

My life in BEAUTY

Brand founder and wellness expert Liz Earle knows all about loving midlife. Here, she shares her secrets...

“ I feel most beautiful when I'm surrounded by the people I love ”



AS TOLD TO: ALEXANDRA FRIEND. PHOTOGRAPHY: GEORGIA GLYNN-SMITH

I've always had an interest in botanical ingredients. My father was a practical man and a keen gardener, who instilled in me a love of nature and plants; particularly plants that do things. It gave me an early appreciation of what nature can give us. You could say that wellbeing and I instantly bonded and remained lifelong friends!

I feel happier in my 50s than ever before. I'm fitter, my head is level and my health is good. I have a few lines around my eyes, but that's life; I don't worry about it. I feel very strongly that we should be making the most of midlife. There's so much that I still want to go out and do.

A huge shift for me was taking control of my fitness. I started working with a personal trainer around 10 years ago, and my first words to him were, 'I don't run.' Now I do, and it's led to a dramatic change in my attitude. I can do things I once thought I couldn't, and I enjoy them!

I recommend running for an instant skin boost. I always come back with a glow! I love the measurability of a treadmill because I like to race myself, but you can't beat fresh air. I don't always run; sometimes I do HIIT just to get the blood flowing. Exercise is an instant mood booster.

The first thing I do in the morning is feel thankful: for the day ahead, for a good night's sleep, that I'm not in pain and that I have so many opportunities. Gratitude is also the last thing I practise at night. When my head is on the pillow, I think of three things I'm thankful for or am happy to have done that day. Perhaps that's why I wake up feeling positive.

Looking after my gut health has been hugely beneficial to my wellbeing. I love that I'm enriching my life by adding things in, not taking things away. I feed my good bacteria daily with plain live yogurt, kefir, kombucha and sauerkraut, which I ferment at home. The great thing about fermenting is that the bugs do the magic for you. You prepare a few ingredients and the bacteria creates incredibly nutritious food.

I used to get eczema and my skin was dry and sensitive. But it's no longer the case. Studies suggest kefir has anti-inflammatory properties. To me, there's no question that the good bacteria is working hard in my body to improve my skin.

I experienced a very tense time in my mid-40s. I felt that life wasn't great. At the time, I put it down to the stress of building a business and looking after small children. I think I'd have felt differently had I been able to top up my oestrogen back then.



HRT has also improved my skin hugely by building more collagen and elastin. It's why young women have such soft, bouncy skin; they have an abundance of oestrogen!

I carry lavender oil with me wherever I go. Neal's Yard Remedies Lavender Essential Oil (£9.50; 2) is the one I have now. I rub it on my temples if I feel headachy, it's great for spots and grazes and I put it on my pillow. I travel with it, so my pillow always smells the same. I also carry medical grade lanolin for dry lips and cuticles. I buy the type you find in the baby sections of shops.

I always have a creamy pink lipstick in my make-up bag. Beauty Pie Futurelipstick Satin in Pinky (£18 or £4.49 for members; 1) doubles up as a cheek colour, too. I've worn a strong lip in the past, although I had to be coaxed into it. I didn't feel comfortable; it wasn't me at all!

I'll do a smokey eye for going out. Dark kohl along the waterline, just inside the top lashes, makes eyes pop. I like matte dark brown or inky colours. Charlotte Tilbury Rock 'N' Kohl in Veruschka Mink (£19; 6) has a lovely soft texture. Clinique High Impact Mascara (£20; 7) curls my lashes and doesn't shift, but is easy to remove with warm water at the end of the day.

If I wear a smokey eye, I'll use foundation. I like YSL Touche Éclat Le Teint (£36; 5) for texture and longevity. I may use a light terracotta powder, such as Laura Mercier Blush Colour Infusion in Chai (£24; 4), on the high points of my face for overall colour.

I'd describe my hair as 'casual polished'. I rough dry it with mousse to get root lift, then brush it through and use straighteners to give a gentle, tousled wave at the front. I finish with hairspray to keep everything in place. I look for the fragrance-free version of L'Oréal Paris Elnett (£3.95; 3), as I find scented sprays interfere with the fragrance I'm wearing. In between washes, I like Batiste Dry Shampoo (£2.99; 8). It blurs root growth, too, as it's slightly white and powdery.

The length that works for me is just on my shoulders. I've gone up and down over the years, but I like being able to tie it back and enjoy having the length; it feels feminine, though any longer and it can look out of shape. I've visited the John Frieda salon in London's West End for the past 30 years. They're consistently brilliant there.

I pass advice on to my daughters. They're 29 and 19. The last thing we did together was tint our brows using moustache dye! It's a great tip for older women and a fantastic way to lift the face. Brows lose colour with age; when they're tinted, the face gets its youthful framework back.

I've always encouraged my daughters to look after their skin. I never wanted them to have tattoos or too many piercings, but I always said they could experiment with their hair as it's less permanent. My elder daughter's hair is currently bright pink!

My go-to treat is reflexology. I adore it. It's an hour of switch-off time, which I believe shows on the face through balancing everything internally. I have a lady who comes to my home in the West Country, and if I see it on a spa menu, I book right in.

If I could tell my younger self anything, it would be to lighten up. I used to take myself and life rather seriously, but I've learned a lot through watching my elder daughter, who works with me part time and has a natural joy about her that makes things fun. She brought home to me that I could be lighter and still achieve a lot.

I feel most beautiful when I'm surrounded by the people I love. There is a lot to be said for feeling content.

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