

FACE OR FIGURE?

For many women, losing weight to stay youthful is a priority – until they realise how much older they can look

Like it or not, we all get wrinkles. But as a number of stars have proved, the process is sped up by losing too much weight.

Earlier this year, pictures of a suddenly stick-thin Angelina Jolie raised a few eyebrows. Once famous for her shapely figure, the star's weight had reportedly plummeted to about 45 kilos, leaving her looking hollow-cheeked, emaciated and a lot older than her 32 years.

Thanks to your genes, there's luck attached to how you age, but most of us go through the same physical changes. When it comes to your face, the trouble starts in your 30s.

Your face starts to lose a little of the vital fat and your skin shows signs of environmental damage – mainly from the sun. Fine lines and wrinkles also appear around your eyes.

By your 40s, collagen production slows down more, your cheekbones start to flatten out, and your lips become thinner and lose volume.

Any past vices such as sunbaking and smoking come back to haunt you.

When you lose weight in your youth, your skin handles the change well and bounces back. But in your 30s and beyond, a loss of elasticity means the skin sags, leaving many women with a tough choice – do they want to have a slim figure or a wrinkle-free face?

Actress Cate Blanchett, who's known for her luminous looks, added to her 38 years and stunned fellow partygoers when she dropped several kilos recently. The star said it was for her role in *Cancer Vixen: A True Story*.

And not even Madonna can have it both ways. Recently, the 49-year-old was pictured looking gaunt.

Of the weight dilemma, she told a friend: 'There's a stage in a woman's life when you have to choose between your face and your body. I always knew I'd choose my body.'

Adding weight to the argument

● Sydney-based plastic surgeon Dr Warwick Nettle agrees that some women can benefit from carrying a few extra kilos and the face is often where we show our age.

'Losing too much weight can make your face look older,' he says. 'A good example of this is triathletes. They're among the fittest athletes in the world, but they can look old and drawn.'

Dr Nettle says that having a little extra weight on your face helps to plump out lines and wrinkles.

'As we age, thin skin wrinkles and thick skin sags, but there are also areas in the face which decrease in volume,' he explains.

'It's like comparing the face to a sail – when you're younger it's full of air, but as you age the wind goes out of it.'



CATE



ANGELINA

These pictures were all taken within two years. It's amazing what an extra kilo or two will do.



MADONNA