastful

I've lived long enough to see the fruits of my parental labor, and after years of hard work and financial sacrifice, I now sit back and see what kind of adults my children have become. I'm pleased with the results and I think it's okay to talk about that with friends and family.

### 14. Being fit is about strength, not toned abs

In a perfect world, I'd like a better butt and flat abs, but I'll settle for feeling good and strong. "At this age, it's about endurance,



moderate strengthening, balance and stretching," says Carly Stewart, M.D., medical expert at [MoneyCrashers.com](http://www.moneycrashers.com).

(<http://www.moneycrashers.com/>)

"It's about maintaining muscle mass so you don't get physically weaker as you age."



### 15 My hairstylist is my anti-aging consultant

When she suggested I go with a shorter 'do because shorter styles are less aging than longer ones, I said, "Lop it off." She was right. I get many more positive comments now. Thinking of a short 'do? [Find great styles here](http://beauty.about.com/od/hairstylingtipstricks/ss/over50hair_4.htm)

([http://beauty.about.com](http://beauty.about.com/od/hairstylingtipstricks/ss/over50hair_4.htm)

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### 16. Frizzy, dry hair looks bad

I now realize my dry, brittle frizzy hair (from years of processing) is the appearance equivalent of an unmade bed in an otherwise neat room. The eye only notices the messiest thing. Here again, I turn to my hairdresser for anti-aging help. My miracle: a keratin treatment, which is expensive, I'll admit (about \$150), but it reduces frizz by 95%, gives my hair shine and luster, and reduces blowdrying time significantly. Hello, Beautiful!

### 17. Invest in a good pair of tweezers

I hate to admit it, but I've noticed a



few coarse hairs growing on my chinny chin chin—yuck! Completely unacceptable. When my older sister chose laser with not totally great results, I opted for tweezers. Really good, expensive tweezers can work wonders.



### 18. Laugh every day

An episode of *The Big Bang Theory*, a Dave Barry column, time with a silly friend—find little things that make you laugh every day. Besides being fun, laughter also has proven health benefits. It lowers blood pressure, reduces stress hormones, even suppresses pain. And it's something I can do even when other parts of my body fail me.

### 19. Problem solving comes easier

Whether it's because of [changes in the brain](http://www.grandparents.com/health-and-wellbeing/health/grandparents-wisdom-barbara-strauch)

(<http://www.grandparents.com/health-and-wellbeing/health/grandparents-wisdom-barbara-strauch>) that actually improve certain skills as we age, or the fact that you just don't get to be 60 without knowing how best to get from A to B, wading through the details to figure out how to solve a problem is so much simpler than it was when we were younger.



### 20. Control isn't the holy grail

Between my 20s and 50s, I believed I knew the answer to



almost everything. I didn't just suggest solutions; I inserted myself into the solution. By the time I got to my late 50s, I was exhausted, frustrated, and disappointed that no one seemed to appreciate my "help." At 60, a light bulb went on. Control does not equal happiness. The world operated just fine without my interference. The kids goof up and they can actually problem solve without me. My husband does the laundry his way and I now say, "Thank you," rather than, "Thank you, but....".

### 21. Turkeys don't have it so good



Turkeys and I share the same neck—a fleshy, jiggly wattle. Sigh. I'm not into plastic surgery, the only real "cure." Instead, I now invest in cool scarves and high necked shirts. And turning up the collar of a button-down shirt works wonders.



### 22. Forget presents; just give me your presence

When my friends ask what I want for my birthday, I tell them I want to do something together—lunch at a new restaurant, a trip to the museum, an afternoon movie, a walk. I don't need more tchotsckes; I want time with my galpals. It's experiences that we remember.

### 23. Protecting my bones is worth it

I do strength training, get 10 minutes of vitamin D exposure several days a week (without





sunscreen; it defeats the purpose), and I've added calcium to my diet in the form of milk, fat-free plain yogurt, fish, and dark greens. ([The Harvard Medical School Family Health Guide \(http://amzn.to/16ZWJD0\)](http://amzn.to/16ZWJD0) is one of my bibles.) I've also reduced my chances of falling and breaking a bone by removing small area rugs and getting up slowly to avoid dizziness. Every little bit helps.



#### 24. It's okay to pamper myself

After years of putting everyone else first...Need I say more?



#### 25. Take every opportunity to express love and gratitude

I've reached this milestone, so why wait to tell others how I feel? My favorite words: "I love you". And "Thank you".

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