

SMOOTH, STRONG & CONFIDENT · SMOOTHSTRONG.COM

A WELLNESS WORKBOOK FOR WOMEN 50+

Smooth, Strong & Confident

*A Realistic Guide to Smoother-Looking Skin, Stronger
Legs & Feeling Like Yourself After 50*

Inside: simple home exercises · easy meal ideas · a gentle 30-day plan ·
printable trackers

WITH YOUR HOST

Susan Carter

"Consistency beats intensity."

How to Use This Guide

You don't have to read this guide cover to cover before you begin. Pick the path that suits you.

"I like to understand why."

Read Parts One and Two over a weekend with a cup of tea. Then start the 30-Day Plan on a Monday.

"Just tell me what to do."

Read the Safety Page (page 3), then go straight to the 30-Day Plan in Part Three. Come back to the other chapters as questions come up.

What the Boxes Mean

Susan's Tip

Practical advice that makes a habit easier.

★ Quick Win

One small thing you can do today.

Safety Note

Please read these. They protect you.

Your Turn

A space to write. Writing makes it stick.

Printing Tips

The workbook pages at the back (pages 42 to 49) are made for printing. Print them as many times as you like for your own use. If you read on a tablet or phone, turn it sideways or zoom in. The text is sized to be easy on the eyes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What's Inside

Before You Begin: Your Safety Page	3
A Welcome Letter From Susan	5
Susan's Story	6

PART ONE · UNDERSTANDING YOUR BODY

01 What Cellulite Really Is	8
02 Why Menopause Changes Things	10
03 Myths vs. Facts	11
04 What to Realistically Expect	13

PART TWO · THE FIVE PILLARS

05 Nourish: Food for Skin & Muscle	16
06 Hydrate: Water Made Simple	23
07 Move: Strength & Walking	24
08 Circulate: Massage, Brushing & Rolling	30
09 Restore: Sleep, Stress & Hormones	32
10 Care: Skincare & Smart Shopping	35

PART THREE · YOUR 30-DAY PLAN

11 One Habit at a Time: The Plan	38
12 Your 30-Day Calendar	40
13 Printable Workbook & Trackers	42

THE FINISH LINE

Your Questions, Answered	50
A Closing Letter From Susan	52
Sources & Important Information	53

Before You Begin: Your Safety Page

Everything in this guide is gentle and designed for women over 50. Still, every body is different, and you know yours best.

Talk to Your Doctor First If You...

- ☐ have heart disease, high blood pressure that isn't well controlled, or diabetes
- ☐ have kidney disease or have been told to limit fluids or protein
- ☐ have osteoporosis, a joint replacement, or ongoing back, hip or knee pain
- ☐ have varicose veins, a history of blood clots, or take blood thinners
- ☐ have fallen in the past year or feel unsteady on your feet
- ☐ haven't exercised in a long time and aren't sure where to start

Bring this guide to your appointment if that helps. Most doctors are happy to hear that a patient wants to walk more, get stronger, and eat well.

See a Doctor Right Away If You Notice

- **One leg that is suddenly swollen, red, warm, or painful**, especially the calf. This can be a sign of a blood clot and needs urgent care.
- Chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, or fainting during activity. Stop and get help.

Is It Cellulite, or Something Else?

Cellulite is a harmless skin texture. But if your legs or hips are **tender or painful to the touch, bruise very easily, or have grown out of proportion to the rest of your body**, ask your doctor about a condition called *lipedema*. It's common, often missed, and needs a different approach than this guide offers.

PLEASE READ FIRST

During Every Activity

- ☐ Mild effort is good. Sharp pain is not. If something hurts in a sharp or stabbing way, stop.
- ☐ Keep a sturdy chair, counter, or railing within reach for balance.
- ☐ Wear supportive shoes and clear the floor around you.
- ☐ Breathe out as you push or lift. Never hold your breath.
- ☐ Drink water before and after you move.

A Note About This Guide

Susan Carter is the host character of Smooth, Strong & Confident. Her story is inspired by experiences many women share after menopause, and it isn't a promise of any particular result for you.

This guide was written by the Smooth, Strong & Confident team using published research and public health guidelines (see the Sources page). It was not written by a doctor, and it is for general education only. It does not diagnose, treat, or cure any condition.

Results vary from woman to woman. Your genetics, health, age, and how consistently you follow the habits will all play a role. Nothing in this guide can remove cellulite permanently, and we'll never tell you otherwise.

Why We're Telling You This

You've probably been promised a lot by the wellness industry. We'd rather earn your trust by being straight with you from page one.

Welcome. I'm So Glad You're Here.

Hi there, I'm Susan.

If you picked up this guide, I'm guessing you've stood in front of the mirror lately and felt a little discouraged by what you saw on the backs of your thighs. Maybe you've tried a cream that promised the world and delivered nothing. Maybe a friend swore by a gadget that left your wallet lighter and your skin exactly the same.

So let me say this first: **there is nothing wrong with you.**

Cellulite isn't a disease. It isn't a sign you've "let yourself go." Most adult women have it, and it often becomes more noticeable as our hormones shift in our forties, fifties, and sixties. Your body isn't broken. It has changed.

Here's what I can tell you honestly. The way your skin looks and your legs feel can respond to how you eat, move, sleep, and handle stress. Not overnight. Not with one product. But gradually, over weeks and months, with small habits you can actually keep.

