

Partici-

pating in a

team sport offers a mental

health boost over

JEFFREY F LIN/UNSPLASH

solitary exercise-if

you're into the game

We benefit more from

exercise if we do for pos-

itive reasons rather than

external pressure or fear

xercise is good for your physical

as a way of boosting their mental

well-being. But not all exercise is equally

beneficial. And while it does matter if you

exercise alone or in a group, it is more criti-

One study examined how the setting peo-

ple exercised in related to mental health. The

study looked at 460 students aged between

16 and 24 years old, comparing those who

took part in team sports, informal fitness

cal as to why you exercise.

health and your mental health,

too. Many people take up exercise



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# Yoga Therapy Can Help Alleviate Tinnitus-Linked Distress

Suffering from a chronic buzzing in the ears can be stressful, and forbearing it better eases the stress

innitus is a buzzing or ringing in the ears that has become a chronic nightmare for millions of Americans, causing undue stress, trouble working, and even sleeplessness. With few possibilities of effective treatment, those afflicted may find it worth pursuing alternative treatments that offer possible relief or a higher tolerance for its effects.

Researchers in Poland examined the effects of 12 weeks of yoga training on 25 patients with chronic tinnitus. Affecting over 50 million adults in the United States, tinnitus can affect one or both ears and can stem from exposure to loud noises, ear and sinus infections, hearing loss in the elderly, heart or blood vessel problems, and Meniere's disease.

Ten of the subjects underwent MRI before and after yoga training, while all participants were assessed using the tinnitus functional index. A control group was made up of 13 persons reporting chronic tinnitus.

Following the 12-week yoga course, the researchers identified several areas that benefited most from yoga therapy, namely a sense of control of tinnitus, sleep, quality of life, and intrusiveness. The MRI results also revealed that connections in the white matter of the brain appeared stronger as a result of the training.

"Yoga training has good potential to improve the daily functioning of patients with chronic tinnitus and can be considered a promising supporting method for tinnitus treatment," reported the researchers writing in the journal Complementary Therapies in

The researchers identified several areas that benefited most from yoga therapy, namely a sense of control of tinnitus, sleep, quality of life and intrusiveness.

What Remedies Can Make a Difference in Tinnitus? Tinnitus treatment varies de-

pending on the cause, yet there are patients who have found no lasting relief from hearing aids, soundmasking devices, and medication.

Acupuncture, both in manual and electrical forms, has been shown to have therapeutic value in treating tinnitus. In a 2010 study, 50 patients who suffered from the disorder were investigated and assigned to either a manual acupuncture group, an electrical acupuncture group, or a placebo group. After six treatments, the frequency of tinnitus occurrence as well as loudness appeared

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to be significantly reduced in the electrical acupuncture group, while quality of life improved at two post-treatment periods in both manual and electrical groups.

Week 3, 2020 THE EPOCH TIMES

Improving levels of coenzyme Q10, zinc, and vitamin B12 have also been linked with the improvement of tinnitus.

Chronic tinnitus can lead to distress and anxiety from trouble hearing, working, or even catching sleep at night.

#### **Stress Management in Chronic Tinnitus Sufferers**

Depending on its severity, chronic tinnitus can lead to distress and anxiety from trouble hearing, working, or even catching sleep at night. Not everyone affected has successfully learned how to cope with the noise, which can come in the form of roaring, hissing, clicking, or other common sounds.

Yoga, an ancient wellness practice, can help immensely in managing stress, whether from conditions like tinnitus or everyday stresses that you encounter. There's mounting evidence that vouches for its favorable effects against stress and diseases. GreenMedInfo.com has an exhaustive list of studies vouching for yoga's therapeutic actions. Other natural remedies against ness tools, include:

- Meditation
- Deep breathing exercises • Simple exercises such as
- getting outside for a walk
- Solid support system
- composed of family, friends Professional counseling, if necessary

Integrating yoga and other natural approaches with additional lifestyle and environmental changes can make a radical difference in your tinnitus experience—even more so in the lasting, life-disrupting distress that can come with it.

The GMI Research Group is dedicated to investigating the most important health and environmental issues of the day. Special emphasis will be placed on environmental health. Our focused and deep research will explore the many ways in which the present condition of the human body directly reflects the true state of the ambient environment. This work is reproduced and distributed with the permission of GreenMedInfo LLC. Want to learn more from Greentheir newsletter at www.

> those facing the constant annoyance of tinnitus greater forbearance.

same rate as you once were. Nutritional deficiencies can

Even if you are eating nutrientdense calories with every food con-

up short on nutrients. Increased

physical activities.

**MADE TO MOVE** 

Group Exercise

Is Better for Your Mental Health

-if You're Properly Motivated

groups), and those who exercised alone

at least once a week. They followed up six

months later to measure their mental health.

group physical activity (either in team

sports or informal fitness groups) had bet-

ter mental health than those who exercised

alone. Students exercising in groups were

also more physically active, doing nearly

twice as much activity as those who exer-

cised alone. They also reported feeling more

The researchers suggest the reason stu-

dents exercising in groups had better men-

tal health maybe because of the social sup-

port network they developed during group

My own research also explored how

informal football programs helped with

mental health recovery. My colleagues

and I conducted two studies, one looking

at community football initiatives and the

connected to the people around them.

The study found that students who did

**Vitamin B12:** Absorption rates for B12 drop substantially with age, and it plays a major role in a variety of bodily processes. You need it to create blood cells, DNA, and to maintain healthy nerve function. It's tricky because even if you think you're getting enough of it, there is a decent chance you aren't. Trying to eat a source of animal protein with every meal can help protect against deficiencies, with ideal sources being fish, poultry, meat, eggs, milk,

Folate or Folic Acid: Also known as vitamin B9, a deficiency in folic acid



As you age eating well

Calcium: Calcium is another nutrient that takes on added importance with age. If you're not getting enough, which most people 65-plus don't, it seeps out of your bones to meet the body's needs. The result is weaker, more brittle bones that are at high risk of fractures. In addition to calcium, ad-

The activity itself might not predict the mental health benefits—but the way people feel while doing it does.

> to experience more benefits from exercise. We're also more likely to experience mental health benefits from exercise if the environment makes us feel we are more capable or likely to succeed, and when we have stronger connections to others. If these aspects are perceived in an environment. we tend to take part in activities because they are enjoyable or personally important to us. This is known as "autonomous motivation." Studies show that when people do activities for these reasons, they feel happier and have more energy.

On the other hand, feeling that we have less choice or control, or that we're not good at what we're doing, can have a negative effect on well-being. When we feel this way, we tend to do activities to avoid feeling guilty or being punished—or to receive praise or attention from others. This is known as "controlled motivation."

While these external reasons can be powerful ways to get us started with exercise, we're much less likely to continue being active over the long term because we're not doing things for our own enjoyment. Crucially, this type of motivation has been shown to have a negative impact on mental health.

Editor's note: This research does not indicate whether the mental health consequence of feeling pressured to exercise outweigh the more general mental health benefit of the exercise itself. In other words, it is possible to experience mental health benefits of exercise, regardless of motivation.]

For example, if I choose to jog on my own because it's important to me, this is likely to be better for my mental health than if I played a team sport where the only reason I participate is that I worry about letting my teammates or coach down. This would be because I'm not choosing to take part in the sport for my own reasons, but for the sake of other people.

Research looking at the reasons people participate in team sports and their mental health in the United Kingdom and Ireland shows how important the right type of motivation is in relation to mental health

Team members who were able to make choices about their training felt connected to those around them and that they were performing well in their sport experienced better mental health. But if these aspects were missing, athletes' mental health was poorer, showing how important creating the right environment is, regardless of the activity.

Finding ways to give individuals more choices and helping them to develop relationships with others might be important for coaches, exercise instructors, and even gym buddies so that people can better improve their mental health through the exercise they're doing. The activity itself might not predict the mental health benefits—but the way people feel while doing it does.

So is it better to exercise alone, or in a group? In practice, there is some evidence that group-based activities might be more beneficial for mental health. But the reason a person is exercising, and the environment they're exercising in, are just as important. Put simply, choosing an activity you love whether it's because you feel good at it, or it allows you to be part of a community—will bring the best mental health boost.

Laura Healy is a senior lecturer in sport coaching at Nottingham Trent University in the United Kingdom. This article was originally published on The Conversation

equate vitamin D, potassium, and

magnesium are required because

they all work together to make

sure calcium can is absorbed and

effective. Eat a variety of dairy

foods, seafood, fruit, vegetables,

and nuts to help boost the intake

Eating a nutrient-dense diet can

help ensure you get the nutrients

you need. Thankfully, many of

of these nutrients.

groups (such as yoga classes or running other at football programs within NHS

mental health services. We interviewed

people who played football at the sessions,

where players, coaches and healthcare staff

We found that participants valued group

activities, as they were able to connect with

people who shared similar interests and

experiences. Participants also said that

being able to choose to play a sport they

enjoyed contributed to mental health.

These programs can support mental health

recovery, allowing participants to live a

And while these participants benefited

from the team aspect of their exercise, our

research shows they also benefited from the

type of motivation that moved them to play.

If we are motivated from within and feel

we have more choice and control, we seem

hopeful and satisfying life despite any limi-

tations caused by mental illness.

The Reasons We Exercise

all took part in the activities together.

## The Nutrients You Need if You're Over 65

can lead to anemia in older adults.

Folic acid contributes to red blood

cell production, which will limit the

amount of oxygen circulating in

vour body. Without it, your organs

and cells cannot function properly.

You can get more folate by consum-

ing a variety of fruits and vegeta-

bles, as well as fortified cereals.

#### **DEVON ANDRE**

LAURA HEALY

There's no simple way to put this: Your nutritional needs change with age. The change has several causes. You might not have the same appetite, food doesn't taste as good, you have trouble chewing, or it gives you a bout of indigestion. And even if you're still eating the way you always have, there's a high probability that you're not absorbing nutrients at nearly the

occur at any age, but they are far more likely in adults 65 and older. This is precisely the age group that's affected by a growing list of chronic health conditions.

sumed, you still might be coming

need and poor absorption can play a trick on you. Here are the nutrients you should be paying the closest attention to if you are 65 or older.

and milk products like yogurt.

takes on greater importance. That doesn't have to be though.

a bad thing

these foods are rather easily digestible and are unlikely to infringe on your appetite. In some cases, it is worthwhile to talk to your doctor about supplementation.

