

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND & BODY



What's the Best Thing That Happened to You Today?

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WISE HABITS

A GUIDE TO Letting Go

You need to face reality, not get stressed about what you think it should be

LEO BABAUTA

We all deal with stress on a daily basis—whether it's the stress of being overwhelmed with work, dealing with personal crises, traffic, difficult relationships, poor health, or strained finances. Stress can be a big part of our lives.

And stress has some strong effects: it makes us less happy, less effective, less open-hearted in our relationships, it exhausts us, wears out our bodies, and can even create mental health issues.

So let's look at how to let go of stress, whenever we notice it.

What You're Struggling With

Why do we get stressed out, or feel anxious and overwhelmed?

Often it is because we want the world to be calm and comfortable—and it isn't cooperating. Things are out of control, complicated, and rarely go as we imagined.

Stress makes us less happy, less effective, and less open-hearted in our relationships.

But this is the way of the world. Stress comes, not because the world is messy and chaotic, but because we desire it to be different than it is.

We have ideals for how other people should be, how we should be, how everything around us should be. These ideals aren't a problem—the problem is that we are attached to them. We can't let them go and accept what comes. Our attachment causes us stress.

The good news is that we can let go of our attachment, and the world doesn't need to change one iota. We can let go, and in doing so, we let go of our stress.

How to Let Go of the Stress

Let's say you're experiencing a moment of stress right now.

Something—or someone—isn't going the way you'd like. Or maybe you're worried about something coming up.

The first practice is to drop into your body and notice how the stress feels physically. Be present

with the feeling. It's not a problem to have stress in your body, it's just a physical feeling. You can observe the physical sensation, just be with it. This can be your whole practice, and it only has to take a few moments.

The second practice is to notice the ideal, or your narrative about the situation. What's causing the stress in your body? What expectation did you have that hasn't been met? You have some ideal about how the world should be, how the other person should be, how you should be. Notice that right now. Notice what you're saying to yourself about it: "They shouldn't act like that. I don't like this. I'm such a screwup and not worthy of love."

Is this a familiar narrative? Notice your expectation of this ideal and the narrative around it are causing you anxiety, fear, and stress. They are not serving you.

Also, notice that they are completely fabricated by your mind. You created this ideal and this narrative. Now they are harming you. That's nothing to beat yourself up about—just recognize it. The good news is that if you created it, you can let it go.

The third practice is to let go and just be. What would it be like to be in this moment without the ideal and the narrative? You'd be at peace. You'd be present in this moment. You'd be free to accept reality and deal with it on your best terms. Maybe you would be able to let go of that thing that is coming between you and a loved one and discover something deeper and truer.

Ask yourself what it would be like to not have the ideal and narrative. See if you can feel what it would be like, just for a moment. Relax, open your mind beyond your self-concern, and just be.

This is a state of openness that you can drop into in any moment. Notice how amazing it is to be alive right now, what a gift it is to have sight, hearing, taste, a body. What a privilege, what a joy!

You don't have to be grateful and joyous in every moment, but this freedom of dropping the ideal and the narrative, and being at peace, is always available. Even in moments of chaos, you can be free, and even appreciate the beauty of the chaos.

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What expectation did you have that has not been met?

How the Rainbow Can Heal

The science of color, in our food, on our walls, and in our stomachs

DEANNA MINICH

There is an old adage that claims we should "eat the rainbow" to gain optimal health. It turns out that while we should definitely eat the colors of the rainbow, just being exposed to its light can help as well.

Every day, we are surrounded by the full spectrum of colors: the bright red of the stop sign on our way to work; the glowing orange-yellow sunlight shining through our window; the sea of swaying green grass in the local park; the dark indigo skin of succulent blueberries and blackberries.

While we might stop and take a moment to appreciate the beauty of these colors, we often don't think about the powerful effects that seeing and eating different colors have on our physical health and emotional well-being.

Color therapy has been long used in the healing arts, but recent studies indicate that colors affect our mood, energy, and health. Here are some colorful findings to encourage you to experiment with colors both on and off your plate:

Red

If you find yourself in a mid-day slump, try switching to a red light or a room with red walls. A 2014 article published in the Conference Proceedings of the Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society found that when participants were put in a room with red light, they had a higher level of brain activity associated with "alertness, agitation, mental activity, and general activation of mind and body functions." They also were more likely to feel "vigor."

Orange

Orange foods, like carrots and sweet potatoes, get their color from carotenoids like beta-carotene, which may play an important role in reproduction. An area of animal research indicates that beta-carotene concentrates in the corpus luteum (a developing egg in the ovary), where it plays a role in ovulation by assisting with the production of progesterone. Animal studies likewise suggest that beta-carotene supplementation supports ovarian activity and progesterone synthesis in goats.

Polish scientists have discovered that uterine tissues contain beta-carotene, while a 2014 study published in the journal *Fertility and Sterility* suggests that when women boost their beta-carotene intake, their chances of becoming pregnant seem to improve.



ANNA KUJHER/SHUTTERSTOCK

Yellow

Yellow is a curious color. It seems to be the color that most people are drawn to, and the one that is most correlated with a normal mood, according to researchers at the University of Manchester. The yellow-colored pigment, lutein, is known to collect in certain tissues of the body, specifically the macula, as well as the skin and in breast tissue. There are several studies that show that healthy yellow foods, like slow-burning carbohydrates, generate energy.

Color therapy has been long used in the healing arts.

Color offers so much more than visual beauty.



RAINER FUHRMANN/SHUTTERSTOCK

A study conducted in Oxford, England, found that yellow mustard bran helped a group of young, active men have a better post-meal response to glucose after eating potato and leek soup compared to eating the soup by itself. Likewise, a Canadian study found that whole yellow pea flour—a complex carbohydrate—helped overweight people improve their use of insulin.

Green

Researchers have discovered some fascinating links associating the color green with the heart. For example, an Austrian experiment found that exposing people to green fluorescent light seemed to have a soothing effect on their hearts, affecting heart rate variability (HRV). People who endure continual worry and anxiety seem to have decreased HRV, which is also associated with a number of disorders, including congestive heart failure and depression.

If exposure to green light increases HRV, it may help protect the heart and even help to heal grief. Moreover, if green light changes vasculature, then it stands to reason that other conditions involving the vasculature would be impacted by it. In support of this concept, a study was just published indicating that migraine severity is reduced in the presence of green light.

Blue

The color blue has powerful effects on the brain and memory. A 2008 British study found that exposing workers to blue-enriched white light improved self-reported alertness, performance, and sleep quality. Similarly, an Australian experiment discovered that exposure to blue light made experimental subjects less sleepy as they tried to complete prolonged tasks during the night.

A recent study published in May 2016 showed that people performed better on a working memory task and had greater activation in the prefrontal regions of the brain after being in a

blue-lit room for thirty minutes compared with being in a room with amber light.

White

The color white has been the focus of promising research about depression. In 2011, Dutch psychiatric researchers found that both blue-enriched white light and bright white light might possibly be effective in treating seasonal affective disorder. Furthermore, a 2004 Danish study affirmed that bright light could perhaps be a helpful treatment even in non-seasonal depression when used in conjunction with antidepressants. A University of California-San Diego study also found that bright light therapy combined with antidepressants and "wake therapy" could be effective in treating depression.

White light may also be part of the fruit and vegetables that we eat. A recent study found that extracts from pomegranate and turmeric emitted almost pure white light emission. The researchers discovered that light was mostly emitting from the active ingredients in the foods—polyphenols and anthocyanins in pomegranate, and curcumin in turmeric. If white light can have a healing effect outside the body, think about the potential of eating white light-emitting foods!

As you can see, color offers so much more than visual beauty. By eating a spectrum of naturally-occurring colors, and infusing colors in our surroundings, we can truly harness the power of the rainbow to guide ourselves to full-spectrum health.

