



Use  
sunscreen  
to keep  
your glow.

# OVER 50 AND FABULOUS

GET BETTER WITH TIME WITH THESE  
HEALTH HACKS FOR THE GROWN AND  
BEAUTIFUL **BY GINA ROBERTS-GREY**

**H**itting your mid-century milestone is something to celebrate—and can require changes in your health routine. Along with eating right, keeping tabs on your blood pressure and staying away from tobacco smoke, these steps may make this your healthiest decade ever and keep the mojo going.



## LISTEN UP

Your doctor should be asking “Can you hear this?” at your next physical. Donna Grant, Au.D., an audiologist at Signia, says turning 50 marks an ideal time for a test to determine the status of your hearing. “From there you should have

annual checkups to track any changes that occur, in order to preserve your quality of life should you experience any hearing loss.”

## FACE IT

Dips in estrogen after age 50 sap your skin of the collagen needed to maintain that dewy glow and wrinkle-free appearance. Slow time’s attempt to tack years on your face. Before makeup, apply a mineral-based sunscreen followed by retinoid creams that stimulate collagen production, says dermatologist Michelle F. Henry.

## EMBRACE THIS SEASON

A stressed-out state of mind can leave you at a 65 percent greater risk of a heart attack, says 2015 research from the American Heart Association. Seek joy as you enter a new period of life. “I’ve survived child-rearing, marriage, divorce and those wasted opinions on whether people know that I have a denture,” says Arlinda McIntosh, 59. “If you live long enough, you’re going to experience something. I love my fifties and the freedom of aging, from graying hair to AARP senior discounts. I am uninhibited and unapologetic, and I spontaneously dance in public.” The New Jersey fashion designer and creator of Sofistafunk, the Skirt Co., says there’s significant peace of mind knowing your legacy is a trail of your knowledge, generosity and kindness. Be inspired by her adventures on Instagram at @funkingafter50.

## TAKE A SHOT



You’re already getting an annual flu shot, right? If not, make that a priority this year—and each one after—because the flu hits our community hard. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says more Blacks die from influenza than any other race. And the risk of dying from the flu inches upward with every birthday. When you turn 60, expect to have a shingles vaccine, and start a pneumococcal vaccination at age 65.

## FOLLOW YOUR PASSION

You can significantly lower production of the stress hormone »



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—ARLINDA MCINTOSH, @FUNKINGAFTER50



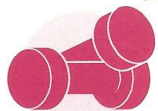
## HEALTHY & HAPPY : AGELESS BEAUTY

cortisol with a little creativity, suggests research from Drexel University. Coloring with the grandkids, taking a ceramics class or even drawing your dream dress for your family reunion can cut cortisol by a whopping 75 percent. That's a good thing, because having a beehive of emotional stress can leave you more vulnerable to type 2 diabetes, according to a Rice University study. Mental tension and turmoil triggers an inflammatory chain reaction in the body that's associated with a greater risk of diabetes and high blood-sugar levels. Sustained stress beats up on your brain too, says data from Ohio State University. It can erode your memory and your immune system, upping the odds you'll have trouble navigating your local streets or remembering where you left your car keys. After raising her son, Lisa V. Arrington, 53, decided it was time to pursue her interest in modeling. "Being brave enough to explore my potential and expand myself led me to enter the world of modeling as a mature, curvy model," she says.

### CHECK YOUR COLON

Ninety percent of colon cancer diagnoses come after age 50, says Tanya R. Gure, M.D., chief of Geriatric Medicine at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Cut your odds of getting this deadly disease by scheduling your colon cancer screening as soon as you reach this milestone. Gure agrees that early detection can increase survival as well as discover benign polyps that could turn into cancer down the road.

### AMP UP YOUR WORKOUT



It's time to add strength and resistance training to your daily routine, says Robert Williams, a strength and performance coach at Abbott's EAS Sports Nutrition.

"You'll improve the look and performance of your muscles, which enhances the strength and density of your bones, because your muscles attach to your bones." Start with squats, lunges and planks, using only your body weight to refresh and prime your muscles. After a few weeks, progress to using dumbbells while doing two to three sets of 6 to 12 repetitions. "The exercise and weights should require your full attention, make you sweat and slightly elevate your heart rate," says Williams.