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

THE EPOCH TIMES: What's the best way

to approach kids who might be strug-

gling? And what approaches should

**DR. BHARGAVE**: Putting yourself in a

## What's Behind the Dramatic Rise in Teen Suicide?

A child psychiatrist shares insights gained from his work with children and teens who have contemplated suicide

to medications—pain medicines from

their parents' rooms and other places.

They're trying it. And it is something

we need to be talking to kids about

There's also more visibility of suicide

in media and online. When we were

growing up, suicide was something

that was very out there and couldn't

possibly affect us in our own homes

and communities. Now, the world

community is smaller. We have more

THE EPOCH TIMES: You mentioned a

need for community connection. With

social media, it seems we're now more

connected than ever. What kind of

connection do kids need and why is

**DR. BHARGAVE**: You would think that

with all of these platforms that we have

They have more exposure to nega-

tive feedback, more exposure to cy-

berbullying, as well as their sense of

self-being tied to having enough likes.

Another thing is that we have all of

the advancements of social media

being able to connect us across ge-

nurturing and fulfilling relationships

in our lives are the ones that come with

For a lot of children, because they have

in-person, one on one interactions.

All of that is part of the problem.

that not being met?

connected than ever.

of a media and online presence.

because it's part of their reality.

#### **CONAN MILNER**

ife is hard, but the transition from child to teen can be especially rough. For a growing number of young people, the process is so unbearable they do the unthinkable.

According to an October 2019 report from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the suicide rate among U.S. children aged 10 through 14 has nearly tripled from 2007 to 2017. The suicide rate among older teenagers (15 to 19) has also increased by 76 percent.

The report doesn't try to explain these figures. But as the number of young people killing themselves climbs steadily over a decade, you can't help but wonder why.

Dr. Suvrat Bhargave, a board-certified psychiatrist specializing in child and adolescent psychiatry, points to several contributing factors. Bhargave is saddened by the CDC statistics, but not surprised by them. Many of the kids who come to his office suffer from extreme anxiety and uncontrolled rage, and they confront pressures and circumstances unknown to previous generations. Bhargave profiles some of these cases in his new book, "A Moment Of Insight."

People have always struggled with inner demons, but why are more succumbing to them today? Although it can be difficult to contemplate such a devastating trend, Bhargave believes it's our duty to address it and try to

"If we as parents were given such scary numbers for the increase in deaths from some superinfection, we would declare this a crisis and demand that it be investigated more aggressively," Bhargave said.

The Epoch Times talked with Bharo suicide and what can be done to change their minds.

THE EPOCH TIMES: When I read the CDC statistics, my first thought was, "What has happened to make so

many kids take this path?" DR. SUVRAT BHARGAVE: I think what makes the numbers shocking, confusing, and disappointing is that we don't have one answer to that question. Suicide has always been a multifactorial complex act and condition. But now, more than ever, we have to look at a wide range of factors.

One is the rise in depression and mental illness in adolescents and kids. It is a very real factor that can contribute to suicide.

There's also more stress in general in the lives of children. Within their families and homes, there is more stress. Within the schools, there is more stress. In their social circle, they're feeling more pressure as well. That contributes to this.

Strong community connection gives kids a sense of support which is protective against suicide, but we have a more divisive environment in general that we're living in right now. When you have an environment that is angrier and more divisive, with stronger expressions of frustration, that definitely affects children. There are also ongoing problems with childhood abuse and neglect. A child who is being abused at home is more likely to end up hurting themselves. We know that to be the case.

Another factor has to be their increased exposure to violence in general. That affects children and how they react to things. I think you also have to put into account their access to firearms. More and more often what they're using to commit suicide are guns and they have more access

There is also an increase in drug use, that includes opioids as well as other drugs. In the old days, it was marijuana and alcohol. Today, there are many kids who have more access

think the more friends you have on social media is an indication of how many friends you have socially. But when I talk about friends, I mean the relationships that are mutually nurturing, mutually respectful. We're socially successful when we have two to four really good friends from that standpoint.

A lot of kids don't have that. It's not in their concept of what it means to

When you talk about having a social network or a community that supports you, it gives you a sense of belonging. If at some moment, you don't feel good enough or feel hopeless, there are others around you who will lift you up. Without that kind of community around, kids are more likely to, in the moment, decide that there is no way out. And suicide really is about the moment. Most kids who contemplate and attempt suicide are reacting in the moment to a feeling that there is no other way out. We've got to really shore up one another by expressing empathy, showing concern, and having a sense of community.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Friendship seems like such a timeless idea. Have we really grown so out of touch with what we need from genuine personal con-

**DR. BHARGAVE:** I've had young people in the last couple years talk about relationships they have with girlfriends and boyfriends that they met online. And the more we talk, I find that

they've never actually met. But they available to us that we ought to be more consider these relationships to be intimate enough that they call them their significant other. Maybe we took for granted that kids will learn this, but we can't do that anymore. We have to go back to what true connection and true friendship is, and what the value of it is. There is something very different from that experience than just ography, but the fact is that the most connecting online.

THE EPOCH TIMES: You mentioned

exposure to violence as a con-

tributing factor to suicide.

What they see are options for them. How they respond on impulse is all affected by exposure.

Take for example an impulsive child—as many children are. If you know you have an impulsive child, then you have to be particularly careful about their exposure to violence. If an impulsive child gets angry and his very first thought is to body slam his younger brother, then how can it be argued that what he was exposed to didn't somehow affect his decision in that moment?

tips there's a lot you see now that we

were never exposed to as children.

In hindsight, the impulsive child can certainly reflect, express remorse, and think of other ways to have handled it. But for many children, their very first thought is what they act on. And in the case of suicide, there may not be a second chance. You may not be able to reflect and think about how you should have done something else. The influences in the lives of children have always been important. But right now, the kinds of influences they have, and the sources for those are much

THE EPOCH TIMES: You say that parents don't take the CDC suicide statistics as seriously as they would an infection epidemic. Why do you think we're so

hesitant to embrace this? **DR. BHARGAVE:** There are some myths that come from a place of fear. One example is that if you talk about suicide with children they will be more likely to commit it. Or if we talk about what it means to be depressed and anxious, that they'll become depressed and anxious. Those really are myths. There is no validity in that. But it comes from a place of fear.

I understand that as a parent and someone who works with children, there is always a little bit of trepidation with talking about difficult subjects with kids. But the reality is that kids are exposed to and are becom-

ing aware of these difficult topics. So if we're not the ones talking about it, we don't know where they're getting their information, and we don't know what solutions they're being offered, or what they're being encouraged to

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think about. Adults should talk to kids very openly about their emotional well-being and mental health. These are things that we should talk about as much as the factors that affect our physical well-being. We talk to kids all the time about making sure they get enough sleep and eat right because those are very important topics. So why do we shy away from emotional well-being? It should be just as much of a topic as physical well-being.

We need to have open discussions about emotional development and social skills, and we need to be intervening earlier, whether it's in the school or within families. We need to have discussions about fostering empathy, for example, and help kids develop their emotional skills. We need to help them identify what they're feeling and how to express each of those emotions.

A lot of times kids tend to clump emotions into two categories: they either feel good or bad. Emotions are much more specific, but if we don't give kids the vocabulary, they can lump all emotions together. Anger is not expressed the way sadness, fear, or embarrassment are expressed. We have got to give kids ways to express themselves appropriately and accurately so that it

doesn't just weigh them down. When I ask kids about the different ways they can describe their moods and they have a hard time with it, I tell them to pull out their phone and take a look at all the face emojis. If there were only two emotions, good or bad, there would only be two faces.

It's just one way to visually show

them that there is a complexity to emotions, and yet it's worth it to express specifically what you're feeling so that it doesn't build up.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Since we live in such polarized times, inclusiveness is not a

message we hear too often. **DR. BHARGAVE:** That's a trend we have to address head-on, because we're headed in a direction where we vocalize our differences much more than we focus on the things that make us all similar. For all the things that divide us, there's nothing you have felt that I haven't felt. One place of commonality is our emotional states. We've all felt sad, angry, embarrassed, disappointed, or happy at some point in our lives. That's a basis from which we can find other places of commonality with one another. I don't think we're having enough discussions in a broader sense what makes us all more alike, even in our

THE EPOCH TIMES: Are there clear warning signs that a kid needs help and is not coping well with life? **DR. BHARGAVE:** There are definitely warning signs from children who are having a tough time. While we may not be able to identify exactly which child is building up to the idea that they don't belong here anymore and wants to die, we can certainly intervene early with the child who feels ostracized, overwhelmed, discouraged or even the child who is being more irritable and acting out more.

When we talk about mood disorders in children, we find they don't always experience it in the ways that adults do. When I use the word depression, people think about sadness, but the number one symptom in adolescent depression is actually irritability. So when you find your child being easily irritated and frustrated inwardly and outwardly, that's a sign where we need to be

a board-certified psychiatrist specializing in child and adolescent psychiatry

We have to go

back to what

friendship is,

and what the

value of it is.

Dr. Suvrat Bhargave,

and true

true connection

position where you're telling someone else how you feel requires a degree of

we avoid?

vulnerability. We should model for kids what it means to be vulnerable, what it means to be able to be in touch with our own feelings, and that's true for men and women. We need to let young girls and boys know that it's okay to talk to people who are close to them about how

you feel. The cultural ideas that real boys don't cry, or young ladies should only behave a certain way we're going to have to challenge those stereotypes because it's not serving our children anymore. Show them that it's

not taboo. Have these discussions regularly across the kitchen table. Let them know that it's okay to talk if they're having difficulty with anything that they might be thinking or feeling. We have to create a space where it's okay to do that.

A lot of times parents will say to me, "How do I have the talk with my child?" Well, anything that's "the talk," that right there sounds foreboding and uncomfortable. But if these are just a series of conversations that we're having with our kids, then this is what they know.