This guide isn't about chasing a perfect body or looking 30 again. **It's about feeling stronger, healthier, and more confident in the body you have right now.**

We'll go one habit at a time. I'll be right here with you.

With warmth,

Susan

Susan's Story

I grew up in North Carolina, where dinner was whatever was on sale and dessert was never optional. For most of my adult life I ate quickly, moved when I had time, and put myself last on the list. I was busy raising a family and working, like so many of us.

Then menopause arrived, and it didn't knock politely. Within months my waistline changed. My energy dropped. The stairs felt steeper. And the cellulite I'd always had a little of suddenly looked deeper than ever. I didn't recognize my own body.

I did what most of us do. I bought the cream that smelled like a spa. I ordered a vibrating massage gadget late one night (it still lives in a drawer). I even priced out an expensive treatment package. Then I stopped and asked myself an honest question:

"What am I actually willing to do, every day, for the rest of my life?"

That question changed everything. I stopped looking for a fix and started looking for a rhythm. I walked along the water most mornings. I learned to put protein on my plate at every meal. I picked up light weights for the first time in my life. I went to bed earlier. None of it was dramatic. All of it added up.

I still have cellulite, and I probably always will. That's okay. What changed is how strong my legs feel, how much energy I have for my grandchildren, and how I feel when I get dressed in the morning.

Now I spend my days sharing these habits with women who are right where I was: tired of quick fixes and ready for something real. This guide is everything I wish someone had handed me back then.

Susan Carter is the host character of Smooth, Strong & Confident. Her story is inspired by real women's experiences.



PART ONE

Understanding Your Body



*“You can't fight your biology, but you can
absolutely work with it.”*

SUSAN CARTER

What Cellulite Really Is

Let's keep this simple. No lecture, just what you need to know for the rest of the guide to make sense.

Just under your skin is a layer of fat. Running through that fat are thin bands of connective tissue that anchor your skin to the muscle underneath.

Picture an Egg Carton

In women, these bands run straight up and down, creating little “pockets,” like the cups of an egg carton. When the fat inside those pockets pushes up, and the bands hold the skin down in between, you get the dimpled look we call cellulite. Men's bands are arranged in a criss-cross pattern, which is one reason they rarely have it.

Three Things Affect How Visible It Is

- 1. The fat underneath.** More fat in an area means more upward pressure on the skin.
- 2. The muscle underneath.** Firm, toned muscle makes a smoother “base,” like a sheet pulled over a firm mattress instead of a soft one.
- 3. The skin itself.** Thicker, more elastic skin hides texture better than thin, fragile skin.

That's why no single product works. The approach that makes sense is one that supports all three at once: your muscle, your skin, and your overall body composition. That's exactly what this guide does.

Who Gets Cellulite?

Almost everyone, if she's a woman. Dermatologists estimate that roughly 80 to 90 percent of adult women have some cellulite. Thin women have it. Athletes have it. It is a normal feature of female skin, not a measure of your health or your effort.

Why It Often Shows More After 50

- **Skin gets thinner** and loses collagen, so it hides texture less well.
- **Muscle mass slowly declines** with age unless we work to keep it. This is called sarcopenia.
- **Hormones shift**, changing where and how the body stores fat.
- **Circulation can slow**, especially if we sit more than we used to.

Susan's Tip

Every item on that list is something we can support with daily habits. We can't stop time, but we have more say in how we age than most of us were ever told.

Your Turn

When did you first notice changes in your skin or body? How did it make you feel?

Why Menopause Changes Things

If you noticed your cellulite getting worse around the time your periods became irregular, you're not imagining it.

Estrogen helps keep skin thick, supports collagen, and helps with blood flow to the skin. As estrogen drops during perimenopause and menopause, several things tend to happen together:

What Changes	What You Might Notice
Skin collagen drops, fastest in the first few years after menopause	Skin looks thinner, crepier, less “bouncy”
Fat storage shifts	More around the middle; thighs and hips feel softer
Muscle is harder to keep	Less tone, weaker legs, stairs feel harder
Sleep is often disrupted	More stress, more cravings, less energy

★ **The Encouraging Part**

Muscle, skin hydration, circulation, sleep, and stress all respond to lifestyle. You can't undo menopause, but you can support your body through it in ways you'll see and feel.

Myths vs. Facts

The beauty industry has told women a lot of nonsense. Let's clear the air.

MYTH Only overweight women get cellulite.

FACT Genetics, hormones, and skin structure matter more than weight. Slim, athletic women get it too.

MYTH The right cream can dissolve cellulite.

FACT No cream can melt fat. Caffeine creams may tighten the look of skin for a few hours. That's all.

MYTH Cellulite means you're unhealthy.

FACT It's a normal skin texture, not a health score. Very fit women have it.

MYTH Enough squats will burn the fat off your thighs.

FACT You can't choose where your body loses fat. But stronger muscle underneath does create a firmer, smoother-looking base.

MYTH Drinking water “flushes out” cellulite.

FACT Water helps skin look healthier and plumper. It doesn't flush fat away.

MYTH *Expensive treatments are the only thing that works.*

FACT Some in-office treatments can give modest, often temporary improvement. Daily habits are the foundation, and they cost far less.

MYTH *Cellulite means toxins are trapped in your body.*

FACT There's no evidence for this. "Detox" teas and wraps mostly remove water, which comes right back.

