Complete Guide to Preventing Skin Cancer

Cancer. We all know enough to fear the name, just as we do the words 'tumor' and 'malignant'. But apart from that, most of us know very little at all about cancer, especially skin cancer in itself.

If I were to ask you to tell me about skin cancer right now, what would you say? Apart from the fact that it's a cancer on the skin, that is.

Perhaps you'd even be able to go so far as to say that it is a malignant growth, or tumor, on the skin.

Still, none of that really helps very much, does it? Then again, you're not a doctor or a medical expert, so it would seem that there's very little reason for you to know about skin cancer, right? After all, isn't that what doctors are there for.

All that may be well and good, but as you're about to see there are several very good reasons why you *should* know about skin cancer. And out of all those reasons none is more compelling than this one:

If you know enough about skin cancer, you can prevent it, or at least, reduce your risk of developing skin cancer.

Pretty good reason, isn't it?

In this guide, we're going to explore the various types of skin cancer that are known to exist. Then, we'll take a look at what causes them. From there, it is just a small hop, skip, and jump to learning how to prevent it.

Everything we cover is going to be as layman-like as possible, so you're not going to need a medical degree to understand this guide (unlike some of the medical resources out there). There'll be very little medical jargon at all, really.

Instead, all that you do need is to be willing to read and spend a little time thinking about what we cover.

Basically, once you're done with this guide, you won't be a doctor, but you will be able to confidently say that you know enough about skin cancer to be able to reduce your own risk of developing it.

And of course, the risk of anyone around you too – so long as you share what you know.

Now, let's get started.

"What is Skin Cancer?"

In a nutshell, skin cancer is a very general term that is used to describe any malignant tumors on the skin itself.

Why is this general? Well, if you think about it, the skin isn't just made up of one type of cell. Instead, it is a mix of many different types of cells, all with specific tasks and functions, working together to form what we know as 'the skin'.

So, malignant cells could be of many different types.

Normally though, skin cancer is found in the epidermis, which is basically the top-most layer of the skin itself. Within the epidermis, there are three main types of cells, namely:

1. Squamous cells – the flat, scaly cells of the epidermis
2. Basal cells – their rounded counterparts, and
3. Melanocytes – the 'color' cells of the epidermis.

No surprise then that the three most common types of skin cancer are:

1. Squamous Cell Carcinoma
2. Basal Cell Carcinoma
3. Melanoma

Each type of cancer is linked to the corresponding cells that we just mentioned. Simple enough, right?

Now, you may not know this, but skin cancer is really *very* common. At least, it is the most common type of diagnosed cancer. Yes, that means that it is even more common than things like breast cancer or lung cancer.

So why aren't people talking about it as much?

Well, that's mostly because it isn't nearly as fatal as those kinds of 'internal' cancers. Or rather, fewer people end up actually dying from it.

For the most part this is due to a number of reasons, but the fact that it is actually out there on the skin, and thus, easy to spot, definitely plays a role. When caught

early, the chances of successfully dealing with cancer of any kind are greatly increased, and skin cancer is no different.

But as things stand, skin cancer cases are growing at a very alarming rate throughout the world. While there is a lot of speculation as to why this is so, there isn't much by the way of general consensus.

As you'll soon see, each of the common types of skin cancer vary in terms of how threatening they are, and how they manifest themselves. Each is unique, in its own way, but still, there is a lot of connection between them, especially in terms of the causes.

Let's take a look at the different types of common skin cancers though.

Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC)

As the most common type of skin cancer, Basal cell carcinoma (or BCC for short) normally is found in facial areas.

Normally, it appears to be a raised, pearly and smooth bump on the surface of the skin, which protrudes outwards. Sometimes, it is easy to mistake it for a sore, especially once it begins to bleed and crust, which is also common.

Despite the fact that it is the most common skin cancer, it is also the slowest growing. Thus, the risk of it actually *spreading* is minimal, so it rarely ends up being fatal. Of course, this doesn't mean that there is no need to worry at all.

Any type of cancer should be treated seriously, even one that is not-so-harmful, like BCC.

Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC)

Although much less common than BCC, Squamous Cell Carcinoma (or SCC, for short) is still the second-most common type of skin cancer around.

In contrast to BCC, SCC is not at all like a bump, but rather manifests itself as a patch of thickened skin that is red and scaly.