Deanna Minich is a wellness and lifestyle medicine expert and author who integrates ancient healing traditions with modern science. Founder of Food & Spirit, she also leads online detox programs. Her latest book is "Whole Detox: A 21-Day Personalized Program to Break Through Barriers in Every Area of Your Life." This article was first published on GreenMedInfo.com

What's the Best Thing

That Happened to You Today?



Offering someone a moment to reflect on what they have to be grateful for might be the best thing you do today

CASEY PETZ

Shortly after the doors locked shut on another day at the family business, I often wandered up to my dad's office in search of something, anything, to eat. A seemingly tireless work ethic often meant my dad could be found in his office well past dinner time. Perhaps he would have something extra left over?

I would approach his desk with caution, so I wouldn't disrupt the countless piles of paperwork, stacks of boxes full of new product ideas, and knick-knacks scattered about. Desperate for food, I would slowly sink into one of the desk chairs and lazily ask, "What did you bring for dinner?"

A natural salesman and professional small talker, my dad would completely ignore the pressing issue at hand—food. Instead, a simple question would roll off his tongue. "What's the best thing that happened to you today?" he would ask while peering over his computer. The way he would methodically ask, listen, and express genuine curiosity in my answers is something I reluctantly embraced.

Over the years, I learned to answer "the question" quickly and without too much detail (any sort of protracted answer surely would lead to the sort of conversation I couldn't end fast enough to satisfy my insatiable hunger). Occasionally, the irresistible urge to give a more thoughtful answer brought on an avalanche of reflective musings and opened a door or two that otherwise may have been slammed shut in the course of our father/son relationship.

Answering "the question" in the office each day is a distant memory for me, but as I have transitioned into fatherhood, mentorship, and being an adult (most of the time), I've found that the habits of the past are just as purposeful today.

Close your eyes, pause for a moment, and think about the best thing that happened

You will not regret taking the time to listen to the answers you receive.

to you today. Say it out loud, even though you aren't ready.

It's a safe assumption that you might be thinking, "This isn't as easy as it should be, what's wrong with me?" More often than not, the first thing your mind will come up with isn't the best thing that happened. Our days are filled with news headlines, busy schedules, family issues, business issues, and for people like me, hunger. Through all that occurs in a given day, it isn't always easy to pinpoint that one thing that you appreciated the most and then recognize it when asked to do so. Really, what is the best thing that happened to you today?

So let's try this again. Take more than a moment to think about your day and see where your thoughts take you. I promise you, it gets easier with practice and your answers are therapeutic, like a daily workout for your soul. Your mind, body, and spirit need a healthy dose of good stuff to drown out all the distractions we face. Like any healthy habit, once you start, you won't want to stop.

Years of practice and coming up with answers taught me some very meaningful insights worth sharing on this topic:

- "The question" doesn't recognize age, gender, or any other demographic factor—it is universal. Young children, grandparents, friends, your spouse, and complete strangers all seem to respond the same. At first, people are a little shaky in their response, but eventually, they are grateful that someone took the time to ask and listen. Start a new tradition in your life; you will not regret taking the time to listen to the answers you receive.
- Get comfortable with being uncomfortably chatty. It takes some practice to push through the boundaries we create for ourselves. It is much more comfortable to stay in our own bubble. It's also easy to fall into habits that don't involve conversations with others. Remember, life doesn't usually reward people that can't change out of their comfy pants and put on a pair of jeans from time to time. Call an old friend, talk to a stranger in line at the grocery store, or share a meal with your family and start talking.
- Many people will respond to you with something terrible that happened today instead. When that happens, listen and then ask them again for the best thing that happened. Repeat until they find something awesome to say, it may take

a few tries.

Put down everything you are doing and pay attention. Humans multitask better than any other known life form. I challenge you to "mono-task"—it is way harder than you think. Be present, be real, and look people in the eye. Your phone will not leave you if you stop glaring at it for a few minutes, so take the time to really connect with people. The rewards are more than worth the effort.

Be the best thing that happened to someone else today. Your relationships are like bank accounts, so in order to make a withdrawal, you also must put something in. Try to deposit plenty of positivity into the lives of those you know!

Be the best thing that happened to someone else today.

When someone you love tells you that you are the best thing that happened today, there is no better feeling.

Taking a step back into my past reminded me how important it is to give before any expectations to receive are met. I find it a bit ironic that in my relentless pursuit to satisfy a very basic need (hunger), I often found real fulfillment through sharing. Try something different the next time your needs aren't being met. Ask away and be ready to listen—the answers you receive may surprise you.

Your answers are therapeutic, like a daily workout for your soul.



Casey Petz is a leadership coach who moved to Traverse City from metro Detroit to escape big city living and find the time to indulge his love for great food and the great outdoors. This guest post was originally published on Life and Whim.

Quick Tips for Reading Nutrition Labels

From what serving sizes really mean to how much fiber should be in a food item

MCKEL HILL

The "Nutrition Facts" label was created to give the consumer insight into what's in our foods, from how much sodium and fiber is in a box of cereal, to how many servings are in a carton of milk.

Knowing this information can help you track macronutrients, ensure you're getting enough vitamins and minerals in your diet, and can even help in the management of certain chronic conditions.

Whether you're unsure of how to read the nutrition facts label, or want to understand how to make the best nutrition decisions when purchasing food, here are three dietitian-approved answers to the most common questions about nutrition labels.

1. How Many Servings Is That?

It's easy to get confused between the serving size, servings per container, and portion size of a food. To get you started, here's a quick rundown:

- Serving size is the size or portion of the product that equates to the amount of nutrients listed. All the information provided in the nutrition facts label is based upon the serving size listed.
- Serving per container is the total amount of servings per container.
- Portion size isn't found on the nutrition facts label. It's different for everyone based on their unique health goals and needs. Moreover, the recommended portion size for each person may not be the same as the serving size listed on the package, particularly if you're managing a condition like diabetes.

Once you've identified the food item's serving size, located under the nutrition facts header, it's time to consider what this means for the label as a whole. Let's use a bag of pasta as an example.

If the serving size says 1 cup of pasta, the nutrition information below the serving size (fats, carbohydrates, protein, sugars, fiber) only apply to that 1 cup of pasta.

That said, serving sizes can be adjusted to meet specific health and weight goals. For example, if you're an endurance athlete or wanting to gain weight, you may need to increase your portion size. This means you'll also increase serving size.

You might, instead, want to up your portion size to two servings (2 cups) rather than 1 cup. This means the nutrition info provided, per serving, also would be doubled.

2. Look for the Fiber

Most of us understand that fiber is an important part of our diet. But how many Americans are actually consuming the required amount of fiber on a daily basis? As it happens, not enough. And this is where a nutrition facts label can help.

The recommended daily fiber intake depends on age, sex, and calorie intake. General guidelines from the National Academy of Sciences recommends the following daily fiber intakes:

- If under 50 years old:
 - women: 25 grams
 - men: 38 grams

If over 50:

- women: 21 grams
- men: 30 grams

Pay attention to the grams of fiber per serving on a nutrition facts label. Aim for foods that have a higher fiber amount, at least 5 grams per serving.

The nutrition facts label is designed to calculate the percentage of all nutrients in the product, including dietary fiber, based on the daily values (DV) percent. These percentages are calculated on the basis that a person eats a standard 2,000 calories per day.

It's important to remember that 2,000 calories per day is more of a guideline. Everyone's dietary requirements are different.

When you look at the percentages of any of the nutrients on a label, anything that's 5 percent or less is considered low. Anything 20 percent or more is considered high.

Fiber is one of those nutrients on the label that should ideally be in the higher range. In other words, look for foods with a fiber DV of around 20 percent per serving.