There are crisis points where you have to have a discussion. Every community has been affected by suicide at some point, and what I find within my own little community where there has been another unfortunate case of a young person taking their lives is that everyone is wondering how to talk about this. But it's really more about having a series of discussions from the time that they're young all the way through to make sure emotional well-being is prioritized. That's what's important.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What drives children to suicide?

DR. BHARGAVE: Many children have a build-up to the way in which they feel. There are experiences, for example, being bullied, or having an argument with a friend, disappointing a teacher by not doing well on a test, or getting in trouble with parents for something

All of these things might just seem  $like\,day\text{-}to\text{-}day\,things\,that\,happen\,with$ children, but if you have a child who is already feeling discouraged, feeling not good enough, or has a low sense of themselves, then these things we think of as a part of normal childhood are ac-

tually much bigger for that child. But suicide, the act of taking your own life, is a moment where you just can't see a way out. I've talked to kids who have been suicidal try to describe what it was like in that moment, and they just don't see any reason to keep going. Thankfully, most people who have had suicidal thoughts eventually think of something they can hold on to. It might be that ending their life would greatly affect their parents. I had one young person say to me yesterday that it was because of a cat. Her cat came into the room, and that was the reason

she stopped thinking about it. You hope there is something that comes in their mind that gives them a sense of belonging, purpose, and hope. At the end of the day, hope is what keeps us all going when any of us are having a difficult time. But if you're having a moment where you can't think of what to be hopeful about, that's where people have taken their lives.

Hope to me is simply the possibility of there being something good. When you're severely depressed, and have circumstances in your life that keep telling you that there is nothing to live for, sometimes it's very, very hard to find hope.

When you're feeling down, depressed, and hopeless, reach out to someone. I know it's sometimes the hardest thing to do in those moments, but it's the most important thing. Reach out to a friend, adult or mentor. If you can't think of anyone in your life you know of, sometimes it's better to reach out to someone who is anonymous that you think won't be able to judge you. In that case, reach out to the suicide prevention hotline: 1800-273-TALK (8255).

But just reach out. If you can't think of a reason to hold on, let someone else



your child being easily irritated and frustrated inwardly and outwardly, that's a sign where we

When you find

Dr. Suvrat Bhargave, a board-certified psychiatrist specializing in child and adolescent psychiatry

need to be asking,

'Are you okay?'

#### **BRIAN HARMAN** & JANINE BOSAK

e are creatures of habit. Between a third and half of search estimates. Unfortunately, our bad habits compromise our health, wealth, and happiness.

On average, it takes 66 days to form a habit. But positive behavioral change is harder than self-help books would have us believe. Only 40 percent of people can sustain their new year's resolution after six months, while only 20 percent of dieters maintain long-term weight loss.

Education does not effectively promote behavior change. A review of 47 studies found that it's relatively easy to change a person's goals and intentions but it's much harder to change how they behave. Strong habits are often activated unconsciously in response to social or environmental cues—for example, we go to the supermarket about 211 times a year, but most of our purchases are habitual.

better care of your body or your bank

#### 1. Prioritize Your Goals

Willpower is a finite resource. Resisting temptation drains our willpower, leaving us vulnerable to influences that reinforce our impulsive behaviors.

A common mistake is being overly ambitious with our new year resolutions. It's best to prioritize goals and focus on one behavior. The ideal approach is to make small, incremental changes that replace the habit with

behavior that supplies a similar reward. Diets that are too rigid, for example, require a lot of willpower to

#### 2. Change Your Routines

Habits are embedded within routines. So disrupting routines can prompt us to adopt new habits. For example, major life events like changing jobs, moving houses, or having a baby all promote new habits since we are forced to adapt to new

#### It's relatively easy to change a person's goals and intentions but it's much harder to change how they behave.

While routines can boost our productivity and add stability to our social lives, they should be chosen with care. People who live alone have With all this in mind, here are five stronger routines so those who do it thereby increasing the risk of habits ways to help you keep your new year's may find throwing dice to randomresolutions—whether that's taking ize their decision making could help them disrupt their habits.

> Our environment also affects our routines. For example, without giving it any thought, we eat popcorn at the cinema but not in a meeting room. Similarly, reducing the size of your storage containers and the plates you serve food on can help to

### 3. Monitor Your Behavior

"Vigilant monitoring" appears to be the most effective strategy for

tackling strong habits. This is where

people actively monitor their goals and regulate their behaviors in response to different situations. A meta-analysis of 100 studies found that self-monitoring was the best of 26 different tactics used to promote healthy eating and exercise activities.

Another meta-analysis of 94 studies informs us that "implementation intentions" are also highly effective. These personalized "if x then y" rules can counter the automatic activation of habits. For example, if I feel like eating chocolate, I will drink a glass

Implementation intentions with multiple options are very effective since they provide the flexibility to adapt to situations. For example, "if I feel like eating chocolate I will (a) drink a glass of water, (b) eat some fruit, or (c) go for a walk."

But negatively framed implementation intentions ("when I feel like eating chocolate, I will not eat chocolate") can be counterproductive since people have to suppress a thought ("don't eat chocolate"). Ironically, trying to suppress a thought actually makes us more likely to think about

Distraction is another approach that can disrupt habits. Also effective is focusing on the positive aspects of the new habit and the negative aspects of the problem habit.

#### 4. Imagine Your Future Self

To make better decisions we need to overcome our tendency to prefer rewards now rather than later. Psychologists call this our "present bias." One way to fight this bias is to future proof our decisions. Our future self tends to be virtuous and adopts long-term goals. In contrast, our present self often pursues short-term, situational goals. There are ways we can work around this, though.

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For example, setting up a direct debit into a savings account is effective because it's a one-off decision. In contrast, eating decisions are problematic because of their high frequency. Often our food choices are compromised by circumstance or situational stresses. Planning ahead is therefore important because we regress to our old habits when put

#### 5. Set Goals and Deadlines

Setting self-imposed deadlines or goals helps us change our behavior and form new habits. For example, say you are going to save a certain amount of money every month. Deadlines work particularly well when tied to self-imposed rewards and penalties for good behavior.

Another way to increase motivation is to harness the power of peer pressure. Websites such as stickK allow you to broadcast your commitments online so that friends can follow your progress via the website or on social media (for example, "I will lose 15 pounds in weight by May"). These are highly visible commitments and tie our colors to the mast. A financial forfeit for failure (preferably payable to a cause you oppose) can add extra motivation.

Brian Harman is a lecturer in marketing at De Montfort University in the United Kingdom, and Janine Bosak is an associate professor in organizational psychology at Dublin City University in Ireland. This article was originally published on The

## Online Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Can Be Effective Fibromyalgia Treatment

#### MAT LECOMPTE

Researchers at Sweden's Karolinska Institutet have developed an online cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for pain symptoms connected with fibromyalgia.

Maria Hedman-Lagerlof, a doctoral student at the Department of Clinical Neuroscience, Karolinska Institutet and colleagues found that patients who receive CBT experience fewer symptoms and enjoy a better quality of life.

"Many doctors feel frustrated and at a loss when meeting a patient with fibromyalgia as there is currently no effective treatment, but now things might be looking up," Hedman-Lagerlof said.

Fibromyalgia is a disorder characterized by widespread musculoskeletal chronic pain accompanied by fatigue, sleep, memory, and mood issues. Many patients with fibromyalgia also suffer from joint pain, muscle pain, concentration difficulties, headaches, gastrointestinal problems, depression, and anxiety.

A fibromyalgia diagnosis can be made if a person has had widespread pain for more than three months with no underlying medical condition that could cause the pain. The cause of fibromyalgia is unknown, and there are no known cures for the condition.

#### Over-Awareness of the Body

The therapy created by Hedman-Lagerlof and colleagues is designed to counteract the brain's learned over-awareness of the body. It involves patients performing activities that they would otherwise avoid on account of their fibromyalgia. They are required to practice holding onto their experience of pain and discomfort without becoming

"The brain gradually learns that these unpleasant signals aren't dangerous and so stops interpreting them as important," Hedman-Lagerlof said. "When you become less occupied with the pain signals you don't feel as impeded by them, which tends



Fibromyalgia is a disorder characterized by widespread musculoskeletal chronic pain accompanied by fatigue, sleep, memory, and mood issues.

symptoms," Hedman-Lagerlof

In studying the online cognitive behavioral therapy, patients with fibromyalgia were randomly assigned either to a course of online CBT or to a waiting list. Over a ten-week course of treatment, the group enrolled in the online training had fewer symptoms to mitigate the pain and other and felt less obstructed by their

condition than the control group who were assigned to the waiting list. They also showed improved functionality and quality of life, with less anxiety, depression, insomnia, and fatigue.

"The next step is to compare our therapy with a different kind of psychological treatment," Hedman-Lagerlof said. "If it proves more effective it wouldn't take by the health services, where it can benefit the lives of many patients." CBT offers new options to those suffering from fibromyalgia,

long for it to be implemented

which has no known cure and few treatment options. An analysis of the therapy also shows that it is a cost-effective treatment, which is partly due to it being online. Participants who followed CBT treatment recorded spending less time in healthcare. Self-care is critical in the management of fibromyalgia. Along with the CBT, studies have shown that lifestyle changes can help to reduce symptoms of fibromyalgia. Reducing stress, getting daily exercise, eating healthy, and maintaining an overall healthy lifestyle can go a long way towards having a higher quality of life when living with

Mat Lecompte is a health and wellness journalist. This article was first published on Bel

## Parenting Your Aging Parents When They Don't Want Help

Focus on preserving trust and maintaining your relationship in your parent's final years

#### **JUDITH GRAHAM**

David Solie's 89-year-old mother, Carol, was unyielding. "No, I will not move," she told her son every time he suggested that she leave her home and relocate to a senior living residence.

Although Carol suffered from coronary artery disease, severe osteoporosis, spinal compression fractures, and unsteady balance, she didn't want assistance. When Solie brought in aides to help after a bad fall and subsequent surgery, his mother fired them in a matter of days.