And, also unlike BCC, it does spread moderately fast, and can even go so far as to spread to areas outside the epidermis, such as the lymph nodes, and other organs. That being said, when caught early before it gets the chance to spread, treatment is definitely possible.

But if left to its own devices, it will develop into a large mass and cause a lot of havoc.

Melanoma

Being the least popular of the three, Melanoma is also, unfortunately, the most deadly.

Besides that, they also have an excellent disguise, appearing normally as a brown or black looking spot that strongly resembles a mole. However, as it grows it starts to look distinctly like a lesion, and may even start bleeding.

Due to the fact that it has a very fast growth rate, and can spread very quickly, it is regarded as the most dangerous type of common skin cancer. Once it has spread, it is very often fatal, and so the emphasis as far as melanoma is concerned is to spot it early and prevent the spread.

Be aware, the mortality rate for melanoma is about 15%.

"Does the Type of Skin Cancer Matter?"

Yes, it most certainly does matter, is the answer to that question. Don't worry, you haven't wasted your time learning a bit about the types of skin cancer because, as you'll see in a bit, it actually matters a *lot*.

Simply speaking, depending on the type of skin cancer, the causes can vary, though they do share similarities.

Still, this in turn means that the treatment would vary too.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of complete knowledge as to the inner workings of skin cancer though, you'll soon find that all we have are generalizations of the causes. As science advances, this is bound to change – but for now, we're stuck with working with what we've got.

That said, stereotyping all skin cancer into a single entity is *not* a good idea. Trying to generalize the causes, treatments, and preventive measures that can be taken is possible though, but hopefully at some point there'll be a more specific approach.

Anyway, now that you have a rough overview of each type of common skin cancer, and you know why it is important to differentiate between the types, let's really kick things off by looking at the causes of skin cancer.

"What Causes Skin Cancer?"

That really is the million dollar question. What causes skin cancer? Why does it pop up out of nowhere?

Since you already know that different types of skin cancer have different causes (we mentioned that just a few paragraphs ago in the last section), as you've probably guessed by now, we're going to have to look at each of the skin cancer types one by one.

But there is a catch.

Truth is: Medical experts don't really know *exactly* what causes skin cancer.

Why have we bothered with all of this then? Well, despite not knowing exactly what causes skin cancer, we do know what makes people have a greater risk of getting skin cancer.

Note: As with most common skin diseases in particular, some feel that skin cancer could be contagious. Don't worry, it isn't.

So for starters, we're not going to be going into the specific types of skin cancer, but instead, we're going to take a broad look at the factors that play a role in increasing the risk of skin cancer.

Ultraviolet Radiation (UV) from the Sun

Yes, it really is true. Sunlight causes skin cancer. But before you board up all your windows and permanently stay out of the Sun, you'd do well to read a little more first.

Firstly, it isn't just sunlight that causes skin cancer, it is the ultraviolet radiation that comes as part and parcel of it. Generally speaking, this UV radiation can be divided into two different varities: UVA and UVB.

Basically UVA is long-wave, and has a wavelength of 320-400 nanometers. If that's all Greek to you, don't sweat it, all that you need to know is that because of this fact, it is able to penetrate deeper into the skin.

On the other hand, UVB is short-wave, with a wavelength of only 290-320 nanometers. Unlike UVA, this means that it doesn't penetrate the skin anywhere nearly as deeply.

We'll be looking at this a bit more later on, but for now, let's just consider all UV to be very bad indeed.

Scientists have found that the risk of skin cancer relates to the overall exposure of a person to ultraviolet rays over the course of their entire life. Also, certain groups of people with specific characteristics seem to be more susceptible to UV radiation.

If you have fair skin, freckles, red or blonde hair, or even light colored eyes, it would generally mean that you have a greater risk of getting skin cancer due to UV exposure. Similarly, if you live in an area with more intense UV light, well, your risk would be higher too.

Just because the sun isn't out, or it is cloudy, doesn't mean that there aren't UV rays around, incidentally. As is known, UV rays are present even in the dead of winter.

Burns and Scars that Don't Seem to Heal

Any burns, or scars, that never really seem to heal are normally termed as Marjolin's ulcers. The presence of such wounds seems to increase the risk of cancer, as the wound itself could develop into squamous cell carcinoma.

How exactly this takes place is not entirely known, but it still remains a very real risk factor.

In fact, other chronic skin diseases, such as psoriasis, which can cause long-lasting inflammations, also are thought to increase the risk of skin cancer. Again, the 'why' is elusive, but it is something that bears consideration.