3. Know Your Sugars

There's still a lot of discussion around the issue of added sugar as it pertains to health. It can, however, be agreed upon that in general, a person's daily total added sugar intake should be low.

There is a difference between total sugars and added sugars. Total sugars are the total amount of sugars found in a product, both naturally occurring (like sugars in fruit and milk) and added. Added sugars refer to the amount of sugar that's been added during the processing of the food product. Added sugars can include:

- high-fructose corn syrup
- table sugar
- honey
- maple syrup
- concentrated vegetable or fruit juices
- brown rice syrup

The American Heart Association recommends women consume no more than 24 grams of added sugar per day and men consume no more than 36 grams. In other words, this means:

- for women: 6 teaspoons of sugar, or 100 calories
- for men: 9 teaspoons of sugar, or 150 calories

That said, the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans are a little more lenient. They recommend the general public consumes no more than 10 percent of daily calories from added sugars.

As is the case with most issues regarding nutrition, recommendations do vary based on the person and their needs.

While it's important to keep an eye on your daily added sugar intake, the reasons for doing so may differ from person to person. For some, it might be to maintain oral health. For others, it might be out of a need to manage or lower the risk of chronic conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease.

Serving sizes can be adjusted to meet specific health and weight goals.

Knowing How to Read Labels Can Help You Get the Nutrients You Need

Being your own health and label-reading detective adds another tool to help you take control of your own health and well-being.

From understanding how a serving size affects the entire label to learning what the DV percent means, using this knowledge can indicate whether you're fueling your body with enough of the nutrients it needs.

McKel Hill is the founder of Nutrition Stripped, a healthy living website dedicated to optimizing the well-being of women all over the globe through recipes, nutrition advice, fitness, and more. This article was first published on Healthline.



Processed foods are best avoided, but no matter what you buy, you should know how to read what is actually in it.



10 Rules of Email That Will Reduce Your Stress Levels

RICARDO TWUMASI,
CARY COOPER & LINA SIEGL

Email and smartphones can be stressful. Academics are calling this constant work connection “technostress”. Consequently, many European countries are now offering employees the “right to disconnect”.

The way email is used is complex, it cannot simply be labeled as “good” or “bad” and research shows that personality, the type of work people do and their goals can influence the way they react to email.

Good practice with email use is not just about limiting the amount of emails sent, but improving the quality of communication.

Here are ten tips to reduce the stress of email at work:

1. Get the Subject Line Right

Use clear and actionable subject lines. The subject line should communicate exactly what the email is about in six to ten words, to allow the recipient to prioritize the email without even opening it. On mobile devices, many people only see the first 30 characters of a subject line. So keep it short. But make it descriptive enough to give an idea of what the email is about from just the subject line.

2. Ask Yourself: Is Email the Right Medium?

Are you in the same office? Could you go and speak to the person? Could you call? Often these other forms of communication can avoid the inefficient back and forth of emailing.

Instant messaging and video calling platforms like Slack and Skype could be more appropriate for quick internal back and forth messaging. Also, remember that most of the advice below applies to all types of electronic communication.

3. Don't Email Out of Office Hours

Research shows that out-of-office emails make it harder for people to recover from work stress.

Try and influence your company culture by avoiding sending or replying to emails outside your normal working hours.

Management should lead by example and avoid contacting their staff outside of their normal working hours. Some workplaces even switch off email access to employees out of hours. Consider implementing this

while keeping a backup phone system for emergency contact only.

New research has also shown that just the expectation of 24-hour contact can negatively affect employee health.

4. Use the Delay Delivery Option

Some people like integrating their work and family lives and often continue working from home during their off-job time. If you are one of these people, or if you work across time zones, consider using the delay delivery option so your emails do not send until the next working day and do not interfere with other people's off-job time.

5. Keep It Positive

Think about the quality of email communication. Not just the quantity. Changes to email use should also focus on the quality of what is being sent and take into consideration the emotional reaction of the recipient.

Research has shown that not only too much but also too little email can cause stress due to a mismatch between the communication preferences of different people.

Research suggests that conflicts are far easier to escalate and messages to be misinterpreted when communicated via email. Therefore, if it is bad news, think back to rule #2: is email the right medium?

6. Try 'No Email Friday'

In order to shift company culture and get people thinking about other methods of communication than email, try a “no email Friday” on the first Friday of every month, or maybe even every week. This is an initiative suggested by experts from the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing at Work, and is being used by businesses around the globe. Employees are encouraged to arrange face-to-face meetings or pick up the phone—or just get on top of the many emails they already have in their inbox on that day.

7. Make Your Preferences Known

Research has shown that not only too much but also too little email can cause stress due to a mismatch between the communication preferences of different people. Some people may like being emailed and cope much better with high email traffic than other means of communication. For these people, reducing the amount of emails they receive may cause more stress than it alleviates.

So consider people's individual differences and make yours known. Add your preferred contact preferences to your email signature whether it is email, text or instant messages or a phone call.

8. Consider a Holiday 'Bounce Back'

Having a backlog of emails that builds up over the week appears to be one of the most commonly mentioned sources of technostress for workers. Think about setting up a system where emails are bounced back to the sender when someone is on holiday, with an alternative contact email for urgent requests. This would let you come back to a manageable inbox.

9. Have a Separate Work Phone

Make this the only mobile device you can access work emails on, which gives you the freedom to switch it off after work hours. Also, consider turning off email “push” (this is where your email server sends each new email to your phone when it arrives at the server) and instead choose a regular schedule (such as once per hour) for emails to be delivered to your phone (this also increases battery life).

10. Avoid Late Night Screen Time

Research suggests that late-night smartphone use reduces our ability to get to sleep and also leads to constant thoughts and stress about work. This, in turn, reduces your sleep quality. Make the bed a phone-free zone to improve your sleep hygiene.

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Why Paper Books Beat E-Books for Toddlers

Researchers find children gain more from reading paper books rather than e-books with their parents

LEAH CAMPBELL

Jennifer Dorety is a preschool teacher with a bachelor of science degree in early childhood education who lives in New York.

In her 17 years of teaching, she has only ever attempted to read an e-book to her students once—and it was a complete failure.

“I found that they did not retain the information in the book as well as they do the physical ones,” Dorety told Healthline. “I asked questions after the story was over that they could not answer. This is not the case when we read a printed book.”

She explained that her students also were eager for her to move on to the next page and they didn't seem to interact at all with her as the reader. She took both of these as signals she should go back to reading to her students from physical books instead.

How Screen Time Affects Story Time
Dorety's experience isn't an isolated one. In fact, new research suggests that Dorety's impression of how her students responded to an e-book versus physical books was spot on.

In a recent study published in *Pediatrics*, 37 parent and toddler pairs were recorded on video reading three different book formats: enhanced electronic (with sound effects and animation), electronic, and print.

These pairs were then observed for the number and types of interactions they engaged in while they read.

The results? Parents expressed more engagement when reading print books while simultaneously exhibiting an ability to get through more of the story in a five-minute time span.

The toddlers who were being read to also talked more about the print books they were being read, and there were more signs of non-verbal bonding that took place between the pairs.

“Shared book reading is one of the most important developmental activities families can

Interaction is a big part of what kids gain from the reading experience.

engage in,” Dr. Tiffany Munzer, study lead and a fellow in developmental-behavioral pediatrics at the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, told Healthline.

She explained that with the rise of mobile device and e-reader ownership over the years, she and her colleagues were curious about how parents and toddlers might interact differently with electronic books compared to print.

Why Is This Happening?

When asked what might account for the decreased engagement that was observed when reading e-books, Munzer hypothesized, “Parents and toddlers know how to engage over a book, but when adding a tablet into the mix, it deflects from some of the positive benefits of that shared reading experience.”

Doherty thinks it might have something to do with how distracting e-readers can be.