MYTH *After 60, it's too late to build muscle.*

FACT Research shows women in their 70s, 80s and beyond can get stronger with regular strength training. It's never too late.

MYTH *Lifting weights will make you bulky.*

FACT That's not how a woman's body works after 50. You'll get firmer, steadier, and stronger, not bulky.

Susan's Tip

Whenever a product promises to "erase," "melt," or "detox" cellulite, keep your wallet in your purse. Honest products talk about appearance and temporary effects.

What to Realistically Expect

I'm putting this chapter early on purpose. Knowing what's realistic is what keeps you going when progress feels slow.

Every woman is different, but here's a general idea of how changes often unfold when the habits in this guide are done consistently:

Weeks 1–2

You may sleep a bit better and feel more energetic. The habits start to feel familiar.

Weeks 3–6

Many women notice they're getting stronger: easier stairs, steadier balance, standing up from a chair with less effort.

Weeks 6–12

Some women begin to see firmer-looking legs and smoother-looking skin, especially when they've kept up strength training.

3 months +

Changes can keep building gradually. This is where habits become simply “how you live.”

Let's Be Honest

- You will likely never have skin exactly like you did at 25. That's not the goal.
- Some cellulite will probably always be there. Genetics play a real role.
- Progress isn't a straight line. Stress, travel, and hormones cause ups and downs.
- The scale isn't the only measure. Strength, energy, and how your clothes fit often change first.

PART TWO

The Five Pillars

“Small habits create big changes.”

SUSAN CARTER

OVERVIEW

Your Five Pillars at a Glance

Each pillar supports the others. You don't need to be perfect at all five. You just need to keep showing up.

Pillar	What It Does for You
1. Nourish	Protein and whole foods give your body what it needs to build muscle and make collagen.
2. Hydrate	Well-hydrated skin looks plumper and smoother.
3. Move	Strength training builds the firm base under your skin. Walking supports circulation.
4. Circulate	Massage, dry brushing, and foam rolling feel good and can temporarily improve how skin looks.
5. Restore	Good sleep and less stress support your hormones, your cravings, and your recovery.

★ If You Only Do Two Things

Make them **strength training 2 to 3 times a week** and **protein at every meal**. These two do the most for the muscle under your skin.

Nourish: Food for Skin & Muscle

If there's one chapter to read slowly, it's this one. Food is the foundation everything else is built on.

Protein: Your Skin and Muscle's Best Friend

Protein gives your body the building blocks for muscle and for collagen. After 50, our bodies become less efficient at using protein to maintain muscle. That's why many experts suggest older adults eat more protein than they did when they were younger, not less.

The Simple Rule

Aim for a palm-sized portion of protein at every meal, roughly 25 to 30 grams. Spreading it across breakfast, lunch, and dinner seems to work better for muscle than eating most of it at dinner.

Safety Note

If you have kidney disease, please ask your doctor how much protein is right for you before increasing it.

Your Protein Cheat Sheet

Approximate amounts. You don't need to count exactly. This just helps you see what a “good portion” looks like.

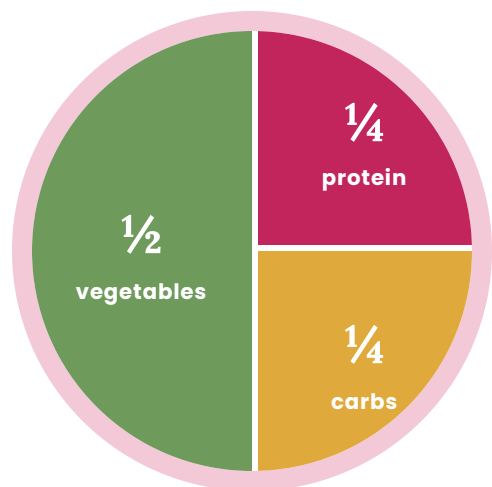
Food	Portion	Protein (approx.)
Chicken or turkey breast, cooked	3 oz (size of a deck of cards)	25 g
Salmon or other fish, cooked	3 oz	20–22 g
Canned tuna or salmon	1 small can (3 oz drained)	20 g
Plain Greek yogurt	3/4 cup	15–17 g
Cottage cheese	1/2 cup	12–14 g
Eggs	2 large	12 g
Lentils or beans, cooked	1/2 cup	7–9 g
Firm tofu	1/2 cup	10 g
Almonds	1 small handful (1 oz)	6 g
Protein powder	1 scoop (check label)	20–25 g

★ Quick Win

Most of us eat a light breakfast. Tomorrow, add one protein to yours: Greek yogurt, eggs, or cottage cheese.

The Simple Plate Method

No weighing, no measuring. Just look at your plate.



1/2 vegetables

salad, greens, peppers, broccoli

1/4 protein

fish, chicken, eggs, beans, tofu

1/4 whole-grain carbs

brown rice, quinoa, potatoes, whole-grain bread

+ a little healthy fat

olive oil, avocado, nuts

Healthy Fats Are Not the Enemy

Many of us grew up fearing fat. Healthy fats help keep skin supple and help your body absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K. The key word is moderate: a tablespoon of olive oil on your salad, half an avocado, a small handful of nuts.

Fiber: The Quiet Hero

Fiber supports digestion, keeps blood sugar steadier, and helps you feel full. Get it from vegetables, fruit (eaten whole, not as juice), oats, beans, and whole grains.