"In her mind, she considered it a disgrace to have anybody in her home," Solie said. "This was her domain for over 50 years, a place where she did everything by herself and in her own way."

Conflicts of this sort often threaten relationships between aging parents and their adult children just when understanding and support are needed the most. Instead of working together to solve problems, families find themselves feuding and riven by feelings of resentment and distress.

Solie got so worked up, he considered going to court and asking for a conservatorship—a legal arrangement that would have given him control over his mother's affairs. (The situation was complicated because Solie's brother, who has Down syndrome, lived at the family home.) But Solie's lawyer advised that this course of action would destroy his relationship with his mother.

Today, Solie, a health care consultant and writer with a well-regarded blog about aging, sounds the same theme when he consults with adult children caring for parents. Make preserving trust and keeping your relationship intact not winning arguments—a priority, he suggests. What your parents most need is confidence that you'll listen to them, take their concerns seriously and stay by their side no matter what happens, he says.

How adult children communicate with parents can go a long way toward easing tensions, Solie says. Instead of telling your parent what to do, ask how they'd prefer to solve problems. Elicit their priorities and recognize their values when making suggestions. Give them choices whenever possible. Be attuned to their unexpressed needs and fears.

When Dr. Lee Lindquist, chief of geriatrics at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, asked 68 older adults in eight focus groups why they resisted help, the answers varied They said they were afraid of losing their independence, becoming a burden on loved ones, being taken advantage of, and relinquishing control over their lives.

Asked what might make a difference, the older adults said they liked the idea of "interdependence"—acknowledging that people need one another from childhood to an older age. And they found it helpful to think that "by accepting help, they were in turn helping the person providing the help," according to Lindquist's study, published last year in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society.

Unfortunately, no amount of patience, compassion or forbearance will work in some conflict-ridden circumstances. But here's some of what experts have learned:

#### **Be Patient**

Give your parents time to adjust. At first, Jane Wolf Frances' 87-year-old mother, Lillian Wolf, wouldn't consider moving with Jane's father from New York City to the Los Angeles area, where Frances, her only child, lived.

Although Lillian had Alzheimer's disease and Frances had planned to give her one-story house to her parents, "I deferred to my mother's fear that she was going to be losing something essential," she said.

During three years of caregiving, Frances had learned to not rush her parents. She knew they had slowed down and needed time to process change.

So Frances waited until her parent's home health aide called with concerns about their ability to live independently. After discussing the situation with their physician, Frances approached her mother again. A move to assisted living would be a fresh start, allowing the family to spend more time together, she said. After several conversations, her mother finally agreed.

Frances, a psychologist, is the author of a

new book, "Parenting Our Parents: Transforming the Challenge Into a Journey of Love" and founder of www.parentingourparents.org. Stay calm when disagree-



Make preserving trust and keeping your relationship intactnot winning argumentsa priority.



most need is confidence that you'll listen to them take their concerns seriously and stay by their side no matter what happens

What your

ments arise with your elderly parents and tamp down your emotional reactions, she tells families. Listen carefully to your parents' concerns and let them know you're trying to help them accomplish their goals, not impose your agenda.

"It's often helpful to say to your parents 'I'm doing this for you; I'd like you to do something for me," Frances said. "People, who are good parents perk up on that one and will ask, 'OK, what can I do for you?' Then, you can tell them, 'You can let me help you more."

Let Them Know You're on Their Side Denise Brown was convinced her parents, Roger and Sally Loeffler, were making a terrible decision. In the previous year, Roger, 84, had been diagnosed with bladder and prostate cancer and undergone extensive surgery. Sally, 81, had suffered three internal bleeds and had one-third of her stomach removed.

Brown didn't think they could live on their own anymore, and her parents had moved into a retirement community upon her recommendation. But then, at a family meeting, her mother stood up and said, "I'm not dying in this dump. I hate it here." As Brown and her siblings turned to their father, he said, "I'll do whatever your mom wants."

When her parents decided to move to an apartment, Brown was confrontational. "I raised my voice and said, 'This is not good, this is terrible," she said. "They were shocked, but they said 'It doesn't matter; this is what we're going to do."

As Brown thought about her reaction, she realized she thought her parents would be safer and have a more "gentle" death in the retirement community: "Then it occurred to me—this wasn't what my parents wanted. They valued their independence. It's their decision about how the end of life plays out."

Brown let her parents know she'd respect their wishes but would need to set limits. Her work—Brown is the founder of www.CareGiving.com—had to be a priority, and her parents would need to arrange other assistance if she couldn't be available. (Brown's two brothers and sister help out.) And they'd have to be willing to talk openly about how their choices were affecting her.

WHAT DOESN'T WORK: Trying to commu nicate when any one of them is tired or angry. "We never get anywhere," Brown said. "Everybody gets defensive and shuts down.'

WHAT DOES WORK: "Asking them questions like how do you think we should try to solve this problem? It's interesting to hear their answers, and it makes working

#### **Understand Your parents Will Change** After her father's death, Loi Eberle was

distraught when her mother, Lucille Miller, became involved with a man she and her siblings didn't like. With his encouragement, Miller invested in real estate and lost a great deal of money.

But nothing Eberle or her siblings said could convince her mother that this relationship was destructive. Eberle struggled with resentment and

anger as her mother's needs escalated after a heart attack and a diagnosis of myasthenia gravis, a severe neurological disease. "Mom and I had this love/hate relationship all my life, and there was a huge need for healing in this relationship," she said.

In 2012, Eberle moved Miller, then 89, from her longtime home in Minneapolis to a nursing home in northern Idaho, near where Eberle lives. Gradually, she realized that her mother "had transitioned to being someone else"—someone

who was vulnerable and at her life's end. "I think for a long time I had this idea that I was going to help Mom come back to who she was, and I spent a lot of time trying to do that," Eberle said. "I finally had to forgive myself for failure and un-

derstand that this is the life process." With this shift in perspective, emotional tension dissipated. "When I'd visit, my mother was always so happy to see me,' Eberle said. Miller died in March 2017 at age 94.

#### Let Go of Unrealistic Expectations

This is the final stage of your journey with your parents. Try to put angst to one side and help make this time meaningful for them and for you. Most of all, your parents want to feel emotionally connected and accepted, even in a diminished state.

Judith Graham is a contributing columnist for Kaiser Health News, which originally published this article. KHN's coverage of these topics is supported by The John A. Hartford Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and The SCAN Foundation.

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 3, 2020



Conforming to endless trends can be an expensive distraction from our own values



"Keeping up with the Joneses" is, by its very nature, the pursuit of conformity. We want what they have or buy what others are talking about or click-to-ship the same product everyone else is buying on Black Friday.

But one of the rarely mentioned side effects of conforming to the life that others are living (what we buy, how we spend our time, and what we desire to have) is the complete and total loss of individuality.

But deep down, do we even want those things? Do we even want to change our clothing styles? Or buy the new car, boat, or bigger house in the gated community?

Or would we much prefer our own life and our own choices? Wouldn't we much prefer to pursue our own values? Because almost certainly your values are different than the Joneses.

We follow the new fashions. We watch the same shows and movies and | When we take control of our life and begin pursuing the life we want to live, we discover the best way to overcome envy and jealousy of others is to live a life consistent with our values.

**Getting one more** toy or updating another room of our home is often an act of conformity meant to match a social norm.

When our time and money are spent on things we consider important, we find inner peace and calm that allows us to experience sufficiency, regardless of how much others have (or how they spend it). When our resources are spent on pursuits that bring us fulfillment, we find fulfillment.

Will others have more? Absolutely. But when we are doing the best we can with the resources we have, it results in the confidence and peace that the Joneses have probably been chasing all along.

Live your life ignoring conformity. Pursue those things that bring you fulfillment and significance and meaning.

Rather than trying to "keep up with the Joneses," try to "keep up with the person you want to be.'

You certainly won't get there trying to live the Joneses' life.

Joshua Becker is an author, public speaker and the founder and editor of Becoming Minimalist where he inspires others to live more by owning less. Visit BecomingMinimalist.com

LIENHARD.ILLUSTRATOR/SHUTTERSTOCK



**JOSHUA** 

ather than

trying to

"keep up

BECKER

Joneses," try to "keep up with the

It is, almost certainly, different than

Society has an interesting effect on us.

Too often, it calls us to conform. Think

of the changing styles and how quickly

person you want to be.

the life the Joneses are living.

the masses adopt them.

**TRUTH and TRADITION** 

# COVERING IMPORTANT NEWS OTHER MEDIA IGNORE

The very fabric of America is under attack our freedoms, our republic, and our constitutional rights have become contested terrain. The Epoch Times, a media committed to truthful and responsible journalism, is a rare bastion of hope and stability in these testing times.

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How to win the battle with your stuff



#### **CONAN MILNER**

piritual practices have long warned against developing attachments to material possessions, as it can be easy to get as an extension of our self, represent who we aspire to be and demonstrate our taste and values. But it can also reveal what we greed after or won't let go of.

Hoarding—the inability to part with any possessions no matter how worthless—has become a surreal staple of reality television, highlighting an affliction both fascinating and repulsive. In every episode,

they're ashamed and isolated by the environment they inhabit. But the pain of letting go is too great.

Christine Bowman has spent much of her life with hoarders—both professionally, as a Chicago-based home organizer, and as a sucked in. Our stuff can serve child watching her grandmother struggle with hoarding.

She describes her grandmother's house as virtually unlivable: A tight pathway snaked through stacks of furniture, clothing, and other items, allowing just enough space to get from one room to the next.

"There was just one burner of the stove that you could use and the rest were covered," Bowman said. "You could use the toilet and hoarders know they have a problem, and sink, but you couldn't use the shower. It was Continued on Page 11

completely full of boxes and objects."

Even though only a small fraction of Americans meet the criteria of being a fullblown hoarder, these days it seems we all have more junk than ever.

Many factors contribute to our materialism, including a culture of mass consumption, the capability to buy almost anything online, and a booming self-storage industry that happily houses our overflow.

We also face bargains that seem too good to pass up, must-have electronics that we're more likely to replace than repair, and a pervasive mantra that having more will make us happy.