“More bright, flashing colors, more music, and noises,” she said. “They also have a desire to move things along faster, swiping through the story without taking the time to absorb the information.”

Munzer added, “That isn't to say there is no benefit to electronic book reading (compared with doing nothing), just less.”

She said the interaction between parent and child while reading is important for a number of reasons. “All aspects of a child's brain development happen through the context of these positive relationships with their caregivers. This engagement promotes child learning of language, problem-solving abilities, and connection with their parents or other caregivers,” Munzer explained.

The Rise of the E-Book

The findings are in line with other research that has occurred over the years.

A 2014 study found that adult Kindle users absorbed a significant amount less of what they read when compared to their physical book reading counterparts.

Nevertheless, e-book reading is on the rise, even among kids, with a 2013 study finding that the number of kids between the ages of 6 and 17 reading e-books had nearly doubled during the course of just three years.

This trend does appear to have impacts in positive ways as well.

Some research has found an increased phonemic awareness for kids who read with e-books, as well as the potential that e-books might help kids learn to read.

Nothing Like the Real Thing
Still, nothing really compares to the benefits of

parents and children reading a physical book together, according to Dana Robertson, executive director of the Literacy Research Center and Clinic at the University of Wyoming.

When asked if there might be benefits to e-readers that read a story to a child without the parent present, he replied in the negative, explaining that the benefits of book reading come down to the joint attention.

“The benefits come from the interactive nature and contingent responsiveness the adult is providing to the child's contributions,” he said.

He explained that in this way, adults are able to provide comprehensible input about a book's content (and concepts about the world more broadly) while also promoting a child's expressive language abilities by encouraging them to talk about what is in the book.

Interaction Is Key

That same interaction can occur when using digital readers, Robertson conceded, but “the adult should turn off the continuous play features to allow for pacing control, and they should also turn off the narration features so that the adult is the one doing the reading.”

Programs that read to your child simply can't provide that same interaction. And, as Robertson explained, that interaction is a big part of what kids gain from the reading experience.

“Book reading for infants, toddlers, and very young children is very much an emotionally based activity. Hearing the voice, being in close proximity, feeling comfortable, all of these make the experience a positive one, which then triggers future positive emotional responses to reading,” he said.

And those positive responses are likely to make reading are more positive and frequent experience as the child grows.

Munzer agrees. While she said an e-reader that reads the story to a child is better than nothing at all, “[younger] children really need that input from their parents to learn from any type of media—print or digital. The print book is just better at facilitating this.”

Parents modeling a joy of reading also tells the children the value of the activity.

Finding Joy in Reading

However, Munzer doesn't want the results of this study to discourage parents or make them feel as though they aren't doing enough.

“Parents today work harder than ever and are more present with their children than ever,” she insisted. “Our goal in distilling the findings of our study isn't to make things harder for parents, but rather to help families reflect on activities they engage in that nurture connection with their children, because that's what being a parent is all about—it's finding that joy.”

Experiencing that joy is one of the big reasons Dorety says she'll continue reading physical books to her students every day.

“For me, nothing beats their faces as I read,” she said. “I change my voice for each character, and I find myself hanging on every word just as much as they do.”

Leah Campbell is a freelance health and wellness writer. This article was originally published on *Healthline.com*

These Sleep Habits May Increase Alzheimer's Disease Risk

DEVON ANDRE

Sleeping allows the brain to perform “house cleaning” and eliminate waste. If the brain is unable to perform these tasks, there is a higher risk of memory loss or Alzheimer's disease.

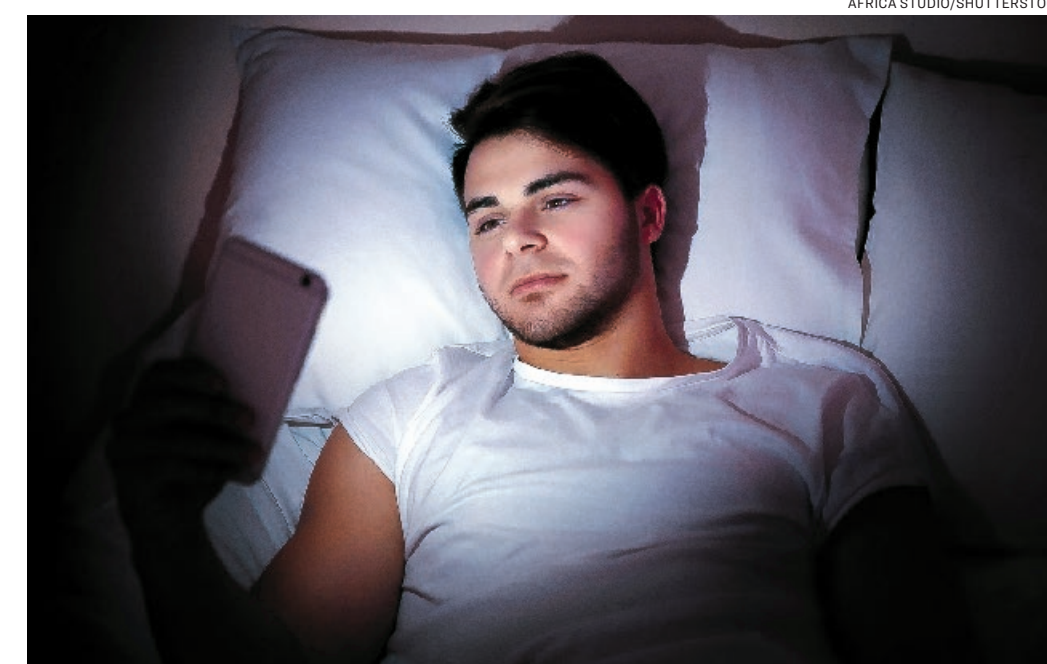
Researchers have found that poor sleep leaves the brain with more tau proteins, which have been linked to brain damage, cognitive decline, and are a sign of Alzheimer's.

There are many nighttime habits you could be performing that are putting your brain at risk of Alzheimer's disease. But recognizing and changing these habits could reduce your risk.

7 Sleep Habits That May Increase the Risk of Alzheimer's Disease

Pulling all nighters: You may think you're getting more done by staying up all night, but you're doing more harm than good. Studies have shown that sleepless nights increase the risk of tau buildup in the brain by 51.5 percent.

You live with untreated sleep apnea: Sleep apnea is a sleep disorder that causes a person to awaken several times throughout the night. Studies suggest that patients with sleep apnea have more tau buildup than those without. Sleep apnea prevents oxygen from getting to the brain,



The light of a smartphone screen can mess up your internal clock.

so living with it untreated can have detrimental long-term effects.

You rely on sleep aids: If sleeping is difficult for you and you rely on sleep aids to get a good night's

sleep, you're putting your brain at risk. Long-term use of sleep aids has been associated with a higher risk of Alzheimer's disease. It may be time that you get to the bottom of your sleeping troubles and stop relying on medications.

You're not getting enough restorative sleep: As we sleep, we enter different sleep cycles, one of those being a deep, restorative cycle. Not spending enough time in this phase can increase your risk of elevated levels of tau proteins.

You're a back sleeper: Sleeping on your side, as opposed to your back or front, has been linked with more significant brain clean up. As mentioned, if the brain is unable to “clean up,” it can increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

You're a big napper: An occasional nap is okay, but if you rely on them, it could be putting you at a higher risk of Alzheimer's disease. That is because napping disrupts your body's natural internal clock.

You use your smartphone at night: The light of a smartphone screen is called blue light and studies have shown that blue light can disrupt sleep by messing with your internal clock.

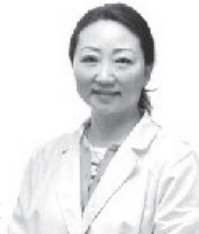
By making simple changes to your nighttime routine, you can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Devon Andre holds a bachelor's of forensic science from the University of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor from the University of Pitts-burgh. This article was first published on *Bel Marra Health*.