Foods to Enjoy More & Foods to Enjoy Less

Enjoy More

- **Citrus, berries, peppers, kiwi:** vitamin C, which your body uses to make collagen
- **Leafy greens:** vitamins and minerals
- **Salmon, sardines:** omega-3 fats
- **Cucumber, celery, melon:** water-rich foods
- **Beans and lentils:** protein and fiber

Enjoy Less

- Added sugar and sweet drinks
- White bread, pastries, and refined snacks
- Very salty restaurant and packaged foods, which can make you feel puffy
- Alcohol, which can disrupt sleep and dry out skin
- Fried foods

Notice I said “enjoy less,” not “never.” Strict rules rarely last. A piece of birthday cake with your grandchildren is part of a good life.

Susan's Tip

I don't call any food “bad.” I just ask: “Is this helping me feel strong today?” Most days the answer guides me just fine.

A Day on Susan's Plate

Not a diet to follow exactly, just an example of how simple this can look.

Meal	What I Eat
Breakfast	Plain Greek yogurt with berries and a sprinkle of walnuts. Coffee with a splash of milk.
Lunch	Big salad with greens, cucumber, tomatoes, chickpeas, and grilled chicken. Olive oil and lemon.
Snack	An apple with a tablespoon of peanut butter, or a cheese stick and some grapes.
Dinner	Baked salmon, roasted broccoli, and a small scoop of brown rice.
Evening	Herbal tea. Sometimes a square of dark chocolate.

From the Farmers Market

Saturday mornings I walk to our local farmers market in Naples. Whatever vegetables look best become that week's dinners. It turns healthy eating into a treat instead of a chore.

12 Easy Meal Ideas

Each one has protein, takes 15 minutes or less of hands-on time, and works for one person or the whole family.

Breakfast

- Greek yogurt, berries & nuts
- Two eggs scrambled with spinach, whole-grain toast
- Cottage cheese with peaches and cinnamon
- Oatmeal made with milk, stirred with a scoop of protein powder

Lunch

- Tuna salad (with Greek yogurt) in lettuce cups or on whole-grain bread
- Lentil soup with a side salad
- Leftover chicken over greens with beans and avocado
- Egg salad plate with raw veggies

Dinner

- Sheet-pan salmon with green beans and potatoes
- Turkey and vegetable chili
- Stir-fried tofu or shrimp with frozen vegetable mix and brown rice
- Rotisserie chicken, big salad, roasted sweet potato

★ Quick Win

Cook once, eat twice. Make extra protein at dinner and you've got tomorrow's lunch.

Your Grocery Checklist

Take it to the store. Check what you need.

Protein

- ☐ Eggs
- ☐ Plain Greek yogurt
- ☐ Cottage cheese
- ☐ Chicken or turkey breast
- ☐ Salmon or other fish
- ☐ Canned tuna or salmon
- ☐ Tofu, beans, or lentils

Healthy Fats

- ☐ Olive oil
- ☐ Avocados
- ☐ Nuts or seeds

Produce

- ☐ Leafy greens
- ☐ Berries (fresh or frozen)
- ☐ Citrus fruit
- ☐ Bell peppers
- ☐ Broccoli or green beans
- ☐ Cucumbers & tomatoes
- ☐ Frozen vegetable mix

Pantry

- ☐ Oats
- ☐ Brown rice or quinoa
- ☐ Whole-grain bread
- ☐ Herbal tea

Also on my list

Hydrate: Water Made Simple

Dehydrated skin looks thinner and shows texture more easily. Well-hydrated skin looks smoother.

As we get older, our sense of thirst gets weaker, so many women over 50 are a little dehydrated without realizing it.

How Much?

Health guidelines suggest most women need about 9 cups of fluid a day from drinks, plus what comes from food. Water, milk, herbal tea, and even coffee and tea all count. Hot weather and exercise mean you'll need more.

★ The Easiest Check

Look at your urine. Pale yellow usually means you're drinking enough. Dark yellow means drink more.

Ways to Drink More Without Trying

- Have a glass of water before your morning coffee.
- Keep a bottle where you can see it all day.
- Drink a glass with every meal.
- Add lemon, cucumber, mint, or berries for flavor.
- Stop drinking large amounts 1–2 hours before bed so sleep isn't interrupted.

Safety Note

If you have heart failure, kidney disease, or take water pills (diuretics), your doctor may want you to limit fluids. Follow their advice.

Move: Strength & Walking

This isn't about punishing workouts. It's about giving your muscles and circulation what they need.

Why Strength Training Matters Most

If I could recommend only one type of exercise for firmer-looking legs after 50, it would be strength training. Building muscle creates a firmer base under your skin and helps counter the muscle loss that comes with age.

And the benefits go far beyond your skin: stronger bones, better balance, fewer falls, easier stairs, and more independence as the years go by.

How Much?

The official US activity guidelines recommend muscle-strengthening activity at least 2 days a week, plus about 150 minutes of moderate activity (like brisk walking) spread across the week. That's 30 minutes, 5 days a week. In this guide you'll do the home strength routine 2 to 3 times a week and build up your walks gradually.

How Hard Should It Feel?

By the last two repetitions, the exercise should feel challenging, but you should still be able to keep good form and breathe. If you could easily do ten more, it's time to make it a little harder. If you can't finish with good form, make it easier.

