

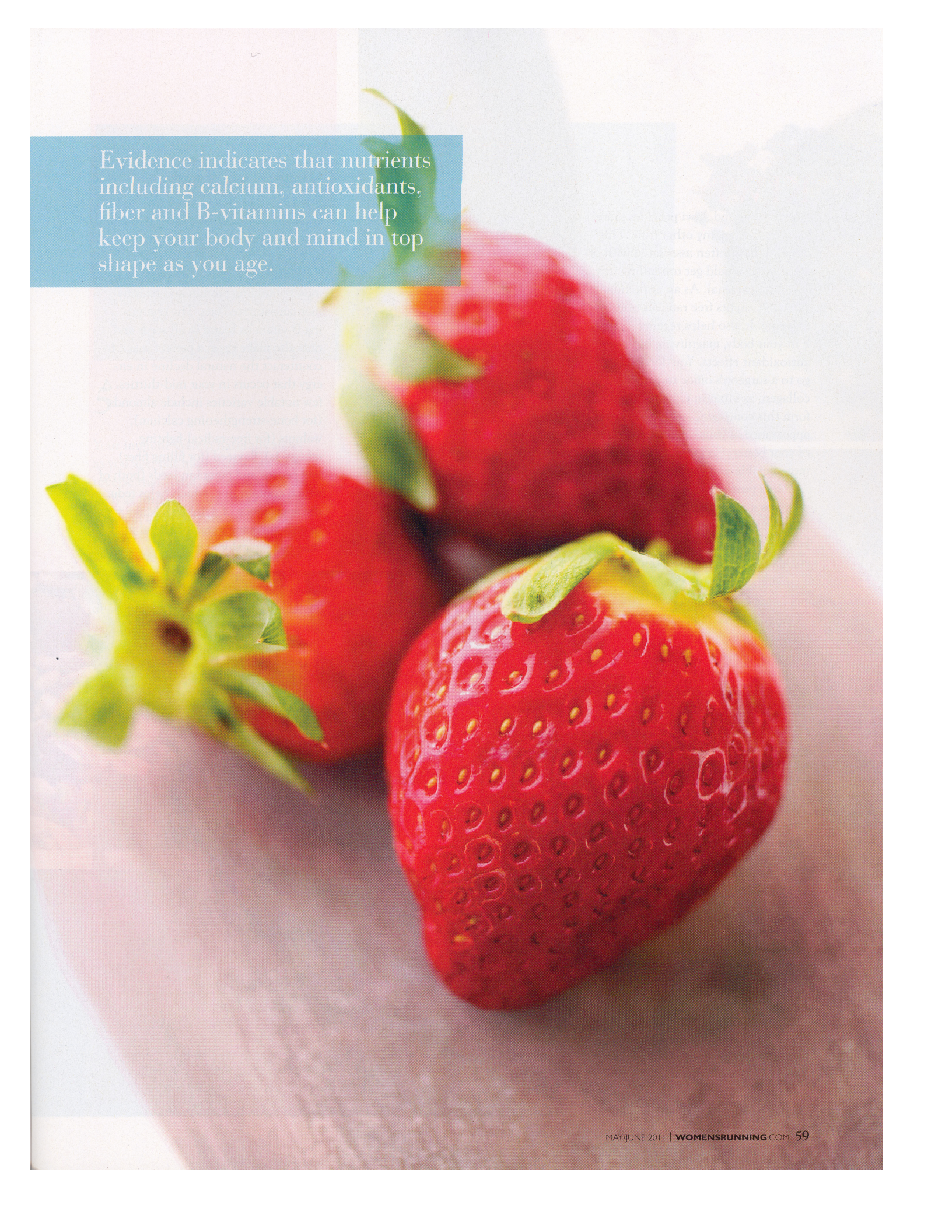
# ULTIMATE ANTI-AGING FOODS

Looking for a fountain of youth? The secret could be in your grocery cart. To run faster and look fitter as the years go by, try these age-busting bites.

BY JULIA MARANAN / PHOTOGRAPHY BY SALVATORE BRANCIFORT

**W**e can't slow down the passing years, but we can control their effect on our bodies and minds. If you know the right foods to reach for, you can maintain a trim body, supple skin and a quick mind throughout your life. Evidence indicates that nutrients including calcium, antioxidants, fiber and B-vitamins can help keep you in top shape as you age. For runners, feeling young is especially gratifying—the proper diet can help you continue to achieve personal records, even as you move up in age groups.