East Acupuncture

Dr. Ping H Liou

Chinese Medicine Acupuncturist, Pharmacist



Born in a family of traditional Chinese medicine, Liou studied at Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine under famous doctors Benshu Diao and Yuqin Lai. has been practicing Chinese medicine for 13 years. Liou is expert in comprehensive treatment combining acupuncture and medicine.

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THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH AND TRADITION

How Team Sports Reduce Risk of Depression in Kids

LEAH CAMPBELL

The preteen and teenage years can be rough for a lot of kids. Their bodies are changing, their hormones are raging, and anxiety and depression can be a very real part of their existence.

In fact, a 2016 study in the journal *Pediatrics* found a 37 percent increase in the number of teens who have experienced major depressive episodes over the past decade.

Many of those kids aren't getting the help they need either. The Child Mind Institute reported that 60 percent of kids with depression are going without treatment.

Those are bleak numbers for any parent to consider—but what if there were a way to mitigate the chances your child might one day live with depression?

It turns out there may be.

Batter up!

Recent research found that involvement in team sports was correlated with a larger hippocampal volume (the area of the brain responsible for the processing of long-term memory and emotional responses) in both boys and girls.

This is important because adult depression actually has been linked to a shrinking hippocampus in other studies.

In fact, the latest report did find a reduction in depression rates among boys ages 9 to 11 who were involved in team sports.

The findings make sense, according to Dr. Cynthia LaBella, chairperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness, and medical director at the Institute for Sports Medicine at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago.

“Team sports provide regular aerobic activity, which is known to have beneficial effects on memory, cognition, and mood,” she told *Healthline*.

That same involvement also can provide kids with a social network of peers, while also instilling in them a sense of purpose, belonging, and achievement.

“All of which are protective factors against depression,” LaBella explained.

Participating in a team sport is where cooperation and physical activity combine.

Team Sports Seem to be the Key

The study involved 4,191 children between ages 9 and 11 and relied on parents to answer questions about their child's participation in a variety of activities as well as any symptoms of depression.

The beneficial results weren't found for non-sporting activities.

However, the study authors acknowledged this could be because participation in sports increases the hippocampus and decreases depression, or it could be that teens predisposed to depression may not be as interested in participating in sporting activities.

They say this is an area where more research may need to be done.

But Monica Jackman, an occupational therapist at Little Lotus Therapy in Port St. Lucie, Florida, can see why team sports may have provided a more noticeable positive impact.

“Team sports inherently foster the development of social-emotional inhibitory control and self-regulation skills as players must follow and remember game rules, take turns, cooperate and collaborate with teammates, build trust in teammates, and experience empathy for others during wins and losses,” she told *Healthline*.

But do those positive benefits extend to kids who may not be as naturally athletic?

Jackman explained that while “children with developmental coordination disorder have reported higher rates of loneliness and lower

self-concept than typically developing children,” studies have shown that those same kids have been found to report less of that loneliness when participating in team sports even when their coordination difficulties may otherwise hold them back.

Squad Goals

The study's findings may encourage many parents to seek out more activities for their kids to join.

However, the researchers note that the positive benefits they observed did not extend to other activities like art or music.

Specifically, non-sport activities were not found to be associated with an increased volume of the hippocampus or decreased rates of depression.

Individual sports were not shown to make a difference in either area.

LaBella has a theory as to why that may be. “I suspect the reason the study did not find the same results for participation in other activities may be because other activities do not combine physical training with working together as a team to achieve a common goal and beat an opponent,” she said.

So it's not enough to just be on a team (chess club, for instance), or to just engage in physical activity (like weight training).

To see the true benefits presented in the study, one would have to be doing both—participating in a team sport, where cooperation and physical activity combine.

LaBella explained that “With individual sports, such as swimming and golf, and other non-sports activities, such as art, music, crafts, or chess, the participants train, perform, and compete alone. So the peer socialization benefits are much less.”

However, she encourages parents not to dismiss the benefits those other activities offer.

“It's important to know that participation in music and art have also been shown to be beneficial to brain health in other ways,” she explained.

Help for All Kids

One other interesting outcome of the study was that while the increased hippocampal volume was detected in both boys and girls who played team sports, only the boys also showed a noticeable reduction in depression rates.

The study authors theorized this may be because boys and girls have different pressures that contribute to depression, or it could be the reduction in depression rates simply become more evident in girls at later ages.

Either way, Jackman has advice for parents concerned about helping their children avoid the struggles of depression: Encourage “active engagement in activities that provide an organic opportunity for social-emotional learning and connection.”

In today's digital age, where so many kids are using social media and digital games to interact, she worries they're missing out on opportunities to gain conflict resolution skills and build on collaborative problem-solving.

She's also concerned they aren't learning to recognize real-life social cues, such as body language, facial affect, and emotional tone of voice as much as they should.

“By their nature, team sports and other goal-directed or structured group activities can nurture social communication, self-efficacy, cooperation, and integrity, and respect for group rules and objectives,” she explained.

LaBella said she's happy to see team sports getting some positive press and hopes more parents will take note of the positive benefits they can provide for kids.

“The stories that often make headlines are injuries due to sports,” she explained. “But it's important for parents to know that for the overwhelming majority of kids, the benefits of sports participation far outweigh the risks.”

Which means that for many parents, now may be the time to start getting your kids involved in a team sport.

Leah Campbell is a freelance health and wellness writer. This article was first published on Healthline.com



Participation in sports increases the hippocampus and decreases depression.



Uncovering the Mysteries of FIBROMYALGIA

Better approaches to treat this widespread ‘pain amplification syndrome’

CONAN MILNER

Imagine a disease where you're in constant pain for no apparent reason. You're tired all the time, yet it's difficult to fall asleep, and even if you manage to sleep several hours you may still wake up exhausted. You also experience so much brain fog that even basic tasks seem impossible to do. Worst of all, doctors say it's all your head.

It's a scenario familiar to many fibromyalgia sufferers. Today, fibromyalgia is recognized as one of the most common chronic pain conditions, affecting as much as six percent of the U.S. population. But not long ago, doctors classified it as a mental disorder, because conventional tests couldn't provide evidence for the long term pain patients experienced.

Awareness and acceptance of fibromyalgia has grown tremendously over the last few decades. Most doctors now agree that it's a real disease and that those who have it endure real pain. However, both the cause and cure remain unclear.

Fibromyalgia is a disease of many mysteries. It often runs in families, but the pre-

Fibromyalgia is recognized as one of the most common chronic pain conditions.

disposing genes have yet to be identified. It impacts all ages and races, but women get it far more than men (up to 90 percent of fibromyalgia patients are female). Another curious feature: the onset of fibromyalgia often follows a traumatic event.

One persistent problem is how to spot it. It's estimated that it takes an average of five years for a fibromyalgia patient to receive an accurate diagnosis.

New Breakthrough Test

A new development promises to lift this part of the veil. Researchers at the Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center have recently created a blood test that reliably identifies a notoriously misunderstood syndrome.

Dr. Kevin Hackshaw, lead author of the study and associate professor of rheumatology at Ohio State, says developing a fibromyalgia blood test is important because it will allow patients a much quicker and less expensive route to appropriate treatment.

“A blood test would save numerous health care dollars,” Hackshaw said. “It would also help to better direct therapy of physicians who might be inappropriately treating these chronic pain patients with narcotics, when

in fact what they need are medications that are aimed more at treating nervous system signals instead.”

Hackshaw's blood test is not the first lab test designed to identify fibromyalgia. There is already one which uses spinal fluid, because researchers have found that fibromyalgia patients have three to four times the normal amount of certain nerve transmitters. Another test uses magnetic resonance imaging to identify brain abnormalities specific to the disease.