***"Being brave enough to explore my potential and expand myself led me to enter the world of modeling as a mature, curvy model."***

—LISA V. ARRINGTON, ESSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



Strengthen your muscles with a regular fitness regimen.



### FILL UP ON FIBER

Research says eating 30 to 35 grams a day can lower your risk of bowel disease, colon cancer and even rheumatoid arthritis. New data from Purdue University suggest that women 50 and older should focus on foods that list soluble corn fiber as an ingredient to help prevent postmenopausal bone loss and the risk of fracture.

### ANSWER THIS

"What are my health goals this year?" is one of the most important questions you can ask yourself. Once you arrive at your answer, share it with your doctor at your next physical. "Your doctor needs to know if you want to lose weight or run a marathon," says Steven Wilson, M.D., a family practitioner and longevity specialist in Redlands, California. "That information can help the two of you formulate a health plan tailored to both your health needs and goals for the second half of life."

FROM LEFT: BAA-ITH NURRI-DEEN; MI. HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES. ALL ICONS, THE NOUN PROJECT.



Get involved on  
World AIDS Day,  
December 1.

# HOW I'M THRIVING WITH HIV

Women around the country aren't letting their status limit their lives **BY GINA ROBERTS-GREY**

**A**ny critical diagnosis can leave you curled up in a ball of fear, anger and confusion. Throw in the social stigma associated with a diagnosis like HIV and odds are your emotional and mental state will suffer even more. In 2014 Blacks accounted for 44 percent of all new estimated HIV cases in the U.S., and Black women outnumbered Hispanic and Caucasian women diagnosed with the disease nearly four to one. Thankfully, our numbers are beginning to decline and more women are taking control of their circumstances. As we commemorate World AIDS Day, meet these HIV-positive women who have achieved their dreams and live every day to the fullest.

## THE PAGEANT QUEEN

**Michelle Anderson-Morrison, 46**  
**Certified health worker in Dallas**

Hearing she was HIV-positive in April 1999 left Michelle Anderson-Morrison thinking her life was over. "It was a shock because I didn't have symptoms," she says. "Even though I had made some bad decisions, I didn't think this could happen to me."

Depression quickly set in. "I thought my life was over and I was going to die," says Anderson-Morrison. "I thought, *Who would love someone like me? I'm fat, Black, HIV-positive and have three kids by three*

*different men.*" A few years later her life spiraled out of control. Issues with substance abuse and not taking HIV medication landed her in a Las Vegas hospital: "I was on my deathbed because I let HIV and drugs be in control."

The birth of Anderson-Morrison's grandson later that year was a turning point and helped her focus on staying clean. She sought treatment for her addiction and health problems. "I realized living with HIV meant embracing every birthday, because it isn't promised to any of us," she says. "I realized I can do anything. HIV doesn't have to dictate the outcome."

A friend's involvement in the Miss Texas Plus America

Pageant program led Anderson-Morrison to pursue the crown as well. She was an openly HIV-positive contestant with a platform of educating others about their risk of contracting the disease. "I wanted to raise awareness in the African-American community about the importance of all women getting tested," she says. "I never thought I'd win."

Although she wasn't successful at the local level, Anderson-Morrison took the national crown in 2011 and became the world's first known HIV-positive national beauty queen: "I accepted that title for every single HIV-positive person out there. We all won that night!"



FROM TOP: BIGFIVE IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF SUBJECT.



The year Anderson-Morrison captured the crown, she also found new love. While in school to receive her associate's degree, she met a classmate who turned out to be her soul mate: "I told him I was positive when we started dating—before our first kiss." She admits their romance was a bit bumpy in the beginning and required patience. "We talked a lot and discussed safe sex and how to protect his health because he's HIV-negative," she says. "I wanted to be open with him and never take from him what was taken from me." The couple married in 2015.

