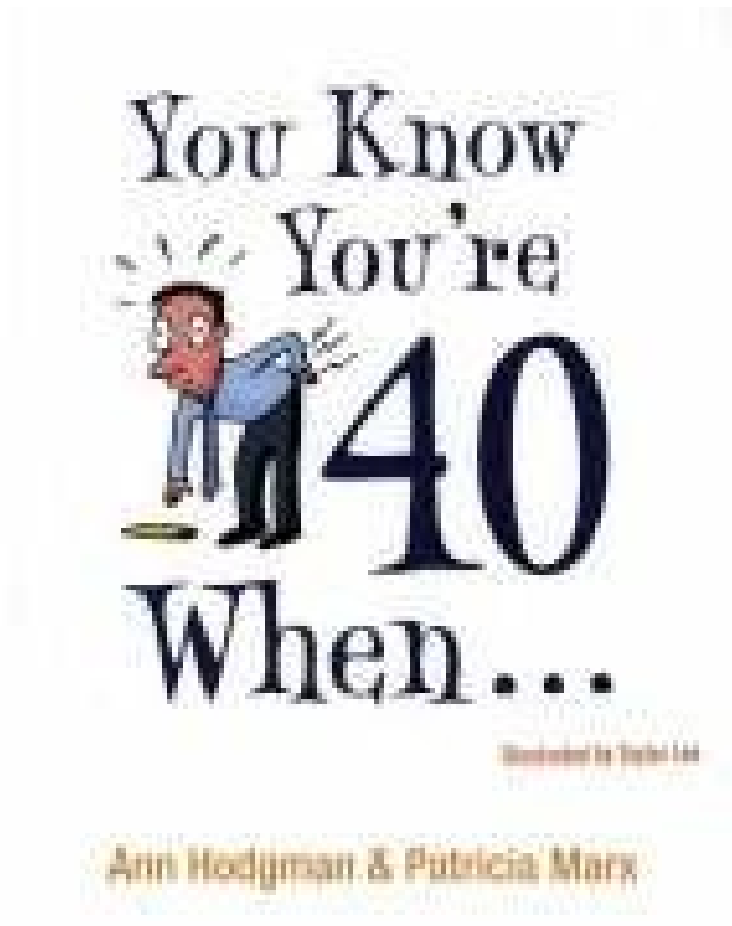


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You Know You're 40 When...

Ann Hodgman

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Are you almost over the hill? Know someone who is?Getting older is no fun, but it sure can be funny. How do you know when you're approaching the big 4-0? Here are a few clues:* Comb-overs are starting to make a certain kind of sense.* A kid you once babysat for is now your lawyer.* At your checkups, the doctor has begun to ask if you're still sexually active. * Midnight seems awfully late.* You're more interested in websites that will calculate your Body Mass Index than in Internet porn.* You receive two phone calls in a single week from people who want to sell you life insurance.Whether you've just found your first gray hair or you're peering around the corner to your mid-life crisis,

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From the Inside Flap Are you almost over the hill? Know someone who is? Getting older is no fun, but it sure can be funny. How do you know when you're approaching the big 4-0? Here are a few clues: * Comb-overs are starting to make a certain kind of sense. * A kid you once babysat for is now your lawyer. * At your checkups, the doctor has begun to ask if you're still sexually active. * Midnight seems awfully late. * You're more interested in websites that will calculate your Body Mass Index than in Internet porn. * You receive two phone calls in a single week from people who want to sell you life insurance. Whether you've just found your first gray hair or you're peering around the corner to your mid-life crisis, "You Know You're 40 When... will tickle your funny bone (while you can still remember where to find it).

About the Author ANN HODGMAN is the author of several humor books and more than forty books for children. A frequent contributor to many national magazines, she lives in Washington, Connecticut. The first female staffer on the Harvard Lampoon, PATRICIA MARX has been a staff writer for Saturday Night Live, created episodes for Nickelodeon, and written dozens of books and magazine articles. She lives in New York City. Hodgman and Marx have collaborated on several previous books, including 1003 Great Things About Getting Old, and they have each written for The New Yorker. Illustrator and cartoonist TAYLOR LEE lives in Larchmont, New York.

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Introduction Turning forty may not be much fun—but it sure is funny. When did your real body get switched with this flabby, middle-aged one? Who tinkered with your metabolism behind your back? Where's the rock star you were going to be? And where did your motorcycle go? How did you end up with a minivan? We can remember when our parents turned forty; they seemed ancient, if not middle-aged. (Ancient, middle-aged—it was all the same to us then.) Forty used to be the age of grown-ups. Now it seems more like the beginning of pretending not to be a grown-up, though it can be hard to believe this as you negotiate with a six-year-old about how many bites of pasta he has to eat before dessert. Forty is also the age of stuff. For those of us who once wanted to backpack across Europe, this can be hard to accept, but nonetheless, forty-year-olds need dozens of shoes, state-of-the-art exercise equipment, the latest skin-care products, and most of all, closet space. They also need a book about how to turn forty. One more thing: enjoy forty because once you turn fifty, you'll wish you could do it all over again. You could be the hippest person on the planet, but no college kid would ever think of you as a peer. You can remember thinking your parents were really, really old when they were younger than you are now. Golf is starting to seem sort of cool. Getting pregnant without medical intervention seems terribly quaint. You don't care about mileage or pollution. You just want the damn SUV, okay? A friend calls to invite you to lunch, and you reply, "How does November 12 two years from now sound?" You haven't added to your thong collection in quite a while. A kid you once babysat is now your lawyer. It really is too late to change your mind and go to veterinary school. Your handwriting may still be legible to someone, but that someone is no longer you. In two years, you've never stumbled upon an episode of Seinfeld that you haven't seen already. You'd just as soon have cereal for dinner. Suddenly, you are overcome by the urge to come up with a new "look" for yourself . . . but you can't be bothered. It's not that the romance is gone, but you've definitely reached the "his and her bathrooms" stage of life. Watching Mystery Science Theater 3000 sounds so much more enticing than a night on the town. You wonder if you can put off organizing your files for long enough that you'll die and someone else will have to do it. You got all the way to work without noticing that you were wearing one loafer and one clog. At your checkups, the doctor has begun to ask if you're sexually active. Your college-alumni committee seems to think you should be able to make a zillion-dollar donation. Suddenly you can see like an eighteen-year-old! Thank you, LASIK. Someone offers you a seat on the bus. And you don't refuse. You no longer look around, startled, when someone calls you Mommy. Your kids are now more embarrassed by you than you are by your parents. That 70s Show has started hitting the 80s. You finally admit that you hate noisy restaurants and loud parties. You carry a tube of lip balm in every pocket.