

# Virtual Beauty Tips

By Lisa\_Reswick, Contributor

Freelance Writer

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[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/aging-gracefully-photo-retouching\\_b\\_2836794](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/aging-gracefully-photo-retouching_b_2836794)



If you're lucky enough to live long enough, here's what happens. You lose ten pounds. Nobody notices. You get a new outfit or a new hairstyle, you switch from caramel highlights to deep russet. Nobody says a word.

*Hey, what's up with that*, you think. You seem to remember that your co-workers, friends, neighbors, spouse, even the guy at the coffee bar used to say things like, "You lost weight! You look great!" And "Nice sweater!" "What did you do to your hair? Wow -- that's pretty!" Not anymore.

Now it's confusing. People you haven't seen in 20 years say things like "My God -- you look exactly the same!" while people you've never met jump up and give you a seat on the subway. You know you don't look pregnant. You're not on crutches. So you can't help but wonder: Do I really look that old?

In any event, nobody is doling out any compliments no matter what you do to yourself. And one day it dawns on you: You're a middle-aged woman. It's different now. What they say is true: You've become invisible. Oh yeah. Great.

Recently, I was putting together a new website for my freelance writing business, and it occurred to me that it would be nice to include a photo of myself that was not either carved awkwardly out of a group shot or so old I could be prosecuted for false advertising. And then I remembered: I'm older now. Oh yeah. Great.

I decided to throw some money at the problem. I went to a professional photographer.

As I posed this way and that way, first in the black T-shirt (sophisticated, intellectual), then the burnt orange sweater (colorful, lively, young!), and in various eyeglass frames (conservative wire rims, dramatic magenta cat-eyes, funky navy-and-rust), I was nervously wondering why I had decided to spend hundreds of dollars on a professional photograph and then didn't even bother to get my hair and makeup done for the occasion. What was I thinking?

When I first viewed the 96 shots I was to choose from, I was horrified. Fat! Oh my God, I look so fat! And wrinkles. I never knew I had so many wrinkles! Under my eyes! And yes, my chin is looking a bit slack. Oh my God.

I was mesmerized, riveted to the online proof gallery as I went through the shots over and over and over again. Is this what I really look like? I kept clicking through again and again and again, hoping that somehow in the next shot I would appear thinner, prettier, younger.

In desperation, I sent the link to my 20-year-old daughter, asking for her help in finding at least one acceptable shot.

"Mom! You look great!" she texted me. "You do NOT look fat! Stop that!"

She forwarded a list of the shots she liked best. I looked them over and saw that yes, there were some decent looking shots in the bunch.

I sent in a few of her choices in to the photographer. She would do the retouching and send me the final photographs in digital form.

When I got the emailed shots, they looked surprisingly good.

I uploaded one to my Facebook page as my new profile picture.

To my complete surprise, friend after friend after friend posted a comment on the photo. "You look gorgeous!" "You look even younger than you did when I worked for you!" "How is it that you look exactly the same as when we worked together all those years ago?"

And then something else occurred to me: We are now conducting so much of our social lives online, and there, people are still noticing me. It's just like the good old days!

So ladies, forget the expensive and scary Botox treatments and facelifts. It's a new world, and there are new ways to cope.

I have one word for you: retouching.

*Lisa Reswick is a freelance writer in New York City.*