## THE **EPOCH TIMES**

TRUTH and TRADITION

# A NEWSPAPER WOULD READ

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Decision fatigue refers to the deteriorating quality of decisions made by an individual after a long session of decision making.

#### **BECOMING MINIMALIST**

## The Reasons I Wear The Same Thing Every Day

The benefits of wearing the same thing every day include saving time and money

Wearing the same

thing every day is

the quickest way to

become famous.

#### **JOSHUA BECKER**

hen I first decided to become

I cut my wardrobe in half to 60 items. But then I discovered Project 333 started by Courtney Carver. After trying it, I cut my closet in half again.

Nowadays, I own about 33–35 articles of clothing. Somewhere during that process, I started wearing basically the same thing every day: a V-neck T-shirt, pants, and black shoes.

I have come to love wearing the same thing each day. And I'm not alone. A lot of people are doing the same thing.

#### Here are some of the reasons why I wear the same thing every day:

**Fewer decisions.** This is by far the **■** most popular reason why people decide to adopt a streamlined capsule

Decision fatigue refers to the deteriorating quality of decisions made by an individual after a long session of decision making. Wearing the same outfit each day removes picking out clothes as a decision to be

The truth of the matter is, you have more important decisions to make than what you're going to wear each morning.

• Less time and energy wasted. **∠.** When you wear the same thing every day, you save time deciding what you're going to wear each morning. And you save significant energy over the course of the week.

Just think about how much time goes into maintaining, and organizing, and taking care of your clothes. Laundry, for example. When you decide to wear the same thing every day, all of that becomes easier. You save time in the morning and energy over the course

**Less stress.** As a result of fewer de-•• cisions and more time, wearing the same thing means you have less stress

#### in the morning.

It also means you experience less stress over the course of the day. I don't minimalist, I can remember ever have to think about, "Oh man, am ▼ looking in my closet and see- I wearing the right thing today? I wish same thing, and it works perfect for almost every occasion. I love it. You

> **Save money.** The average American family spends \$2000 a year on clothing—despite already having closets full

> For some reason, we just keep buying more and more and more. A lot of this expense is wasted on clothes that are never worn—trial and error fashion that ends up wasting time, energy, and

> **Feeling put together.** Every moment **3.** of every day my clothes fit, match, and just so happen to be my favorites. All-day long, I feel like I'm wearing something I enjoy and look good

> > **Less waste.** The aver-**O.** age American throws away 70 pounds of clothing every year. Deciding to wear the same thing is good for the planet, it's good for you, and it's good for everyone else as well.

An iconic look. Wearing • the same thing every day is the quickest way to become famous. You become known for your particular style, you look put together, you look classy, you look comfortable, and you look confident. Because you're not constantly chasing the newest fashions, you'll communicate confidence in who you are and how you look.

I love wearing the same thing every day. You will too.

If you're looking for help to get started on this in your own life, let me suggest: The Minimalist Wardrobe: A Practical Guide to Owning Fewer Clothes.

Joshua Becker is an author, public speaker and the founder and editor of Becoming Minimalist where he inspires others to live more by owning less. Visit BecomingMinimalist.com



#### How to win the battle with your stuff

#### Continued from Page 9

We're constantly prompted to buy, but given little commercial-free space to consider what the items truly mean to us. Bowman says that clutter often takes over when people are too busy and overwhelmed to confront it. "We're accumulating things so fast that we're not being conscious about what we really value and what we really want."

The root of the problem, according to Don Aslett, author of "Clutter's Last Stand: It's all been associated with hoarding. Time to De-Junk Your Life," is that we often confuse ownership with companionship. We're so focused on the memories of how mechanism—creating a cowe acquired an item or gripped by its potential ("it might be useful one day") that we fail to see that it's just taking up space. As more junk accumulates in our space, we become victims of "junkicide."

"Junkicide is a slow, painful strangulation and dying of the senses," Aslett writes. "Although our brains are still intact, we've simply replaced thinking with things. Our accumulations have crowded out creativity and frozen flexibility. We've snapped up so much free stuff and bought so many things to keep, store, clean, polish, and protect that we don't have any freedom."

#### Fight Back: Get a System

There are two basic rules to an organized, clutter-free life: get rid of the objects you don't need, and ensure that the things you want to keep are easy to find. The concept may sound simple, but Bowman says there are several ways people can derail the process.

One is not starting out with a good system for sorting. Bowman's first step in helping a client tackle clutter is to set up boxes or bags labeled with simple categories: recycle, donate, throw away, or repair.

we use to talk ourselves into keeping use- Tidying Up." less clutter.

to it after it left her house. What if her recyclables got tossed into a landfill? What if her clothing donations got thrown away? In her mind, getting rid of anything was too risky, so she couldn't move forward.

Teaming up with a friend, family member, or professional home organizer can help you stay on track when you're deciding what to throw away, what to keep, and where to put it. A declutter buddy can also act as a sounding board for your excuses and help you retain perspective. It's harder to justify keeping your junk when you have to convince someone else of its worth.

More extreme cases of possession attachment may require deeper reflection. According to Janet Luhrs, author of "The Simple Living Guide: A Sourcebook for Less Stressful, More Joyful Living," hoarding is not about the clutter. It's about the hoarder's emotional state.

"Until the hoarder is able to take a look read, the hat you will never inside him or herself to see what's causing wear, or the immersion blender

the hoarding, nothing will change," Luhrs said in an email.

Trauma is the common theme Bowman recognizes in all the hoarders she has known. For her grandmother, it was living through the Great Depression—a time when people saved everything they had because they didn't know if they would ever get anything else.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, addiction, and unresolved grief have Whatever the backstory, hoarding often serves as a coping coon of objects to soothe an injured soul.

This is why Bowman believes that people with chronic hoarding issues often need help to address their underlying trauma first, before tackling their stuff. Otherwise, the mess is bound to return.

"These objects represent security," Bowman said. "If you clear a space, they will fill it in quite quickly."

#### **Mindful Purging**

Try as we might, we can't buy a sense of abundance. But we can cultivate genuine abundance by learning to appreciate the things we already own, while ditching the stuff that no longer serves us.

Imagine how your life would change if your possessions were reduced to the essentials—only the things you truly wanted and needed. Japanese organizational consultant Marie Kondo has written an internationally bestselling book devoted Another roadblock is the flimsy excuses to this idea, "The Life Changing Magic of

Kondo, whose reach has grown thanks to One of the hoarders Bowman worked a Netflix series in which she helps peop with couldn't let go of anything because resolve their clutter conundrums, has a she couldn't control what would happen view of possessions that may seem strange to the Western mind at first. She asks people to regard their things not as mere objects, but as living beings that deserve respect and purpose. Objects want to be used. Clothes want to be worn. It's what they were created to do. If you can't give them a job, it's

best to set them free. Instead of addressing your clutsuggests to go by category (clothing, toys, books) and consider whether each item in that category brings you joy. If not, let it go. Tune in to how you really feel about each of your possessions, and you will suddenly notice the book you will never you never should've purchased.

Done thoughtfully, this project may take a while to complete, but it saves a lot of hassle in the long run. Once you've pared down to the essentials, you won't waste as much time and energy rummaging through things that no longer serve you, and it's easier to find the stuff you actually want. You'll also give your unwanted objects a chance to have a more purposeful exis-

tence elsewhere. Once you have a better feeling for what you truly value, it becomes easier to spot the items

> you don't want. Having a place to put the rejects ensures they make it out of the house in a timely fashion. Bowman recommends keeping a permanent donation box to hold your unwanted objects until you have time to take them to their next home.

"There's a place always ready, so that when I see an object, boom, it goes right in there. Once a month, I take all the donations to wherever they need to go," she said.

#### Finding Balance

In response to the material excess of our consumerist culture, more people are turning toward a minimalist lifestyle: smaller homes, fewer possessions, and more freedom. The 2016 documentary "Minimalism" highlighted this phenomenon, featuring one man who managed to whittle down his worldly possessions to a mere 51 objects.



Imagine how your life

would change if your

possessions were

reduced to the essen-

tials—only the things

you truly wanted and

needed.

We're accumulating things so fast that we're not being conscious about what we really value and what we really want.

Christine Bowman, Chicago based home organizer

Bowman is a big proponent of adopting a more minimalist lifestyle, but she knows from personal experience that it can also go too far. In reaction to her grandmother and father (who carried on the family's hoarding tradition), Bowman went the other way. For a time, she tried to live with as little as she could. She cautions that this can also become unhealthy—a coping mechanism at the opposite end of the spectrum.

"We don't want to be in excess, but we don't want to be in a deprivation state. There's this middle way. It's about having the things you need to have the life that you need," she said.



Our worn-out resolutions tradition is in desperate need of an attainable, skills-based update

#### **CHLOE ANAGNOS**

ew Year's resolutions don't work. At least not the way many people make them. According to US News, 80 percent of New Year's resolutions don't live to see the light of day by the second week of February. With just 8 percent of resolution-makers actually following through, it's clear that the odds are not in your favor if you choose to join the fad—unless you do it the right way.

Companies in the fitness and diet industries offer special packages to those determined to lose weight, while regulators urge cigarette smokers to turn their back to nicotine as the new year rolls in. Despite their efforts, the results mostly fail to meet expectations, and resolution-makers who fail feel demoralized

"Is there anyone who actually lives up to their own New Year's resolution expectations?" the discouraged resolution-maker may ask himself, only to realize that whatever the answer is, it doesn't matter.

If you really want to make a change, setting monthly goals makes more sense, not just because short-term goals are more easily attainable, but also because as you set yourself to accomplish smaller tasks, you also build up your self-esteem, raising the bar as you move forward.

If you're still not convinced, here's the definitive list of reasons why you should ditch the typical vague New Year's resolution for

#### **Many Resolutions Are Unattainable**

According to an Inc. report, 71 percent of Americans resolved to eat healthier in 2019. Following closely behind were exercising more, losing weight, saving money, learning a new skill, quitting smoking, and reading

While some of these goals are attainable in theory, the fact that we set a goal for an entire year without checking our progress regularly makes a mockery of our hopes.