But Hackshaw says the problem with these tests is that they're either too expensive or too invasive for general use. With a little bit of blood, however, doctors can now accurately confirm fibromyalgia.

“The amount of blood we use for this test is less than one milliliter, and our study shows that it is highly reproducible,” he said.

Aching for Relief

Diagnosis is a crucial step, but it's just the first piece of a grand fibromyalgia puzzle. Once patients know what they've got, doctors can prescribe drugs approved to treat it.

Continued on Page 11

Why Parenting Without Yelling Is Better for Kids—and You

Lessons learned from the Inuit, who never get angry with their misbehaving children

LEAH CAMPBELL

I'm not a yeller by nature, so the first time I really screamed at my daughter, it caught not only her attention but also the attention of the two friends we were with.

She was maybe 2 years old and had yanked away from me to run out into the street. My reaction was primal, the yell that emanated from me almost guttural. Everything in me vibrated as I raised my voice and yanked my girl out of the street.

"Whoa," one of my best friends said moments later. "I've never heard you do that. I didn't even know you had it in you."

It turned out, I did. But I thought it was only because I'd been sure my child was in immediate danger.

Learning About the Inuit Way of Discipline

My daughter is adopted, a little Alaska Native child with Inuit blood coursing through her veins. It was perhaps because of that background that a recent NPR piece titled "How Inuit Parents Teach Kids to Control Their Anger" first jumped out at me.

As I read the piece, which detailed how Inuit parents almost never lose their tempers, I found myself feeling increasingly inadequate.

Because while that day in that street may have been the first time I yelled at my child, it certainly wasn't the last.

In fact, with a little girl who is now 6 years old and full of constant sass, I'm repeatedly surprised by how often motherhood pushes me to that edge of a boiling temper and angry words.

Nevertheless, the NPR piece I read highlighted the story of Jean Briggs, an anthropologist who spent more than 30 years with Inuit tribes.

According to Briggs, the families she stayed with never acted angrily toward her, even though she was sure she'd made them angry a number of times.

They also never reacted with anger toward their children, choosing instead to maintain calm tones and avoiding even the slightest displays of frustration or irritation.

Those displays were considered weak and child-like, according to Briggs.

In this way, she explained, they taught their children to control their own tempers.

It appeared there was a lot I could learn from the Inuit way of parenting, I decided to do some digging and see what more I could find.

Mastering Effective Discipline

I learned the Inuit parenting style is one the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) supports, according to Robert Sege, AAP spokesperson and pediatrician at Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center in Boston.

"I think what they are doing is all the things that I and other pediatricians have been advocating for a while," he told Healthline.

Sege talked about how the Inuit families described in the NPR piece were using positive reinforcement,



IMTPHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK

“Children don't come into the world understanding feelings.”

Nancy Molitor, clinical psychologist and assistant professor, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

teaching their children what they were expected to do, rather than scolding them for not doing it.

"It sounds wonderful," he said enthusiastically. "The only thing I can think of as a negative is that it's slower, and I'm not even sure that's really a negative unless the child is actively headed into danger."

The AAP has long held that spanking is detrimental to child development. But what about yelling?

It turns out the AAP's policy statement on effective discipline actually does address yelling. It states, "Aversive disciplinary strategies, including all forms of corporal punishment and yelling at or shaming children, are minimally effective in the short-term and not effective in the long-term."

They then go on to cite several research studies with data that support this point.

So, what does effective discipline look like?

Well, according to Sege, it's a lot like what the Inuits are doing. Modeling desired behaviors, talking to kids at an age-appropriate level, redirecting, and using stories to promote what you'd like your kids to do (or what you'd like them to avoid doing).

"It's not necessary to insert fear and pain into the most loving relationships any of us have, the relationship between parents and kids," he explained.

"The bottom line of the AAP's policy statement is, 'We can do better.'"

Teaching Kids Emotional Regulation

Nancy Molitor, a clinical psychologist and assistant professor of clinical psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, agrees that modeling is an important place to start parenting.

"Children don't come into the world understanding feelings," she told Healthline. "We're hardwired to feel, but not necessarily to name and deal with those feelings appropriately."

She says it's incredibly important for parents to model appropriate expressions of both positive and negative emotions.

"Parents need to understand that children are watching them from day one, and they are learning how to handle their own complicated feelings from you," she said.

In that sense, the Inuit way of brushing aside anger makes a lot of sense. But is it necessarily healthy for people to diminish their own natural desire to react? Could there potentially be something kids might be able to learn from seeing their parents reach a boiling point?

Molitor said there's potentially some beneficial aspect to what follows a parental meltdown, but only if the parent is willing to acknowledge they lost their temper and talk to their child about better ways they could have handled their own frustration.

Most people lose their tempers from time to time, after all, but that doesn't make those intense reactions right.

She also said she wouldn't suggest doing so intentionally or looking at it as a learning experience for them more than for yourself.

Telling Stories

Another effective thing Inuit families do, according to the NPR piece, is devise creative—sometimes frightening—stories to steer a child's behavior.

So, in order to keep children away from the water, for instance, they might tell them there's a sea monster lurking beneath the depths waiting to pounce on children who get too close.

If you're concerned about the ethics of employing such a tactic, Sege pointed out that storytelling as a behavior modification tool is something in which many parents engage to some extent.

He brought up the dark plotlines of many of Grimm's Fairy Tales, saying, "I think there's a long tradition of doing that. It's not exactly my philosophy, but I don't think it's particularly harmful. And I say that because a lot of cultures have been doing this for a long time."

However, Molitor was a little more hesitant about this parenting tactic.

She spoke of a story her grandmother had told her as a child to keep her out of the pantry, about a monster who would lay in wait for anyone who might dare try to sneak a snack.

"I was a fearful kid, very controlled by that story," she explained. "It worked. I never went into the pantry, but it gave me nightmares and I used to tiptoe around the house at night. Even now, I'll have this weird feeling if I'm home alone and it's dark."

So, storytelling as a disciplinary tactic could have some unintended side effects, particularly for sensitive children.

However, Molitor acknowledged most of us have similar stories we were told and now tell our own children, and that even the fairy tales we share usually have some sort of moral message.

Therefore, depending on how it's used, storytelling can be an effective tool for parents to shape the behavior of their kids.

The Bottom Line

I leaned the Inuit people have a way of raising and guiding children in which there are no time-outs and no outbursts of anger. Instead, there are a lot of stories told and a lot of redirection.

It's a slower parenting style, but according to Sege, it's an approach to parenting that's both effective and healthy.

"Overall, what [the Inuit] are doing is using the child's natural learning style through telling stories. It's fascinating, I'm impressed," he said.

After researching more about the Inuit approach to parenting, I must admit I'm not only impressed but inspired.

As a mom who sometimes loses her temper and yells, I now understand how effective doing the exact opposite can be. It's an approach to parenting I intend to make an effort to practice, which will be better for both my daughter and me.

Leah Campbell is a freelance health and wellness writer. This article was first published on Healthline.com

“Rather than yelling, telling kids the right way to behave, sometimes stories, will have a better long-term impact, say researchers.”

Uncovering the Mysteries of FIBROMYALGIA

Better approaches to treat this widespread 'pain amplification syndrome'

Continued from Page 9

But the best these prescriptions can do is manage symptoms. For some, drug treatment provides little to no relief.

This disheartening dead end is something Leah McCullough is intimately familiar with. Her fibromyalgia began in her early 20s, when McCullough was in the army. She was tired all the time, and her back always hurt. Her pain and fatigue continued to worsen, but McCullough didn't find out what was wrong until seven years after she developed symptoms.

"I had all kind of tests done, but they couldn't find anything wrong with me," McCullough said. "I was told things like, 'You have MS,' or 'You're just constipated,' or 'We see some stuff on x-rays, but this is really all in your head.'"