Genetic Factors

Just because a family member of yours has had skin cancer before, it doesn't necessarily mean that you will end up getting it. However, it does mean that there is a chance that you may have a hereditary condition which increases your risk.

One such condition is Congenital Melanocytic Nevi Syndrome (CMNS) which causes moles to appear shortly after birth. These moles are termed 'Nevi' and if they are large enough, there is a great risk that they could become malignant tumors.

Other genetically linked factors may also play a role, but since there is not too much you can do about genetics, there is little point worrying about it.

End of the day, being aware of any heightened risk is the most that can be done.

Drugs that Suppress the Immune System

Any drugs that suppress the immune system for a period of time can increase the risk that you'll get some form of skin cancer. Since your body relies on its immune system to fight off most everything, a suppressed immune system quite literally leaves your body unprotected.

Being aware of this could help in some small ways, as we'll see later, but normally doctors would not recommend such drugs unless they were necessary.

Radiation Therapy

Although radiation therapy is normally mentioned as a way to combat cancer by destroying malignant cells, it also has the unwanted side effect of increasing your susceptibility to cancer post-therapy.

Again, it is unlikely that you could 'avoid' radiation therapy, as it is necessary in almost all cases where it is carried out, but it is still a risk factor.

Actinic Keratosis

If this name means absolutely nothing to you, then you probably don't have it. Basically it is just flat, scaly growths that pop up on the skin in either red or brown hues. While they aren't cancerous, they could turn into Squamous cell carcinoma unless they are handled in some way.

Bowen's Disease

Yet another disease that causes a thick and scaly patch to appear on the skin that, just like actinic keratosis, can turn into Squamous cell carcinoma. If you have it, then you should definitely start treating it.

Going Over the Main Source of Risk: Ultraviolet Light

As you've undoubtedly noticed, despite the fact that there are other factors that can increase the risk of skin cancer, the big one is still ultraviolet light.

Which is why, from here on out, a lot of the focus is going to be on it in particular.

First though, you should know that medical knowledge is not completely certain on how exactly ultraviolet light reacts with the skin to cause the various types of cancer, but it does have a rough idea.

For a long time, it was thought that only UVB would cause all types of skin cancer, be it basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, or melanoma.

Now though, new evidence suggests that UVA too not only increases the chance of cancer, but it can also directly cause melanoma.

Without getting too involved in the science of it all, the other main difference between both basal, and squamous, cell carcinomas and melanomas are the fact that the former two are caused by *direct* DNA damage due to ultraviolet light.

Whereas, melanoma is caused by *indirect* DNA damage due to the ultraviolet light.

Another difference is that basal and squamous cell carcinomas are now thought to be caused by prolonged exposure, over the course of many years, to these ultraviolet rays. Melanoma, however, seems to be caused more by short, intense exposure.

Regardless of this fact, and despite the relative uncertainty, it is safe to say that both types of ultraviolet light are generally bad. Thus, most of the preventive measures that could be taken would involve protecting yourself against ultraviolet rays.

Which is, incidentally, what we're just about to get into.

Steps that Can Prevent Skin Cancer

By now, you should already have a rough idea of what you can do to prevent skin cancer. After all, you already know what can increase the risk of skin cancer – so all that is left is to take steps to avoid those risks.

We'll start looking into that in more detail soon.

First though, a short word of warning: Most of these steps are not the kind of thing that you do once, and then forget about for the rest of your life. Instead, they are actual changes to your daily activities that you should undertake.

Granted, most of them are very small changes, but they may take some getting used to, depending on the type of lifestyle that you're used to living.

While it is definitely a bit of a pain to change your lifestyle, no matter how small that change is, the key question is this: Considering the type of lifestyle that most of us live, on average, is causing reported cases of skin cancer to increase, it may be completely necessary that we all change our lifestyles.

When everything is said and done, it would seem to be a small sacrifice to make tiny lifestyle changes, and face a dramatically lessened risk of skin cancer.

That said, let's start to look at these tiny lifestyle changes which you should be thinking about.

Wearing Sunscreen

This one doesn't take much to figure out, does it? What better way to prevent ultraviolet light from harming your skin than to wear sunscreen, right?

Well, it is part true, but the topic of sunscreen and skin cancer is not without its own controversy.