Warm-Up (3 minutes)

1. **March in place** for 1 minute, swinging your arms.
2. **Arm circles:** 10 forward, 10 backward.
3. **Ankle circles:** holding a chair, 10 each direction, each foot.
4. **Gentle side steps** for 30 seconds.

Your Home Strength Routine

Six exercises. No gym needed. All you need is a sturdy chair, a counter or railing, and a bed or mat. Do the routine **2 to 3 times a week**, with a rest day in between. Rest 30 to 60 seconds between sets.

★ Starting Out?

In your first week, do just the first three exercises, one set each. Add more as you feel ready. “One habit at a time” applies here too.

Safety Note

Move slowly and with control. Breathe out on the effort. If any exercise causes sharp pain, especially in your knees or back, skip it and choose an easier version.

1 Sit-to-Stand (Chair Squat)

2 sets x 8–12

1. Sit on the front half of a sturdy chair, feet flat and hip-width apart.
2. Lean slightly forward and press through your heels to stand up tall.
3. Slowly lower back down to the chair, counting to three.

Easier: push off the armrests with your hands, or use a higher seat.

Harder: hold a light weight at your chest, or just tap the seat instead of sitting.

Keep your knees pointing over your toes, not caving inward.

2 Glute Bridge

2 sets x 10–15

1. Lie on your back on a mat or a firm bed, knees bent, feet flat.
2. Squeeze your seat and lift your hips until your body forms a straight line from knees to shoulders.
3. Hold for 2 seconds, then lower slowly.

Easier: lift only a few inches.

Harder: hold at the top for 5 seconds, or loop a resistance band above your knees.

If getting down to the floor is hard, do this one on your bed. It works just as well.

3 Standing Side Leg Lift

2 sets x 10 each side

1. Stand tall holding the back of a chair.
2. Lift one leg out to the side, toes pointing forward. Go only as high as you can without leaning.
3. Lower slowly. Finish all reps, then switch legs.

Easier: make the movement smaller.

Harder: add a resistance band around your ankles.

4 Supported Step-Up

2 sets × 8 each side

1. Stand at the bottom of your stairs, holding the railing.
2. Step your right foot onto the first step and press through your heel to bring your left foot up.
3. Step back down, one foot at a time. Finish all reps, then lead with the left.

Easier: hold both railings, or use a lower step.

Harder: go slower, especially on the way down.

Always hold the railing. Never do this on a loose step or stool.

5 Supported Reverse Lunge

2 sets × 6–8 each side

1. Stand holding a kitchen counter with one hand.
2. Step one foot back and gently bend both knees.
3. Press through your front heel to return to standing.

Easier: take a shorter step and bend just a little.

Harder: bend deeper, still keeping control.

If this bothers your knees, skip it and do an extra set of Sit-to-Stands instead.

6 Calf Raise at the Counter

2 sets × 12–15

1. Stand facing the counter, hands resting on it.
2. Rise up onto your toes as high as is comfortable. Pause.
3. Lower slowly back down.

Easier: lift just a little.

Harder: do one leg at a time.

Bonus: your calf muscles act like a pump that helps move blood back up from your legs.

Cool-Down Stretches (3 minutes)

Hold each stretch for 20 to 30 seconds. Breathe slowly. A stretch should feel gentle, never painful.

- 1. Seated hamstring stretch:** sit on the edge of a chair, one leg straight out with heel on the floor. Lean forward slightly with a straight back. Switch legs.
- 2. Seated hip stretch:** sit tall, cross one ankle over the opposite knee. Gently lean forward. Switch sides.
- 3. Calf stretch:** hands on a wall, step one foot back with the heel down. Switch legs.
- 4. Shoulder roll:** roll your shoulders back 10 times and take three deep breaths.

Susan's Tip

So many women my age worry that weights will make them “bulky.” I promise you, that's not how a woman's body works after 50. What you will get is firmer muscle, better posture, stronger bones, and legs you can trust on the stairs.

Your Turn

What's one kind of movement you truly enjoy? Dancing, gardening, swimming, walking with a friend? The best plan is the one you'll keep doing.

Walking: Simple and Powerful

Walking supports circulation, helps your lymphatic system move fluid, is gentle on joints, and is good for your heart and mood. A 10-minute walk after a meal can also help keep blood sugar steadier.

Your 4-Week Walking Plan

Week	How Long	How Often
Week 1	10 minutes	5 days
Week 2	15 minutes	5 days
Week 3	20 minutes	5 days
Week 4	20–30 minutes	5 days

Already walking more than this? Great. Start where you are and keep going. The 30-Day Calendar (pages 40–41) marks your five walking days each week.

The Talk Test

For a “brisk” walk, you should be able to talk, but not sing. Break it into pieces if you like: three 10-minute walks count just as much as one 30-minute walk.

Move More Without “Exercising”

- Stand up and move for a few minutes every hour.
- Take the stairs when you can.
- Park farther from the entrance.
- Garden, dance in the kitchen, play with the grandkids.

My favorite part of the day is my morning walk along the beach here in Naples. Twenty minutes, the sound of the waves, and my head is clear before the day begins. Find your version of that.

Circulate: Massage, Brushing & Rolling

These rituals feel wonderful and can make skin look smoother for a little while. They work best alongside strength training, not instead of it.

Your lymphatic system moves fluid around your body, but it has no pump of its own. It depends on your muscles moving. That's why walking and calf raises matter so much.