McCullough was thrilled when doctors finally put a name to her problem, because it meant she wasn't crazy. But that was just the beginning. In her quest to feel better, McCullough tried over 30 prescription medications, but her symptoms barely improved.

After 20 years of pain, depression, and fatigue with no end in sight, McCullough was forced to face a sobering reality: the rest of her life might be nothing but constant suffering.

"When I turned 40 I was staring down the barrel of some seriously horrible outcomes. I was in an incredible amount of pain, and taking narcotics. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't work, and I couldn't function. I couldn't have a baby, and I wasn't a very good wife," she said. "It was very stressful on our marriage. We went from two incomes to one overnight, and we nearly went bankrupt from all the medical bills."

McCullough regularly took 12 prescriptions to manage her symptoms, three of which were just for pain. One drug was called Rohypnol, also known as the "date rape drug," or roofies. "I couldn't sleep for years, so they had to chemically knock me out," she said. "Even then I had to wake up in the middle of the night and take another dose in order to sleep."

Desperate for either a cure or death, McCullough turned to prayer. Miraculously, it worked.

Alternative Approach

"Meditating and praying is not what recovered me, but I think it made me become aware of the possibilities," she said. "I met a lady who said she had recovered from fibromyalgia. It was the first time I ever heard that, so I started talking to her and she was seeing a holistic practitioner. I started working with her, and within three weeks of doing what she said, I felt so much better."

In the months that followed, McCullough was able to get off all her prescriptions, and her symptoms finally began to fade. By the time McCullough turned 41, she was pain-free and pregnant.

"I didn't have postpartum depression afterwards, even though major depression was one of my diagnoses," she said. "I've been able to be a really good mom and a really good wife and I got my whole life back."

It will be 11 years this June since McCullough became symptom-free, and her mission ever since has been to share her journey and protocol with people who still struggle with the disease so that they don't have to endure the years of agony she had to. Details can be found in her book "Freedom from Fibromyalgia: Seven Steps to Complete Recovery."

"I'm working really hard to let people know that it's absolutely possible to completely recover from fibromyalgia and I'm doing everything I can to get the word out," she said.

Pain Perspectives

It's hard to appreciate the influence of chronic pain until you've lived with it.

The typical pain we experience might be unpleasant, but it's usually over quickly. When pain wears on for weeks, months, or years, it can feel like a cruel, soul-crushing specter that haunts everything you do.

Fibromyalgia means muscle pain. It is different than other chronic pain conditions, like arthritis, and it's not an autoimmune disease like multiple sclerosis. According to Hackshaw, fibromyalgia is best characterized as "pain amplification syndrome."

"It's what we call neuropathic pain," he said. "Patients with fibromyalgia get increased signals of pain because of abnormalities in the nervous system."

Because of how the disease manifests, conventional strategies to treat fibromyalgia target the nervous system. These include antidepressants, serotonin, and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors, and drugs that moderate the calcium and sodium flow across nerve endings.

"All of these agents work in some way to change the concentration of these key neurochemicals that are involved in pain sensation in the brain," Hackshaw said.

But there are also other treatment strategies outside the realm of conventional medicine. For example, one common view found among many holistic-minded practitioners is that fibromyalgia symptoms actually stem from a body overburdened with toxicity and digestive problems.

Some conventional doctors may still scoff at these ideas. But for McCullough and others, lasting relief has come from things like taking probiotics, eating a clean, nutrient-dense diet, and gently detoxifying their bodies.

"Everybody I talk to with fibromyalgia, even if they are asymptomatic, their digestive systems are in trouble. If they are symptomatic, their digestive system is damaged," McCullough said.

Antibiotic Impact

Several studies support McCullough's observations, and so do ancient forms of medicine. As Hippocrates stated, "All disease begins in the gut."

However, Hippocrates never encountered the chemical toxicity we see today. Fortunately, our bodies generally do a pretty good job filtering out these poisons from our air, food, and water so that we don't get sick. However, it's believed that the bodies of fibromyalgia patients can't detoxify as effectively as they should, and their pain, depression, and sleep disturbance are all the result of toxins lodged in their tissues.

The rise of all chronic diseases over the last century has been linked to the accumulation of numerous environmental and nutritional factors. But some fibromyalgia sufferers say they can identify the specific toxic source that pushed them over the edge.

For example, a growing number of people diagnosed with fibromyalgia connect the onset of their symptoms with taking fluoroquinolone antibiotics. The best-known drug

from this class is Cipro (ciprofloxacin), so the fibromyalgia patients in this group refer to their disease as "Cipro-myalgia."

Fluoroquinolones are necessary when other antibiotics fail, but some doctors prescribe them before trying a less powerful drug. However, in 2016 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned that the side effects of these medications outweighed the benefits when it comes to simple infections.

Fluoroquinolone toxicity advocate and Cipro-myalgia sufferer Mark Girard believes he has paid a high price for doctors administering these powerful drugs irresponsibly.

"Fluoroquinolones are incredibly toxic yet doctors hand them out like candy, and worse yet they double the dose or triple the duration on a whim as if they were traditional antibiotics," Girard said. "They are also prescribing them in conjunction with other drugs that cause toxic reactions in our bodies. My doctors did all three, and I have suffered horribly with a wide variety of health problems from head to toe."

"Exercise is number one in terms of treatment," he said. "We know a regular exercise program can increase some of those key neural chemicals that are abnormal in fibromyalgia and can help to precipitate or enhance the pain prototype that fibromyalgia patients experience."

Exercise can also help the body detoxify by increasing blood circulation and flushing out the lymphatic system.

But even though both sides agree on this strategy, it can still be hard to convince someone to exercise when they are tired and hurting all over. That's why McCullough advises people who are still in pain to wait until they feel better to do anything too strenuous.

"A healthy body wants to move," she said. "It's part of how we're designed. But if you're overloaded with toxins, and you start to detoxify without a way to get the toxins out, then you're going to get sicker."

With time, McCullough believes exercise can become a big part of the healing process because it allows people to finally trust the body that had failed them for so long.

"Their body has just been this painful meat suit that their soul is trapped in. When it starts to feel better, they have to learn to partner with it again. It's very cathartic," she said.

5 Signs of Low Testosterone

T.DEN_TEAM/SHUTTERSTOCK



MOHAN GARIKIPARITHI

As we age, we begin to experience many different changes to our bodies and health. For men, one of these significant changes is a reduction in testosterone, which can lead to unwanted symptoms. But how can you tell if you are enduring regular changes or if they are a result of low testosterone? And if they are a result of low testosterone, when should you treat it?

“Feeling sluggish throughout the day could be a sign of low testosterone.”

Look for these five signs to determine if the changes you are experiencing are a result of low testosterone.

Fatigue

It is natural to feel less energy as you get older, but always feeling sluggish throughout the day could be a sign of low testosterone. You will experience chronic fatigue if you have low testosterone, meaning even if you sleep well at night, you won't feel well rested.

Decreased Muscle Mass

With chronic fatigue also comes a lack of physical activity, which means you won't be using your muscles as much. On the other hand, if you are still hitting those regular workouts and not seeing any gains, this is another sign of low testosterone.

Sexual Dysfunction

Your sexual organs may not be working as they did. This could cause difficulty in becoming aroused or difficulty maintaining an erection. Sexual dysfunction can also be a sign of heart problems, so you should see your doctor to detect any other underlying issues.

Increased Body Fat

Notice your chest is getting a bit larger? Breast enlargement in men, known as gynecomastia, is a result of a hormonal imbalance and low testosterone.

Mood Changes

If you begin to experience greater depressive symptoms, it could be a result of low testosterone. Testosterone plays a significant role in our mood, so if you're feeling more down than up, disinterested in things you once loved, or are more irritable, it could be time you check your testosterone levels.