What sunscreen can do is protect your skin from ultraviolet light. That much is a given. Still, you should take time to choose the right type of sunscreen, and that's one place where many end up making mistakes.

One thing that you should keep in mind is that just because a certain sunscreen brand is more expensive, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is *better*.

Instead of focusing on price tags, you should look at the Sun Protection Factor (SPF) number. This number can range from 1 to about 60 at times, but anything at 15 or above is going to be perfectly okay.

What the SPF number does is it basically measures the amount of UVB rays that can get through. So while a 15 SPF sunscreen will only let 7% of the UVB rays through, a 60 would only allow 2% through.

That 5% difference is very often not worth shelling out the extra cash for (higher SPF sunscreens *are* more expensive) but you can if you want to.

On the flipside, UVA protection is measured on sunscreens by 'stars' (that range from 1 to 5). Unfortunately this is where things get slightly confusing because a higher SPF can also mean additional UVA protection.

Some bottles of sunscreen that offer this dual-protection might simple be called 'broad spectrum sunscreen'.

Basically if you can get a cream with at least 15 SPF and 4 stars, that should do the trick pretty nicely. Go higher if you want to though, there is no harm in doing so other than the relative expense that you're going to be shouldering.

Once you've chosen the right sunscreen, the only thing left is to apply it.

Remember to always put on your sunscreen first. For it to work at maximum effectiveness, it must be the first layer on your skin, so if you use moisturizer, only apply that after you've already put on your sunscreen.

Cover all exposed skin areas with as generous a portion as you feel necessary. Do not apply it too thinly, or you won't really be protecting yourself very well. All of this should be done about 20 minutes before you actually go out into the sun.

In particular remember to coat behind your neck and your ears, which are the two places which people most often forget.

Even after you have a coating of sunscreen on, you'll need to maintain it. Most sunscreens only provide optimum protection for about 2 hours, so if you plan on staying out longer, you should reapply before your protection runs out.

And if you happen to get wet, well, no matter how 'water proof' some sunscreens claim to be, they aren't completely water proof, so be sure to reapply it.

Better safe than sorry, right?

That's it – you should now be as protected as possible from those nasty ultraviolet rays, and therefore be able to considerably lessen your risk of skin cancer. But, very unfortunately, there is that matter of the controversy which we mentioned earlier…

Short Notes on the Controversy Regarding Sunscreen

Before we get into the controversy itself, you should know that none of this is completely confirmed. Thus far, it is something that is being debated, but no clear answer has emerged yet.

A while ago, it was found that there were more cases of melanoma among people wearing sunscreen than among those who weren't.

Needless to say, this sparked off a lot of argument. On one hand, it was said that perhaps the sunscreen itself was interacting with the ultraviolet light to release free radicals, which are known to cause melanoma.

On the other hand though, it was argued that perhaps the statistics were simply due to the fact that those people who do wear sunscreen largely come from a group of people who spend more time in intense sunlight – and are thus automatically at greater risk of melanoma.

Until a solution is found to this controversy though, what should you do?

Well, one simple alternative is to use sunscreen that is metallic in nature, due to the relative inertness of metals. These are fairly common, and you should be able to find zinc or titanium sunscreen without too much effort.

Never thought that choosing a bottle of sunscreen could be so complicated, did you?

Avoiding Intense Sunlight

No matter how much sunscreen you use, or how high its protection factor, inevitably you're still going to end up soaking up some harmful rays, especially if you go out when the Sun is at its most intense.

A good rule of thumb if you want to avoid the brunt of the Sun's harmful ultraviolet light is to try to remain indoors between 11 am and 3 pm. Of course, this isn't always possible, but making an attempt is a good start.

Considering that those hours are normally the regular 'working hours' of most people, it shouldn't be too much of a hassle to avoid stepping out of the office, unless you're in a job that requires you to be outside.

Not only will this help you a lot in the long run, but you'll also dodge the need to worry about the entire sunscreen controversy.

Also, intense sunlight exposure makes you more susceptible to melanoma in particular, which is by far the most dangerous type of skin cancer. Thus, avoiding it, more than avoiding sunlight in general, is a very good idea.

One thing to keep in mind even if you are staying indoors is that while UVB rays are blocked out by window glass, UVA rays are not. So if you're seated near a window with the Sun's rays streaming through it – you're being exposed to UVA.

Curtains could be the solution that you're looking for, if that is the case, and the more tightly woven they are, the better.