Self-Massage

Using a body oil or lotion, massage your legs with upward, circular strokes, from ankles toward hips, for a few minutes. Do this a few times a week. It can temporarily improve the look of skin, and it's a lovely way to care for yourself.

Dry Brushing

1. Use a soft natural-bristle brush on dry skin, before your shower.
2. Start at your feet and brush upward toward your heart with long, gentle strokes.
3. Use light pressure. You want a gentle tingle, not redness or scratches.
4. Spend 3 to 5 minutes. Then shower and moisturize.

★ How Often

Do this 2 to 3 times a week, not every day, so your skin can recover.

Foam Rolling

Foam rolling the front and sides of your thighs and your seat can ease tightness and boost blood flow for a while. Roll slowly for 1 to 2 minutes per leg. Choose a soft roller to start. If getting to the floor is difficult, use a massage stick or a rolling pin while seated instead.

Skip Brushing, Rolling & Deep Massage On Areas With...

- varicose veins or a history of blood clots
- thin, fragile, or easily bruised skin (common if you take blood thinners or steroids)
- eczema, psoriasis, rashes, cuts, or sunburn
- numbness from diabetes (you may not feel if you're scraping the skin)

If you have osteoporosis, ask your doctor before foam rolling.

A Simple Weekly Routine

Day	Practice
Monday	Strength + walk
Tuesday	Dry brushing + walk
Wednesday	Strength + walk + stretching
Thursday	Self-massage or foam rolling + walk
Friday	Strength + walk
Saturday	Dry brushing + active fun (garden, dance, swim)
Sunday	Rest and gentle stretching

That's three strength days and five walking days, matching the plan in Part Three.

Restore: Sleep, Stress & Hormones

This is the chapter most guides skip. It might be the most important one.

Sleep

While you sleep, your body repairs muscle and balances hormones. Poor sleep tends to raise stress hormones and increase cravings for sugar and quick carbs the next day. Most adults do best with **7 or more hours** a night.

- ☐ Go to bed and wake up at the same time, even on weekends.
- ☐ No caffeine after early afternoon.
- ☐ Dim lights and put screens away an hour before bed.
- ☐ Keep your bedroom cool and dark (a fan helps with night sweats).
- ☐ Try a short wind-down ritual: herbal tea, a book, gentle stretching.

If you regularly can't sleep, snore loudly, or wake up gasping, talk to your doctor. Sleep problems after menopause are common and often treatable.

Stress

When stress is constant, the stress hormone cortisol stays high. Over time that can encourage fat storage around the middle, disrupt sleep, and leave you craving comfort food. You can't remove stress from your life, but you can help your body recover from it every day:

- Five minutes of slow breathing, morning or night
- A short walk outside in daylight
- A few minutes of journaling to get thoughts out of your head
- Time with people who make you laugh
- Saying “no” to one thing this week that drains you

★ Quick Win: The 4-4-6 Breath

Tonight in bed: breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4, breathe out slowly for 6. Repeat five times. A longer exhale helps signal your body to relax.

Blood Sugar

Skipping meals and then eating a lot of refined carbs can send blood sugar up and down, which leaves you tired and hungry. Meals with protein, fiber, and a little healthy fat help keep your energy steady through the day.

Talking to Your Doctor About Menopause

Some women find that hormone therapy, prescribed and monitored by a doctor, helps with menopause symptoms, and it may also affect skin. It isn't right for everyone. This is a personal medical decision to make with your doctor, who knows your full health history.

Questions to Bring to Your Next Appointment

- ☐ Is it safe for me to start strength training and walking more?
- ☐ How much protein and water is right for me?
- ☐ Should I have a bone density test?
- ☐ Should my vitamin D level be checked?
- ☐ Are my menopause symptoms something we can treat?
- ☐ Is hormone therapy an option for me? What are the benefits and risks?
- ☐ Do any of my medications affect my skin, sleep, or energy?

My own questions:

Care: Skincare & Smart Shopping

Skincare alone won't change cellulite much. But a simple routine keeps skin healthy and supports the work you're doing.

- **Moisturize daily**, ideally right after your shower while skin is still damp. Look for hyaluronic acid, ceramides, glycerin, or shea butter.
- **Use sunscreen** on exposed legs. Sun damage breaks down collagen over time.
- **Keep showers warm, not hot.** Hot water dries out skin.
- **Caffeine creams** may tighten the look of skin for a few hours. Nice before a beach day, not a long-term fix.

A Word About Collagen Supplements

Some small studies suggest collagen supplements may modestly improve skin, but the research is still limited and some of it is funded by supplement makers. They aren't necessary to follow this guide. If you'd like to try one, ask your doctor or pharmacist first, especially if you take other medications.

How to Spot a Cellulite Scam

Be cautious with any product, treatment, or influencer that:

- promises to “erase,” “melt,” “dissolve,” or “cure” cellulite
- says results are “permanent” or “guaranteed”
- talks about “toxins” being stuck in your fat
- shows dramatic before-and-after photos (lighting, posture, and editing change everything)
- pressures you with “only today” prices or countdown timers
- says you’ll see results in a few days

Susan's Tip

I keep that old vibrating gadget in my drawer as a reminder. Every dollar I didn't spend on the next “miracle” went to good shoes and fresh food instead. Best investment I ever made.

Your Turn

What products have you tried in the past? What did you learn from them?