Any changes noted in your health should be discussed with your doctor to determine the cause. There are often very easy fixes for many issues, especially low T, so you don't need to suffer from it.

Mohan Garikiparithi has a degree in medicine from Osmania University (University of Health Sciences) in India. This article was originally published on Bel Marra Health.



MORFON/ALFAS/SHUTTERSTOCK



Each new level of achievement becomes the new baseline.

JAY HARRINGTON

In 1899, Teddy Roosevelt delivered a speech in Chicago in which he extolled the virtues of what he called “the strenuous life.”

“[T]he life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph,” said Roosevelt.

Roosevelt, the quintessential “man in the arena,” lived a strenuous life full of risk-taking, rugged self-reliance, and commitment to core values. His lifelong adventure culminated in the presidency of the United States.

Today, too many men live the modern version of “the strenuous life,” which is more aptly termed “the stressful life.” Instead of adventure, it’s one marked by overwhelm. Men are strapped to their desks, tethered to their smartphones, a beep or chime away from their next dose of anxiety. They get consumed by careers they dislike to buy things they don’t need for the purpose of impressing people they don’t care about (or even know). And they’re suffering the consequences.

More than six million men suffer from depression. Suicide among men has risen dramatically since the year 2000, and in the year 2017 men died by suicide 3.5 times more often than women. Approximately one in five men develop alcohol dependency during their lives. Mental health trends among men continue to trend in the wrong direction.

Exhausted, pressured, restless, searching—what else can one feel while running in the rat race? How do I know? For years, I was sprinting to keep up with the pack. From a top law school to a top law firm, which led to a too-big house and too-little time for much of anything, something had to give.

What changed? The weight of it all nearly crushed me. But I feel like I’m one of the lucky ones. When you approach rock bottom, you are afforded a clear view of the fate awaiting you. By falling, as opposed to remaining afloat on auto-pilot, I had the chance to correct course before it was too late.

My safety net? I found minimalism, which allowed me to find the space and time necessary to strive for things—and by “things,” I mean experiences, relationships, beliefs, and values—that are necessary to cultivate a content and fulfilling life.

A Stubborn Journey Toward Minimalism

The truth is, however, I didn’t find minimalism. My wife did, then introduced it to me ... again and again before it stuck. Along with my tendency toward chasing shiny new objects, I’m pretty stubborn. Over time, my ego and self-worth got wrapped up in what I had—not who I was. My wife perceived this and saw minimalism as an escape hatch, but I resisted.

Minimalism seemed like a quirky idea propagated by people who resigned themselves to a Spartan, white-space existence. It appeared devoid of the color and excitement that pop culture, marketing, and social media heralded as essential elements of the modern good life.

And, if I’m being totally honest, as reflected by the Facebook pages, groups, and comment threads associated with members of the minimalism movement, it seemed that far more women than men were on board with the minimalistic life.

As much as the promises and principles of minimalism resonated with me, I did not embrace it, in large part because my identity as a husband, father, and working professional felt threatened by its implications. Why settle for less when ev-

Why Men Need Minimalism

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erything in society suggested that I should be striving for more?

Yes, these feelings are admittedly old fashioned, and not even relevant to my circumstances, given that my wife is every bit my equal partner (and then some) in all aspects of our marriage, including our respective financial contributions to the household.

Nonetheless, these feelings (irrational as they may be) are real, so I don’t see the point in pretending otherwise. I have always prided myself on my ability to simply outwork any challenge, and I foolishly believed that embracing minimalism put my

identity at risk by signaling vulnerability to the world. And vulnerability, at least in the pre-Brené Brown era, was not something I felt comfortable showing.

It took time, study, and reflection, but ultimately, I overcame the resistance, scaled back, and began to realize the benefits of a life with less. I became a better husband, father, and professional—a better man—in the process. I’m far more present, aware, and happy.

As a result of my transformation, I’ve come to believe that more men need minimalism.

The Dangers of the Hedonic Flywheel

Too many of us are chasing rainbows that we’ll never reach. We strive and grasp for more but regardless of how far we get, it doesn’t lead to happiness. Each new level of achievement becomes the new baseline.

Many believe that a material possession—be it a house, car, or new set of golf clubs—will lead to contentment, but save for a fleeting rush, it ends with remorse every time. Some of us think “only if I get that promotion ...” or “when I meet the person of my dreams ...”—but our happy future doesn’t materialize the way we expected. Author Tal Ben-Shahar calls this the “arrival fallacy,” which is the belief (almost always false) that when you arrive at a certain destination, you’ll be happy.

In short, we keep sprinting on the “hedonic treadmill” and never get anywhere. We merely adapt to our new circumstances and keep searching for more. However, the “treadmill” as a metaphor doesn’t convey the whole story. If you’re on a treadmill you can simply step off.

Getting trapped in the rat race is better described as being strapped to a “hedonic flywheel.” A flywheel is a heavy, mounted wheel that takes a great deal of effort to push. As you keep pushing, the flywheel gains speed and eventually it has powerful momentum. It takes a tremendous amount of effort to stop.

A life animated by the pursuit of more money, possessions, and social status is a dizzying life on the flywheel. It’s one that goes round and round, faster and faster, but never gets any closer to happiness and contentment.

Through living a more minimal life, I was able to stop and take stock. What I found was that I still wanted “more”—just of a different variety. I didn’t know it at the time, but a British philosopher prescribed exactly what I was looking for nearly 100 years ago.

A Life Full of ‘Zest’

Bertrand Russell was one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century. He grew up in a wealthy household in the United Kingdom but was deeply depressed as a teenager—even suicidal.

He navigated his way into adulthood despite his depression. As he made his way through the world, he was struck by his observation, which seemed counterintuitive to him at the time, that many of the wealthiest people he met also seemed to be the unhappiest. This confused him and he set out to find an explanation. In 1930, he revealed his findings to the world in his classic book, *The Conquest of Happiness*, which was Russell’s attempt at explaining the root causes of both happiness and unhappiness in life.

In particular, Russell found that “zest” was the common mark of a happy person. “Zest,” by definition, means “enthusiasm, eagerness, energy, and interest.” For Russell, having zest for life meant living with vigor, taking interest in the world around you, seeking out adventure, and living with a sense of enthusiasm. According to Russell, “What hunger is in relation to food, zest is in relation to life.”

I didn’t have a word for it at the time, but looking back, zest was the very ingredient that was missing from my life when it felt at its most monotonous. The days dragged by while the years seemed to fly past. I spent more time living through a screen than appreciating the wonders of the real world. Ambition and consumption blurred my vision to other possibilities.

By adopting a more minimalist lifestyle, I began to see what I was missing.

As a family, we cut back our possessions and financial obligations. We pared down our businesses, ditched our physical office space, and transitioned to a virtual working environment. This created space and time, which allowed me to pursue the outdoor activities that I love, and in the process rediscover a passion for life. I began to live with more zest and never looked back.

I know I’m not alone in my struggle with these issues. There are countless men who feel overworked, overstressed, and are drifting through their days. They feel sluggish from the weight of the expectations that society has foisted upon them. They see minimalism as a way out, but can’t muster the fortitude to make the changes necessary to transform their lives.

Obviously, women grapple with these issues, too, and I hope they can draw some lessons from my missteps. However, if my own hard-headedness is any indication, and given the staggering increase in mental health conditions among males, a message targeted more directly toward men is needed.

Transformation is not easy. I know this from experience. But I can say with certainty that there’s only one way off the hedonic flywheel, and it’s by taking a leap of faith into a more minimalist lifestyle. Once you regain your footing, you’ll come to realize that everything you were chasing was never going to make you happy.

You’ll see clearly, perhaps for the first time, that zest and passion for life come from its simplest pleasures.

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