By definition, a goal entails work, but when you set a goal that must be met sometime next year, you're setting yourself up for failure. When you focus on the goal monthly, you are setting your focus on the next step. tainable, but specific goals aren't.

#### **Resolutions Don't Prompt Us to Attain**

Many of us are guilty of resolving to "save more money." Regardless of where we are professionally, "saving more" means little when we tell ourselves that "next year, I'll save more," all the while paying bills and



Go to a nutritionist and discuss your habits. Find out what kind of diet would work better with your lifestyle and start off by setting a modest weight loss goal.

The fact that we set a goal for an entire year without checking our progress regularly makes a mockery of our hopes.

failing to pay attention to our finances.

That's why it's so important to think of money pragmatically. Rather than set a goal to save more money, why not set a goal that is more skills focused, like learning how to monitor your spending effectively.

Then you can set a follow up goal to set up

Aside from important bills like a mortgage, student loans, water, electricity, gas, internet, etc., check whether you can cut wasted monthly expenditures, like an Amazon Prime membership you never use, or that Netflix subscription that you just use to scroll through a disappointing list of shows, never finding anything truly worth your time.

Do the same with things like gym member-changes take shape right before your eyes. service for your one-bedroom apartment. Is it realistic to slash some of those expenses or are you going to live miserably if you do so? Once you have the skill to monitor your spending and make good decisions about

what to spend your money on, you can keep your expenses contained and you will never have to make a money-related New Year's resolution again.

#### **Resolutions Don't Improve Accountability**

When switching from a New Year's resolution to a month-to-month goal schedule, the key to being successful is accountability.

Before going on some crazy diet because you read about it online, go to a nutritionist and discuss your habits. Find out what kind of diet would work better with your lifestyle and start off by setting a modest weight loss goal.

Become more involved with the food you eat by cooking at home more often, and keep the bar somewhat low in the first couple of months. Once you've gotten better at keeping up with your new habits, set a higher standard for the following months, and watch as

Whatever you do, don't embrace the elusive New Year's resolution just because that's what everyone does. Be realistic, and give yourself time and room for improvement without losing track of your schedule.

Chloe Anagnos is a professional writer, digital strategist, and marketer. Although a millennial, she's never accepted a participa-

> Patrick and Madelyn Gahan with their daugh-

ters Mya (L) and Anya.

## 2 Parents' Mission to Improve the Pediatric Heart Transplant

Their mission began when they learned their daughter would need another heart transplant in 12 years

#### **ANDREW THOMAS**

An ill child is a tremendous ordeal for any parent. If that child is sick enough to need an organ transplant, that ordeal can become a parent's worst nightmare. Patrick and Madelyn Gahan have two daughters Anya and Mya, and live in Marietta, Georgia. At only 15 months old, Mya was diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy, which meant her heart wasn't able to pump as effectively as it should. After a year and a half on medication, Mya would require a heart

On the eve of Mya's third birthday, she began to suffer severe heart arrhythmia. Her parents could see her heart beating through her shirt. Patrick and Madelyn rushed Mya to the emergency room, and doctors determined a transplant would be required quickly before

her lungs became any weaker. "The hardest part I think when we first learned about it was

long wait, and we wouldn't have any idea when she would actually get the transplant," Madelyn

The doctors initially told the Gahans that it would take four to six weeks before a heart would become available for Mya. Little did they know it would ultimately take six months. It was also emotionally difficult knowing someone else's child would have to pass away in order for Mya to receive a heart transplant. Fortunately, Mya remained happy and active during her stay, and would ride her tricycle around the hospital. After six months, the call finally came that a heart was available.

During the early morning hours of Sept. 3, 2012, Mya underwent a

just knowing it would be a long

could expect the new heart to last

"It was surreal. It was like shock [and] you don't really believe it's happening. It takes a really long time to kick in," Madelyn recalled.



successful heart transplant. Five days later, Mya was able to go home with a new heart. However, doctors informed the Gahans that they

"It's a temporary solution and that's a little hard to take when you first hear. You get the good news that the transplant went well, and then you get the bad news that it's not a permanent solution," Patrick

#### **Enduring Hearts**

As a result, the Gahans started an organization called Enduring Hearts in 2014 in an effort to improve the pediatric heart transplant system so children's new hearts can last longer. The organifor pediatric heart transplants.

COURTESY OF PATRICK AND MADELYN GAH.

Before Enduring Hearts, there was less research for pediatric heart transplants. It's the only nonprofit focused on research to help children who are heart transplant recipients. The group has raised more than \$3.2 million since

The organization is also developing four less-invasive testing techniques to determine heart rejection, among other initiatives. The ultimate goal is to have the new heart last a lifetime.

Mya is now 10 years old and recently experienced the seventh anniversary of her heart transplant. After her annual checkup, all is

It's a temporary solution and that's a little hard to take when you first hear.

Patrick Gahan, founder of Enduring Exercise is likely the closest thing to a fountain of youth or a magic pill that you will have in your lifetime.

**MADE TO MOVE** 

## Hate Exercise? Take It One Step at a Time

Small increases in physical activity can make a big difference in our well being

#### LIBBY RICHARDS

A new year typically brings new resolutions. While making resolutions is easy, sticking with them isn't. Exercise-related resolutions consistently make the top 10 list, but up to 80 percent of resolutions are tossed aside by February.

You know physical activity is good for you. But, that isn't always enough to get or keep you moving. You're not alone. Fewer than half of American adults are as active as they should be.

How active should you be? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity every week.

So, let's think about physical activity in a different way. As a nurse who researches exercise, I can tell you that it is likely the closest thing to a fountain of youth or a magic pill that you will have in your

#### **Benefits to All Parts of Your body**

Research shows that every single system in the body benefits when you are more active. You sleep better. You have more energy. You find yourself in a better mood. You think more clearly and remember better. Your bones become stronger. Your body also responds better to insufor many cancers. All of that is in additions you will take to meet your goal. For tion to the better-known weight and heart benefits of physical activity.

Bottom line: If you want to live a long and healthy life, you need to be active. But "that's easier said than done," you might be saying to yourself. In fact, increasing your physical activity is probably easier than you think. You don't need to buy expensive equipment or join a gym. And you will begin to reap the rewards of physical activity almost as soon as you start. Adding small amounts of movement to your daily routine goes a long way.

Brisk walking, at a pace of at least a 20-minute mile, provides health benefits

similar to running, and probably more social benefits. Plus, your risk of injury is much lower. And you can walk—for free with nothing more than comfortable shoes—from almost anywhere: your neighborhood, your office, or in lieu of waiting behind the wheel of your car in the pickup line at your kid's school. A 22-minute walk every day, or two 11-minute walks, would put you just over 150 minutes every week.

It isn't cheating to break your 150 min-

Many experts who work with clients or patients to set goals use the acronym SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-based) to guide goalsetting. This simple method could help you achieve a goal to sit less and move more in the new year:

Make it measurable. Again, "less" and "more" are hard to measure. Instead, try "Walk for 5 minutes after every hour of sitting." Without a way to measure your goal, it becomes hard to know when you have achieved it.

utes a week into small increments. In fact, even for people who are physically fit and exercise every day, breaking up periods of sitting is critically important. Even if you are getting enough exercise, sitting for the rest of the day can undo the health benefits of your workout. If you aren't yet ready to aim for 2.5 hours of brisk walking each week, reducing the time you spend sitting would be a great starting goal.

#### **Setting Other Goals**

Be specific. Rather than just "sit less, lin, which lowers your risk of diabetes. move more," include when you will start **Set a time by which you will meet your** • If you are at your kid's or grandkid's And you significantly reduce your risk and how will you do it. Specify what ac- **goal.** For example, will you take a cerexample, make a list of how you can get Or, will you build up to 150 minutes a more steps in each day by doing specific things, like taking the stairs instead of

> **Make it attainable.** If you currently don't exercise at all, 150 minutes a week may not be realistic. How about three 20-min

ute walks per week? You can slowly inyour lifestyle, without too much inconcrease after you achieve that first goal. And choose an activity you might enjoy.

If you already know you hate running,

**Set realistic goals.** Your new activity

goal should work for you and fit within

your lifestyle. It's great to challenge your-

self, but break up challenging goals into

smaller, more realistic goals to help keep

tain number of steps by noon each day?

week by mid-April? You're more likely

to achieve short-term goals that lead to

One of the best ways to keep up with

your efforts is to track your progress. You

can do it with pen and paper, in a journal,

or in one of many smartphone apps. As

you see yourself making progress, it can

Another thing to keep in mind is that

you don't have to go a gym to get moving.

There are ways to make exercise part of

be easier to keep up the routine.

**Expand Your View of Exercise** 

a long-term one.

Brisk walking provides health benefits similar to running, and probably more social benefits

a goal to do it every day would be less a scavenger hunt at a local park, or walk to your favorite hangout. • Park farther away from your workplace,

> the store, the library, etc. • Walk during your breaks at work and

• Get the family involved. Play tag, go on

over your lunch period. • Instead of sitting and having coffee with

friends, take your javas for a walk. • Whenever you are on the phone, stand

up and walk around. sporting event, walk the sidelines.

• Try to find ways to make walking mo meaningful, like walking a shelter dog.

As you undertake the big change from being inactive to being active, understand that setbacks happen. Don't let one slipup derail your whole goal. When possible, have a backup plan to deal with barriers like weather or time constraints. And celebrate the small victories you make

Libby Richards is an associate professor of nursing at Purdue University. This article was first published by The Conversation.

toward reaching longer-term goals.



## Wait, Was That a Heart Attack?

Knowing the signs of a heart attack will improve your chances of getting help-and living

#### **DEVON ANDRE**

Heart attack risk goes up in the winter. Ten percent more people die from a heart attack or stroke in the winter than summer, partly because the demands of the holidays make this a high-risk time of year.

The bad news doesn't stop there. A new study suggests that 1 in 5 Americans can't name the symptoms of a heart attack, making it highly unlikely they will respond in time, or at all, if one does occur.