So long as you can dodge the bulk of the intense ultraviolet light, you'll find that your risk factor for all types of skin cancer is very much reduced.

Covering Up With Clothing

Naturally, at times you won't have sunscreen handy, and will inevitably end up having to go out into the intense sunlight.

During such times, the best way to protect yourself is simply to cover up with clothing, so that less of your skin is exposed to the sun. By putting a physical layer between your skin and the Sun's rays, you'll be, at very least, hampering their effect.

However, the amount of protection that any given piece of clothing can provide is determined mostly by the weave of its fabric. Something that is closely woven will keep much more sun off than a loosely woven, sheer piece of fabric.

And, as should go without saying, long sleeves that cover up most of your arms are certainly more effective than short sleeves.

Choosing the right clothes to go out into the Sun is definitely a bonus.

Of course, one of the classic ways to keep the Sun off your skin, in particular, your facial skin, is to use a hat or cap. If you do want to wear a hat to protect your skin though, then you'd best choose the correct one.

Although most styles of hats and caps come with a front brim only, such as baseball caps, these don't really protect a lot of your skin, and tend to leave the back of your neck very unprotected indeed.

Instead of going for style, practicality would mean using a wide-brimmed hat that puts as much of your face (and neck) in the shade of its brim.

Additionally, a pair of sunglasses could protect your eyes, and a fairly decent portion of the skin around it.

Some clothes now come with various labels to signify how much ultraviolet light they block out. Be sure to check for these if you're buying new clothes, they could save you a lot of hassle, especially opposed to trying to figure out how tightly woven the fabric is.

If you can keep your skin covered and protected during those times that you are out in the most intense heat, or even at other times, then your exposure to ultraviolet light should be very minimal, if any.

Less exposure means less risk of cancer, which is what you're aiming for.

Staying Away from Tanning Booths

Yes, we all know how tempting it is to try to acquire that perfect golden tan that will make your skin look absolutely gorgeous. Still, getting a tan means exposing yourself to very intense light, especially in a tanning booth.

Which is why, I'm afraid, you're going to have to forego it if you're serious about preventing skin cancer.

Even sun lamps are sources of ultraviolet light.

At the end of the day, there really isn't much choice. If you're thinking to yourself, "Well, I could just use sunscreen which would protect me from the ultraviolet light," think again.

Earlier on, we mentioned the controversy regarding sunscreen, and this is the exact kind of situation that could be causing that statistic. Long-term and very intense exposure to ultraviolet light is the worst possible thing as far as skin cancer risk is concerned.

So an hour or two in a tanning booth is definitely off the table.

Get Lesions and Other Skin Problems Treated Immediately

Remember how we talked about Actinic Keratosis and Bowen's Disease as increasing the risk of skin cancer? Also, scars and burns that never seem to heal?

Well, basically if you have any skin problems that seem to be chronic, or out of the ordinary in any way, shape, or form, then you should get them checked out by a doctor, and treated as soon as possible.

Already, there is tentative evidence that links some other skin conditions, such as psoriasis, to the risk of skin cancer, so really, anything at all should be looked at.

If you already visit your doctor on a regular basis, then you probably have little to worry about, but can still raise any issues which you may spot. Later on we'll deal with some of the things to look for which could help you catch skin cancer early on.

For now, it suffices to say that having your skin checked out every now and again to make sure that it is in tip top condition would be a great help in preventing skin cancer.

And at very least, you'll end up having healthy skin with any and all other skin conditions being treated professionally.

Staying Safe from Skin Cancer through Continuous Preventive Measures

Most of what we've discussed is really, not going to cause you too much of a pain to implement, or even hurt your wallet all that much.

Well, sunscreen can be slightly expensive, depending on the type which you choose to use, but that is about it.

Seeing as you already know the advantages of preventive measures as far as skin cancer is concerned, there isn't much point drilling those into you again. Still, it does help if you get as motivated as possible to carry out these preventive measures sooner rather than later.

Who knows, perhaps someday there'll be an easier and less obtrusive way to dodge skin cancer, but for now, this Is the best that is out there.

If you're willing to stick to these measures though, and completely minimize your risk as much as possible, well, you'll end up saving yourself even more trouble. Treating skin cancer, even the more harmless varieties, is no laughing matter.

And trust me, you don't want to have to go through cancer treatments.