PART THREE

Your 30-Day Plan

“One habit, one day, one week at a time.”

SUSAN CARTER

One Habit at a Time: The Plan

Most plans ask you to change everything on Monday. By Thursday, you're exhausted. This plan is different: you add habits gradually, so each one has time to settle in.

Week	Focus	Habits You'll Add
Week 1 Start Small	Build the walking habit and try your first strength sessions.	Walk 5 days a week · Protein at breakfast · 2 short strength sessions
Week 2 Build Strength	Full strength routine, three times a week.	+ Water goal · + Dry brushing or massage
Week 3 Support Your Skin	Protein at every meal and a bedtime routine.	+ Protein at all meals · + Wind-down routine
Week 4 Make It Yours	Daily stress practice and planning for month two.	+ 5 minutes of calm daily

Every week: walks on 5 days (time grows from 10 to 30 minutes, page 29), strength 2 to 3 times (pages 26–27), and at least one rest day.

If You Miss a Day

Just pick up where you left off. Don't “make up” for it, and don't start over. One missed day changes nothing. Quitting changes everything. **Consistency beats intensity.**

Before Day 1

Your Turn

Why are you doing this? Not “to get rid of cellulite.” Go deeper. Is it to keep up with your grandkids? To feel good in a swimsuit on vacation? To stay independent for years to come? When motivation fades, and it will some days, come back and read what you wrote here.

Get Ready Checklist

- ☐ Read the Safety Page (page 3) and talk to your doctor if needed.
- ☐ Print the workbook pages at the back.
- ☐ Fill in “Your Starting Point” (page 42).
- ☐ Find a sturdy chair, and a mat or firm bed.
- ☐ Put supportive walking shoes by the door.
- ☐ Shop using the Grocery Checklist (page 22).
- ☐ Pick your start day and write it on your calendar.

Your 30-Day Calendar: Days 1–14

Check the box when you've done the day. "Walk" means your walking time for that week (page 29). "Strength" means the home routine (pages 26–27). Each week has 5 walking days.

Week 1 *Start Small*

1 Begin ☐
Fill in your Starting Point. 10-minute walk.

2 Protein Morning ☐
Protein at breakfast. 10-minute walk.

3 Walk ☐
10-minute walk. Protein at breakfast.

4 First Strength ☐
Exercises 1–3, one set each.

5 Walk + Veggies ☐
10-minute walk. Extra vegetables at dinner.

6 Strength + Walk ☐
Exercises 1–3, one or two sets. 10-minute walk.

7 Rest & Reflect ☐
Week 1 check-in (page 48).

Week 2 *Build Strength*

8 Strength ☐
Full routine (all 6). 15-minute walk.

9 Try Dry Brushing ☐
First session (page 30). 15-minute walk.

10 Strength ☐
Full routine. Start your water goal.

11 Walk + Water ☐
15-minute walk. Meet your water goal.

12 Recovery ☐
Self-massage or gentle stretching.

13 Strength ☐
Full routine. 15-minute walk.

14 Active Fun & Reflect ☐
Garden, dance, swim. 15-minute walk. Week 2 check-in (page 48).

Your 30-Day Calendar: Days 15–30

Week 3 Support Your Skin

15 Strength ☐
Full routine. 20-minute walk.

16 Protein All Day ☐
Protein at every meal. Dry brush. 20-minute walk.

17 Strength ☐
Full routine. Try one “harder” version.

18 Wind Down ☐
20-minute walk. Start your bedtime routine.

19 Strength ☐
Full routine. 20-minute walk.

20 Market Day ☐
20-minute walk to a farmers market or park. Massage.

21 Rest & Reflect ☐
Week 3 check-in (page 48).

Week 4 Make It Yours

22 Strength ☐
Full routine. 20–30 minute walk.

23 Calm ☐
Dry brush. 20–30 minute walk. 4–4–6 breathing.

24 Strength ☐
Full routine. 20–30 minute walk. 5 minutes of calm.

25 Recovery ☐
Massage or foam roll. 20–30 minute walk.

26 Strength ☐
Full routine. 20–30 minute walk.

27 Active Fun ☐
Something you enjoy. Invite a friend.

28 Rest & Reflect ☐
Week 4 check-in (page 48).

29 Measure ☐
Retake your Starting Point tests (page 42).

30 Celebrate! ☐
Fill in “Day 30” (page 49) and plan your month two. You did it.

Your Starting Point

Fill this in on Day 1, then again on Day 29. Measurements are optional. Many women find the strength test is the most encouraging number of all.

Measure	Day 1	Day 29
Date		
30-Second Chair Test: how many times can you stand up from a chair and sit back down in 30 seconds (arms crossed)?		
Waist (inches), optional		
Hips (inches), optional		
Thigh (inches), optional		
Energy (1-10)		
Sleep quality (1-10)		
How I feel about my body (1-10)		

Susan's Tip

Take a photo in the same spot, same lighting, and same outfit on Day 1 and Day 29. Keep it just for you. The mirror and your strength usually tell the truth before the scale does.

Daily Habit Checklist

Week of: _____

Habit	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Walk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strength routine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Protein at breakfast	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Protein at lunch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Protein at dinner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Water goal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Veggies: half my plate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Brush / massage / roll	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 minutes of calm	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In bed on time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

One Win This Week

Water Tracker

Color in one glass for each cup of fluid. Aim for about 9 a day (unless your doctor advises otherwise).