Heart attacks don't necessar-Let's look at the five major ily look like they do on televisymptoms of a heart attack:

sion. Sometimes you can have a

You might sit down for a second

small one and not even notice.

before going back about your

or months later—boom—the

business. But then a few weeks

jammed in your chest). Shortness of breath (real difficulty breathing, like you've run a marathon without getting

• Chest pain or discomfort (a very pressurized, constrictive

feeling; like there is an elephant

out of your chair. You might not even be able to talk.) Pain or discomfort in the arms

or shoulders.

 Feeling weak, lightheaded, faint, or experiencing a cold sweat (standing up or moving is a challenge, like a gust of wind

could knock you over.) Pain in the jaw, neck, or back (like when you have the flu.)

If you've felt any of these symptoms in the past few months, seeing the doctor is recommended. Further, if you have risk factors like high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or are overweight, awareness is essential. Knowing the signs can improve reaction time and that has the potential to save your life.

So, this season when you step out to shovel the driveway or get some quiet time away from the family, be aware of the heart attack risk and the signs.

more people die from a heart attack or stroke in the winter than summer, partly because the demands of the holidays make this a high-risk time of year.

Ten percent

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

## Knee Injuries in Early Adulthood Is Linked With Osteoarthritis

#### MAT LECOMPTE

A knee injury in young adults could put them more at risk for developing arthritis in middle age, according to a recent study. For those who have had broken bones or torn connective tissue, this risk increases.

For two decades, researchers followed almost 150,000 adults aged 25-34, including about 5,200 who had a history of knee injuries. It was found that compared to people who never had knee injuries, those who did had nearly six times the number of incidences of osteoarthritis during the first 11 years of follow-up. The risk then tripled over the next eight years.

"Injuries that occur inside the knee joint, for example, in the meniscus or cruciate ligament, may alter the biomechanical loading patterns in the knee," said study leader Barbara Snoeker, of Lund University in Sweden.

"Such injuries may lead to an 'imbalance' in force transmissions inside the knee joint, consequently overloading the joint cartilage and leading to increased risk of developing osteoarthritis, compared to injuries that mainly affect the outside of the knee joint, such as contusions."

The study noted that two-thirds of the people in the study with knee injuries were male. After 19 years of follow-up, 422 people with knee injuries, or 11.3 percent, developed knee osteoarthritis. So did 2,854, or 4 percent, of people without knee injuries. This shows a clear connection between an injury in early age, and osteoarthritis as those participants aged.

Knee injuries most often involved multiple structures of the knee, which accounted for 21 percent of participant injuries. The second most common type of injury were cuts and contusions, at 18 percent, followed by cartilage or other tissue tears at 17 percent.

The study did find that cruciate ligament injury, or damage to the tissue connecting the thighbone to the shinbone, was associated with a 19.6 percent greater risk of knee osteoarthritis. Meniscal tears, or damage to cartilage connecting the same two bones, were associated with a 10.5 percent greater risk of osteoarthritis, and fractures of the shinbone where it meets the knee, or of the kneecap, were associated with a 6.6 percent greater risk.

#### **Total Joint Replacement** Osteoarthritis commonly af-

fects the large weight-bearing joints and can eventually lead to the need for total joint replacement. Some risk factors can include a history of knee injuries, being overweight, older, female, or having a job that puts stress on the joints.

What happens after a knee injury can greatly influence the risk of arthritis later in life. Rehab matters, regardless of what other treatments patients receive, said Adam Culvenor, a sports and exercise medicine researcher at La Trobe University in Bundoora, Australia, who wasn't involved in the study.

"Once these injuries occur, optimally managing them with an intense and progressive period of rehabilitation under the guidance of a physical therapist (irrespective of the decision to have surgery or not) to strengthen the muscles around the knee to facilitate a return to function and physical activity is likely to reduce the risk of osteoarthritis and persistent symptoms longer-term."

Mat Lecompte is a health and wellness journalist. This article was first published on Bel Marra Health.



Ginger demonstrated noteworthy healing properties in a study looking at its impact on rheumatoid arthritis.

**FOOD AS MEDICINE** 

# Ginger Soothes Suffering of Rheumatoid Arthritis

Small randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial finds ginger is an effective treatment

#### **GREENMEDINFO**

re aching, swollen joints stifling your activity levels and making life a real pain? Ginger, an inexpensive, herbal wonder, can reduce pain and inflammation and allow you to do more of the activities you enjoy.

One common cause of swollen joints is rheumatoid arthritis (RA), an autoimmune disease affecting approximately 1.5 million people in the United States. RA disproportionately affects women, with nearly three times as many women afflicted as men and onset typically occurring between 30 and 60 years of age.

Autoimmune diseases occur when the body's immune response is overactive and assaults healthy cells and tissues. In the case of RA, the immune system errone-

The tissue that lines the inside of joints called the synovium, thickens, and synovial fluid, which lubricates and reduces friction between bones and cartilage, is impaired, resulting in inflammation and swelling o affected joints and surrounding tissues.

RA can affect specific joints, such as those of the hands and feet, and can also be systemic, affecting entire body systems, such as the cardiovascular or respiratory systems. Left untreated, RA can permanently damage cartilage, which normally protects bones, eventually causing damage to the bones themselves. This can result in severe pain, loss of mobility, and even permanent joint deformity.

Due to the severity of potential outcomes, most doctors recommend early and aggressive treatment to control RA. Fortunately, natural treatments, including ginger,

#### **Drug Treatment Poses Risks**

Due to the painful symptoms and severe risks presented by RA, most individuals who receive this diagnosis will opt for med-

> corticosteroids, modifying

ment. Physicians typically prescribe one or a combination of three types of drugs: nonsteroidal antidrugs (NSAIDs), and disease-

ication-based treat-

arthritis ffects nearly nree times as nany women as men.

anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDS).

23w Meta-analyses of data collected through studies of these drugs show that the elderly are particularly vulnerable to such adverse effects. Increased risks of cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal problems, and liver problems are among the potentially devastating consequences of NSAID treatment.

Steroids, another common prescription for RA sufferers, provide targeted treatment since they can be shot directly into joints. However, their effectiveness diminishes over time and using steroids is not without risks. Side effects can include weight gain and puffiness, increased blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease.

#### The group receiving ginger supplementation had significant decreases in their disease activity score and inflammatory markers.

Another common treatment, DMARDS, work by suppressing the body's immune system response. DMARDS are taken for long periods, potentially for the duration of the disease-state, or the rest of the patient's life. Relief does not come immediately, so these drugs are often prescribed in conjunction with an NSAID for pain relief.

DMARDS are risky drugs since the suppression of the immune system increases susceptibility to opportunistic infections. They can also harm a developing fetus, so any patient who is or wishes to become pregnant should exercise extreme caution when taking DMARDS.

Other potential side effects include, but are not limited to, gastrointestinal distress, liver damage, pancreas damage, high blood pressure, fertility problems, and increased cancer risk.

#### **Ginger: A Natural Antidote** to Inflammation

A focus of our research at GreenMedInfo. com is the healing effects of plant-based medicine. Ginger (Zingiber officinale Roscoe) is a medicinal plant from the Zingiberaceae family. To date, more than 40 antioxidants have been isolated from ginger rhizome. Ginger is GRAS—generally recognized as safe—and is known as a traditional treatment for relieving stiffness and pain in patients with osteoarthritis.

> While the healing effects of ginger may be well known, there is little

clinical evidence supporting its use as a pharmaceutical drug alternative or adjunct in the treatment of RA. A multidisciplinary team of researchers based in Tehran, Iran, aimed to add to this dearth of clinical evidence by studying the effects of ginger root on immunity and inflammatory markers in patients with active cases of RA.

In this randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial,[xv] 70 active RA patients between 19 and 69 years of age were selected. Inclusion criteria were at least two years of disease duration, being under treatment with DMARDs (methotrexate, hydroxychloroquine and prednisolone <10 milligrams (mg) a day) and not receiving anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

Participants were randomly allocated into two groups, ginger or control (placebo). The ginger group received two capsules daily, each containing 750 mg of powdered ginger, while the placebo group received similar, inert pills containing wheat powder that was stored in a ginger box to impart the distinctive ginger smell. The intervention was conducted for 12 weeks, with the ginger group receiving a total of 1500 mg of ginger each day.

The severity of illness and pain from RA are closely associated with inflammation and oxidative stress markers, factors that can be measured via a "disease activity score" and expression of certain genes (NF-κB, PPAR-γ, FoxP3, T-bet, GATA-3, and RORyt). The disease activity score (DAS28-ESR) was measured by a rheumatologist, with information related to swollen joints, tender joints, acute phase response, and the patient's self-report of the general health of 28 joints.

These markers and scores were measured using quantitative, real-time PCR (polymerase chain reaction) blood analysis,

before and after this clinical intervention. After the 12-week intervention, the group receiving ginger supplementation had significant decreases in their disease activity score and inflammatory markers (RORyt and T-bet genes expression). In addition, the ginger group saw significant increases in healthy immunity markers (FoxP3) as compared to placebo.

Also, the expression of PPAR-γ gene within the ginger group increased significantly, showing increased anti-inflammatory activity. Researchers concluded that ginger can improve quality of life and decrease symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis by increasing FoxP3 gene expression and decreasing RORyt and T-bet gene expression.

You can find more than 100 free and informative articles on the healing properties of ginger on GreenMedInfo.com. To read more scientific studies on ginger, consult GreenMedInfo.health's Research Database by becoming a member.

The GMI Research Group is dedicated to investigating the most important health and environmental issues of the day. Special emphasis will be placed on environmental health. Our focused and deep research will explore the many ways in which the present condition of the human body directly reflects the true state of the ambient environment. This work is reproduced and distributed with the permission of GreenMedInfo LLC. Sign up for the newsletter.

## N-A-C: Could this Amino Acid Change Your Life?

This well-studied nutrient helps the body make one of its most important antioxidants

#### **ZOLTAN RONA**

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 3 2020

One of the most underestimated and under-utilized natural food supplements I have recommended to my patients over the past 35 years is an amino acid derivative known as N-A-C (N-Acetyl-Cysteine).