Alternative Skin Cancer Preventive Measures

Apart from all the ways to prevent skin cancer which we've already dealt with, there are other methods that some claim to work. Mind you, most of these do not have a lot of research backing them, and aren't fully confirmed, but it won't do you any harm to spare a thought about them.

Generally, you should treat any of these alternative measures with a certain amount of skepticism.

But, you shouldn't close your mind off completely to the possibility that they may actually work either.

As you'll see, some of these alternative measures are pleasant, and may even be the kind of thing that you'd want to do – which would make them very unobtrusive to you, and to your lifestyle.

We'll start off with one of those.

Caffeine and Exercise

Who'd have thought that if you exercise a bit, and drink coffee, you could actually be staving off skin cancer.

Well, you're not supposed to drink a *lot* of coffee, incidentally, just a small amount here and there. Research has shown that if you do, you could be mitigating the damage caused by UVB rays to the skin.

What's the downside? Well, it hasn't been comprehensively tested on humans yet, just mice.

Still, a little bit of caffeine, and a nice dose of exercise is not exactly something that is risky in any way. Worst case scenario, you end up being that much healthier due to the regular exercise.

Certainly doesn't hurt to give it a shot.

Green Tea

Another mice-tested and certified prevention measure for skin cancer that has emerged recently is green tea.

If you haven't heard of it before, it's basically well… tea… that is green, and is a brew that is very widespread throughout Asia (where, incidentally, skin cancer is much rarer as opposed to America).

Supposedly, green tea contains certain antioxidants that could be key to preventing skin cancer, or reducing the risk of it.

Whether or not it works, green tea overall has many properties that are excellent for health, and it does taste quite good, so, it might not be too much to try it out. Again, there is pretty much no risk involved whatsoever.

Unless of course you somehow don't like the taste, in which case you don't really have to force it down anyway, seeing as it isn't a sure thing.

Broccoli

Lastly, but certainly not least, one of the other new alternative preventive measures to be announced is none other than: Broccoli.

But no, you aren't going to eat it.

Instead, research has shown that extracts from broccoli could provide various benefits to the skin. This is due to a chemical known as sulforaphane, which is said to be able to prevent tumor development.

Admittedly, it too has only been tested on animals, not humans.

Right now though, it isn't readily available, but it might be soon. Till then, there isn't much point eating tons of broccolis, or… worse, trying to brush them on your skin.

If this research is successful though, don't be surprised to see broccoli based cancer prevention lotion on the shelves of pharmacies.

Catching Skin Cancer Early

Although this doesn't exactly fall under the 'prevention' bracket per se, it certainly is a preventive measure.

Just instead of preventing skin cancer itself, catching it early can prevent skin cancer from spreading to levels that become far more difficult to manage and treat. It goes without saying that this is the reason why catching skin cancer early is a very clear benefit.

Taking a few moments to watch your skin is really all that it takes – if you know what to look for, which you should.

Back when we were discussing the types of skin cancer, we also stated what each appears like, so basically you're looking for:

1. Any raised, smooth, pearly bumps that may resemble a sore.
2. Patches of thickened, red, and scaly skin.
3. New moles or discolored versions of old moles.

If you check your skin for any of these regularly, then chances are you'll probably spot any skin cancer when it is still in the earliest of stages.

Then, all that you need to do is get it treated as quickly as possible.

Doing Everything Humanly Possible to Prevent Cancer

Now that we're at the end of this guide, let's just recap quickly to skim over what you *should* know.

Working our way from the bottom, up, we covered the types of skin cancer, and how they manifest themselves. From there, we went on to the causes that can increase the risk factor.

Subsequently, we discussed a wide variety of preventive measures, both conventional and… well, slightly less than conventional.

Finally, we highlighted how to catch any skin cancer during its early stages, while stressing the importance of doing so.

And with that, we're done.

At this point, you know all the theory, and all that is left is taking what you know and starting to apply it. Don't rush into things if you're not comfortable with them just yet though. Start slowly, maybe experimenting with one preventive measure at a time.

Gradually, you'll find that most of what we talked about can easily become a part of your regular lifestyle, so much so you don't even feel like you're *trying* to prevent skin cancer.

You just *are* preventing skin cancer by doing what you normally do.

Until you reach that point though, it would be a good idea to keep reminding yourself of the measures you're taking, and maybe even make small notes to help you along the way.

Who knows, this advice could save you a lot of trouble – or even, maybe, end up saving your life.