Week of: _____

Day	Cups
Mon	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Tue	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Wed	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Thu	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Fri	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Sat	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Sun	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

★ Quick Win

Fill a glass before every meal and finish it before you eat. That's three cups done without thinking.

Meal Tracker

Use the plate method. Put a star next to meals with a palm-sized protein.

Week of: _____

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Strength & Walking Log

Strength Sessions

Date	Which exercises	Sets	How it felt

Walks

Date	Minutes	Where / with whom	How it felt

Weekly Planner

Sketch out your walks, strength days, meals, and rest for the week ahead.

Week of: _____

Day	Movement	Meals / Shopping	Self-care
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Weekly Check-Ins

Week 1: What felt easier than I expected?

Week 2: Where did I struggle, and what got in the way?

Week 3: What's one non-scale win? (energy, sleep, strength, mood)

Week 4: Which habits do I want to keep for good?

Day 30: Look How Far You've Come

Compare your Day 1 and Day 29 Chair Test. What changed?

Three things I'm proud of from this month

My plan for month two

- ☐ Keep strength training ___ times a week
- ☐ Walk ___ minutes, ___ days a week
- ☐ Try one harder exercise version
- ☐ One new habit to add: _____

Consistency beats intensity. Keep going.

Your Questions, Answered

“I’m in my late 60s (or 70s). Is it too late?”

No. Studies show women well into their 70s and 80s can build strength. Start with the easier versions, go slowly, and check with your doctor first.

“Will my cellulite go away completely?”

Probably not, and anyone who promises that isn't being honest. What many women notice is firmer-looking skin, stronger legs, and more confidence.

“Do I need to lose weight for this to work?”

No. Building muscle and taking care of your skin can help how your legs look and feel, whether or not the scale changes.

“My knees hurt. What should I do?”

Choose the easier versions, skip lunges, and keep the movements small and controlled. If pain continues, a physical therapist can tailor exercises to you.

“I fell off the plan for a week.”

Welcome to being human. Go back to the calendar and pick up the next day. No guilt, no starting over.

“Do I need special equipment?”

No. A sturdy chair and comfortable shoes are enough. Later, a resistance band set and light dumbbells (2 to 8 lbs) are inexpensive ways to keep progressing.

“How soon will I see results?”

Many women feel stronger within a few weeks. Visible changes in skin, if they happen, usually take two to three months of steady habits. See page 13.

“Can I do this if I'm on hormone therapy, or if I'm not?”

Yes, the habits in this guide work alongside whatever you and your doctor decide about menopause treatment.

“How often should I do the strength routine and walks?”

Strength 2 to 3 times a week with a rest day in between, and walks on 5 days a week. The 30-Day Calendar lays it out for you.

“What should I do after 30 days?”

Repeat the plan with the “harder” exercise versions, lengthen your walks, and keep using the trackers. The habits are the program.

A Closing Letter From Susan

If you've made it this far, pause for a moment and notice something: you showed up. You read about science, food, movement, sleep, and stress because you care about yourself enough to invest this time. That matters more than you know.

Somewhere along the way, many of us were taught that our worth was tied to how our skin looked in a swimsuit. I want to gently push back on that. Your legs have carried you through decades: raising children, building a life, walking through hard seasons and joyful ones. They deserve appreciation, not just criticism.

At the same time, wanting to feel strong and confident in your skin is a completely valid goal. I'm proud of you for pursuing it the healthy, realistic way.

The women who do best aren't the ones who do everything perfectly. They're the ones who keep showing up. They miss a workout and do the next one anyway. They enjoy a big weekend and go back to their plate on Monday. They give themselves grace and keep moving forward.

You don't need to be perfect. You just need to be consistent, one habit at a time.

I'll be cheering you on the whole way. You've got this.

Susan

Sources

This guide draws on public health guidelines and published research, including:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, 2nd edition (2018).
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. *Dietary Reference Intakes for Water, Potassium, Sodium, Chloride, and Sulfate* (2005).
- Bauer J. et al. "Evidence-based recommendations for optimal dietary protein intake in older people: a position paper from the PROT-AGE Study Group." *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association* (2013).
- American Academy of Dermatology. Patient information on cellulite and its treatment.
- The Menopause Society (formerly NAMS). Patient information on menopause, skin, and hormone therapy.
- Fiatarone M.A. et al. "Exercise training and nutritional supplementation for physical frailty in very elderly people." *New England Journal of Medicine* (1994).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 30-Second Chair Stand assessment, STEADI program.

Medical Disclaimer

This guide is for general educational purposes only. It is not medical advice and is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment by a qualified healthcare provider. Always consult your doctor before beginning a new diet, exercise, or wellness program, especially if you have a health condition, take medication, or have had recent surgery. Stop any activity that causes pain, dizziness, or shortness of breath, and seek medical care if needed. This guide does not diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. No statement in it has been evaluated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

About Susan & Results

Susan Carter is the host character of Smooth, Strong & Confident and is not a licensed medical professional. Her story is inspired by real women's experiences. Individual results vary and are not guaranteed.

© 2026 Smooth, Strong & Confident. All rights reserved. smoothstrong.com · susan@smoothstrong.com

This guide is licensed for the purchaser's personal use only. You may print copies for your own use. Please do not share, resell, or distribute it.