



To prevent unsightly veins, it's crucial to know what causes them. They're mostly genetic, but they can be worsened by pregnancy, smoking, lack of exercise, standing all day, taking birth control pills and, believe it or not, frequently wearing Spanx, which are so tight that they can keep blood from circulating properly. Fortunately your sporty habits help. "Moderate exercise pumps blood back to your heart so it doesn't pool in your calves or thighs," says Luis Navarro, M.D., founding surgeon of the Vein Treatment Center in New York City. Just make sure to alternate high-impact workouts, like running and stairclimbing—which can lead to spider veins, especially around ankles—with low-impact routines, such as Spinning and swimming, says Paul Friedman, M.D., a dermatologist in Houston and New York City.

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