While swallowing nutrients from a bottle might seem like an easy fix, studies show that you'll get the best benefit by consuming vitamins in your diet, rather than in pill form. Natural, whole foods contain hundreds of beneficial compounds that work together in ways that isolated supplements just can't replicate. So if you want to turn back the clock, stock your plate with the following six foods. These anti-aging superstars will help you look and feel younger, prevent or even reverse disease and ensure that you'll stay at the top of your game for years to come.

A close-up photograph of three ripe, red strawberries with green leafy tops, resting on a light-colored wooden surface. The strawberries are arranged in a cluster, with one in the foreground and two slightly behind it. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the strawberries and the wood grain.

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# 1 KIWI

Pound for pound, kiwi provides more vitamin C than any other fruit. This vitamin, most often associated with orange juice, should get top billing in your anti-aging arsenal. As an antioxidant, vitamin C fights free radicals that speed up aging. It also helps regenerate vitamin E in your body, magnifying both vitamins' antioxidant effects. You don't have to go to a surgeon's office to get a dose of collagen, as vitamin C helps your body form this compound, which improves the appearance of your skin and the durability of your bones. Collagen makes your bones more flexible and less likely to fracture.

In a pint-sized package, one kiwi provides a surprising amount of fiber, calcium and potassium as well. Citrus fruits, berries, melons, bell peppers and broccoli are also good sources of vitamin C.



# 2 NUTS AND SEEDS

Want to lower your risk of heart disease and keep your waistline trim as you get older? Studies say you should make like a squirrel and snack on nuts and seeds. These savory morsels provide satiating, muscle-building protein and healthy monounsaturated fats. The energizing B-vitamins found in all seeds and nuts also make them a perfect snack to counteract the natural decline in energy that occurs in your mid-thirties. A few notable varieties include almonds (for bone-strengthening calcium), walnuts (for free-radical-fighting omega-3s), flaxseed (for filling fiber) and pecans and pumpkin seeds (both of which contain zinc, which helps reduce the appearance of wrinkles). Make sure to only consume a small handful at a time to keep calories in check.



# 3 BROCCOLI

Broccoli and other vegetables in the Brassica family (including cabbage, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, kale and mustard greens) contain an impressive number of anti-aging nutrients. For just 31 calories, one cup of broccoli offers artery-clearing fiber, bone-strengthening calcium and heart-healthy potassium. Broccoli is also chock-full of vitamins that fight the effects of passing years, including the B-vitamin folate, which helps you stay sharp by ensuring that your brain synapses fire correctly. Women runners in particular will benefit from broccoli, as the vegetable includes a full serving of vitamin K1 to increase bone density and reduce fracture risk. All vegetables in this green group also provide the immunity-boosting antioxidant glutathione and the compounds sulforaphane and indoles, which help protect against oxidative stress, cell damage and even cancer.

## 4

### QUINOA

Protein is one of the best nutrients for maintaining lean, youthful muscle tone as you age. Packing more protein than any other whole grain, quinoa works as a great base for a meatless meal or a stellar side dish. The mild, nutty grain also serves up slimming fiber, calcium and potassium. While many still think of ticker troubles as a male-dominated issue, heart disease is the leading cause of death in women. Quinoa will keep your heart running strong with B-vitamins, including folate, which regulates levels of homocysteine, an amino acid linked to heart problems. Rinse the grains thoroughly before cooking to wash away the bitter saponins, then follow the package directions.

## 5

### MUSHROOMS

Your immune system naturally slows as you age, but mushrooms can help reverse that trend. Asian mushrooms, such as shiitake and maitake, contain a type of carbohydrate called beta-glucans that boost immunity and may protect against cancer. Beta-glucans also help you stay youthfully slim by counteracting your body's natural tendency to store fat around your middle as your metabolism slows. Widely available white button mushrooms are a good source of antioxidants, as well as the anti-inflammatory vitamin B3, and vitamin B2, which may increase resistance to bacterial infections.



## 6

### WILD SALMON

Salmon deserves its reputation as a super source of omega-3s. These fatty acids keep hair shiny and skin smooth to give you a healthy, youthful glow. For the best benefits, purchase wild salmon over the farmed variety. Wild salmon contains naturally higher levels of omega-3s, which, aside from improving your appearance, can lower triglyceride levels and protect against heart attack. Omega-3s also help maintain a quick mind by slightly thinning your blood, which makes it easier for your brain to get the oxygen it needs to function optimally. Wild salmon also provides muscle-building protein and the anti-inflammatory antioxidant astaxanthin, which gives it a naturally reddish hue (farmed salmon has color added). Recent research indicates astaxanthin may help protect your skin against the effects of sun damage, such as sagging and wrinkles, to help you keep your ageless beauty.

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