Anderson-Morrison now spends her time raising awareness about HIV. She's a national ambassador for the Greater Than AIDS Empowered campaign and was cochair of the Texas chapter of the Campaign to End AIDS. "Having HIV forced me to get in touch with the Michelle who was underneath all the hurt of being sexually abused as a child and trying to be everything to everyone," she says. "I love the Michelle I met. She's awesome!"

## THE GLOBE-TROTTER

**Masonia Traylor, 29**

**Pharmacy technician in Atlanta**

HIV screenings were a routine part of Masonia Traylor's life.

"I wanted to make sure I knew what was going on in my body," Traylor says. When her October 2010 screening came back positive, her diagnosis felt like retribution. "I thought God was punishing me for having sex before I was married."

The news tore at the foundation of who Traylor was as a woman. "I thought my dreams were flying out the window, and questioned my morals because I had always

lived clean and sober and thought I was making good choices," says Traylor, who at the time had already completed her associate's degree. She realized that her HIV screenings weren't protection. "Couples should get tested together to know each other's status. I assumed if I was negative, then the person I was with was too. That was misguided."

After spending two weeks in tears, Traylor received a second shock. "I found out I was pregnant," she says. Her baby's father tested negative and she believes she contracted HIV from a previous relationship. The one-two health punch was overwhelming: "I was bouncing between several different doctors while trying to make ends meet. I couldn't see me ever returning to school."

Giving birth to an HIV-negative baby was a highlight in Traylor's otherwise emotionally dark life. "I took pride in that because I worked hard for my daughter's health." She enrolled at Georgia State University, later earning a degree in public policy, and fulfilled her aspiration of traveling around the globe. Whether going abroad for work as an HIV activist or for pleasure, Traylor is quickly collecting stamps in her passport. She has steered horses through the ancient streets of Marrakech and saw the Mona Lisa



while touring Paris with her mother. Her enthusiasm for overseas exploration has even rubbed off on her children—her son recently hopped across the pond with his grandmother to watch the Giants play football in the United Kingdom. "I also travel a great deal for work, having shared my story and lessons with more than 60,000 people," adds Traylor.

## THE HEALTH WARRIOR

**Michelle Steele, 55**

**Peer educator in New York City**

In 1985 Michelle Steele was battling what she thought was meningitis but later turned out to be tuberculosis.



A year spent undergoing treatment for TB took a toll. "I was using drugs," says Steele. She entered rehab in May 1992 and a test revealed she was HIV-positive. "My heart fell apart." Looking back she says she believes she was positive in 1985 because of the symptoms she had at the time. "I didn't know what HIV was and my doctors didn't mention it."

It was hard to share the news with her HIV-negative son, then 7. "I had to inform him so he wouldn't see me as a liar and because he kept asking why he was an only child," says Steele. The emotional blow of her diagnosis took her from having a high-paying job in customer service in New York City to scrounging around for a few coins, drugs or food on the street.

Then, in 2009, Steele had an awakening. "I looked in the

**“HIV has helped me take back my life in order to give to others.” —MICHELLE STEELE**

mirror and didn't like who I saw," Steele says. "I didn't like the mother I was to my son. We both deserved more." She went cold turkey and adopted a clean lifestyle. She saw her HIV diagnosis as a way to pursue a lifelong passion.

"Since I was 16 or 17, I've wanted to help others. I have a sister with cerebral palsy who was always in doctors' offices and hospitals," Steele says. "It hurt to see and know she'd get taken advantage of, so I wanted to give education, support and encouragement to those who can't give it to themselves." As an elected member of Amida Care's member advisory council, she assists in collecting and voicing member feedback for the improvement of programs and services. "I look forward to showing people I come in contact with some motherly love."

Steele sees her HIV diagnosis as possibly extending her life. "If I wasn't positive, I might not have turned my life around," she says. "I might not have had regular checkups and found out I was on the verge of a stroke earlier this year because of terribly high blood pressure. Ironically, HIV has helped me take back my life in order to give to others." ▣

*Visit [greaterthan.org](http://greaterthan.org) to learn the latest on HIV/AIDS and how to treat and protect yourself and your loved ones.*