Why underestimated? Well, even naturopaths seldom recommend it and most people who take natural food supplements have never even heard of it. Yet, this supplement could be the difference between life and death.

#### What is N-A-C?

N-A-C is a form of the essential amino acid cysteine, something used by the body to make glutathione (GSH), one of the body's most important antioxidants. In fact, all the benefits of N-A-C are due to the fact that it boosts the blood levels of GSH. The major impact of N-A-C is on the immune system, liver protection, detoxification, and cardiovascular health. We all badly need its anti-inflammatory protection.

#### **How It Works**

N-A-C modulates the expression of genes that affect the inflammatory process. It inhibits the expression of pro-inflammatory cytokines, suppresses NF-kappa B and regulates the gene for COX-2 thereby preventing inflammation and pain. These chemicals are involved in hundreds of inflammatory conditions and diseases. In other words, N-A-C is anti-inflammatory and can either blunt or reverse chronic inflammatory conditions.

#### **Cardiovascular System Benefits**

N-A-C prevents LDL-cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol) from being oxidized and causing inflammatory damage to the blood vessels. N-A-C lowers the levels of homocysteine, which prevents the buildup of plaque in the arteries. The lower the homocysteine, the less likelihood of arterial blockage.

N-A-C is also the most effective natural remedy that lowers the blood levels of lipoprotein a (Lp(a)), thought by many scientists to be a more accurate predictor of cardiovascular disease than blood levels of cholesterol. Diet changes and drugs do not lower Lp(a) anywhere as well as N-A-C.

N-A-C also improves insulin resistance and will improve metabolic syndrome, diabetes, and hypoglycemia.

#### **Neurological Benefits**

numerous neurological conditions such as Parkinson's Disease, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's, hearing damage, ataxia and ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease), it stands to reason that N-A-C would be helpful because supplementation of it raises the blood levels of GSH.

#### **Immune System Benefits**

Because N-A-C boosts the body's levels of GSH, it helps fight most viruses, including the influenza virus and HIV, the AIDS



virus. GSH is vital for optimal T and Blymphocyte function. N-A-C can block the production of the AIDS virus so is a valuable natural defense against at least this virus if not millions of others.

One would think it might be a good idea to supplement the body with GSH, but the major problem here is that GSH is not absorbed intact from the gastrointestinal tract. Oral GSH supplementation is destroyed and inactivated by stomach acid. N-A-C is not.

Supplementation of N-A-C is, therefore, more desirable because the body will make much more GSH than if supplementing GSH orally in any form.

Aside from viruses, N-A-C protects the body from numerous pollutants, drugs, microbes and toxic heavy metals like mercury. N-A-C is mucolytic, which means that it breaks up heavy and sticky mucus that can build up in conditions such as sinusitis, asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, and cystic fibrosis. N-A-C is therefore indispensable in any condition that involves excessive mucous.

Evidence exists that N-A-C blocks the progression of most cancers and could be taken with chemotherapy to improve treatment outcomes.

#### **Detoxification Benefits**

N-A-C protects the body from many different toxins because of its content of sulfhydryl groups that can bind and inactivate herbicides, mercury, cadmium. lead, other toxic heavy metals, drugs like acetaminophen, environmental pollutants, microbes like E. Coli, carbon tetrachloride and aflatoxin. Although not a drug, N-A-C has government approval as a drug to prevent liver damage from acetaminophen (Tylenol) poisoning.

A very common condition that plagues more than 50 million people in North America is known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). In this condition, the liver stores excessive amounts of fat mostly due to insulin resistance, metabolic syndrome, or diabetes. Liver function tests usually indicate damage to liver cells and the liver appears grossly fatty on an ultrasound. This condition is benefitted by a strict restriction of simple carbohydrates as well as a vigorous exercise program. Studies also show a significant improvement in liver function tests in those suffering from NAFLD with supplementation of N-A-C. Not only does it protect liver cells but it also helps heal a damaged liver.

#### **Respiratory Tract Benefits**

Because N-A-C is mucolytic, just about any lung or bronchial problem can benefit from high N-A-C supplementation. Whether you have chronic bronchitis, cystic fibrosis, asthma, sinusitis or pneumonia, N-A-C helps reduce the viscosity of mucus so that the body can more easily cough it up. A number of studies also conclude that N-A-C prevents influenza, possible through this mucolytic mechanism.

N-A-C reduces both the frequency and duration of COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) attacks and may blunt the ravaging clinical course of pulmonary fibrosis, a usually lethal lung

In my practice, I have had a great deal of success using an N-A-C nasal spray to treat chronic sinus pain and congestion. Combining the spray with high dose oral N-A-C and vitamin C is often more effective than prescription antibiotics for chronic or recurrent sinusitis.

#### **Stomach and Other Gut Benefits** The bacteria known as H.Pylori has been

acknowledged to be the cause of ulcers, gastritis, reflux disorder discomforts, and even different types of gastrointestinal cancer. In fact, it's the second leading known cause of all cancers. N-A-C supplementation is capable of inactivating H. Pylori and is something worth adding to any

resistant to antibiotics H. Pylori infections.

#### **Kidney Disease Benefits**

Kidney disease is greatly helped by N-A-C supplementation. Even dialysis patients can be helped by as little as 600 mg N-A-C daily to reduce inflammation occurring in chronic kidney disease.

#### Compulsive Hair Pulling/Psychiatric Illness Improvement

Trichotillomania is a bizarre obsessivecompulsive disorder in which victims pull out their hair for inexplicable reasons causing noticeable hair loss. The usual treatment is anti-depressant drugs or major tranquilizers. Studies indicate that N-A-C significantly reduces the compulsive hair pulling.

Schizophrenia, autism, bipolar illness, and other obsessive-compulsive disorders are also improved with  $\bar{ ext{N}}$ -A-C.

#### **Athletic Benefits**

Due to its antioxidant effects and benefits to the respiratory system, N-A-C improves athletic performance. Specifically, N-A-C reduces muscle fatigue and, as proven in double-blind studies, enhances athletic endurance.

#### **Anti-Aging Benefits**

If you can effectively scavenge harmful free radicals it stands to reason that you can prevent premature aging. This phenomenon has indeed been proven in numerous scientific studies.

#### **Drug Addiction Benefits**

Studies also indicate that N-A-C also diminishes the craving for highly addictive drugs including cocaine and nicotine. As such it may be a useful adjunct in any drug detoxification program.

#### **Ideal Dosages**

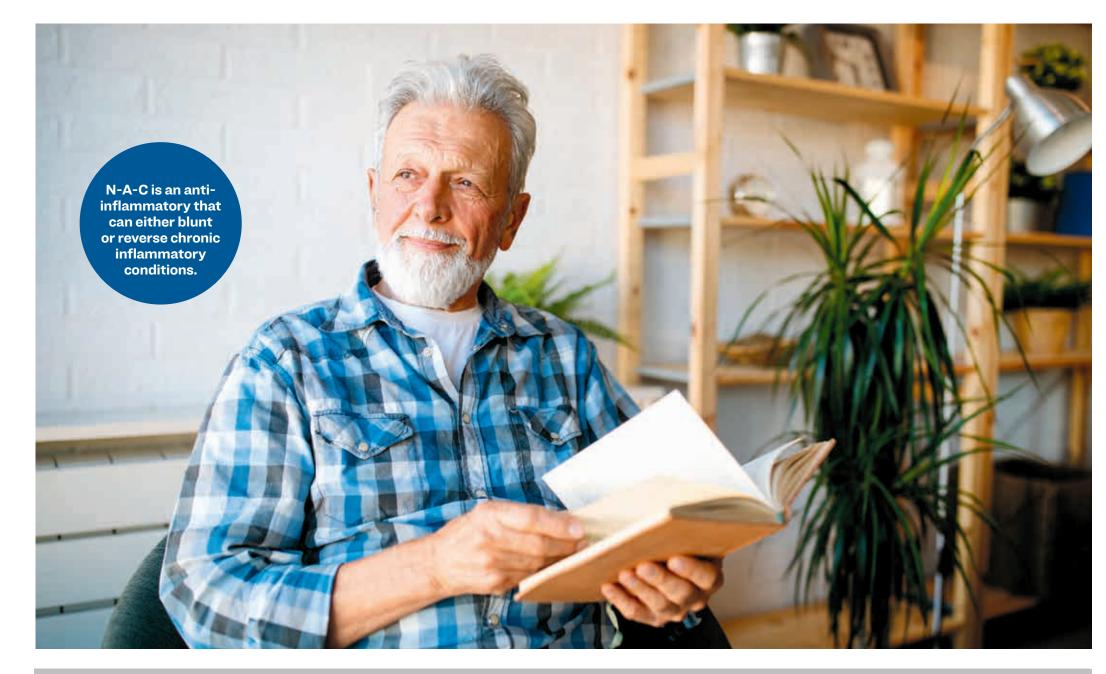
There are no accepted ideal dosages for N-A-C. My advice is to start at 600 mg daily and gradually build up to a maximum of 3000 mg daily. Ideally, take with an equivalent amount of vitamin C for maximum free radical scavenging effects.

#### **Side Effects**

Despite more than 40 years of clinical use by naturopaths, holistic medical doctors, and nutritionists of virtually every stripe, N-A-C has a well-established safety record even at very high dosages over long periods of time (you can take it virtually without worry for months and probably years).

Some people experience nausea when taking N-A-C on an empty stomach but the majority do not experience any side effects if they take it with food.

Zoltan Rona, M.D., M.Sc., practices complementary and integrative medicine and is an expert in nutritional biochemistry and clinical nutrition. He is the author of 11 books on natural medicine. This article was originally published on NaturallySavvy.com



MIND & BODY Week 3, 2020 THE EPOCH TIMES

## Prediabetes Rampant Among US Teens

Nutrition research too often influenced by companies behind unhealthy foods

#### **KRISTINA MARTIN**

The health, food, and education systems in the United States are failing young people. According to a new study from JAMA Pediatrics, an estimated 18 percent of adolescents aged 12-18 are prediabetic, while 24 percent of young adults aged 19-34 were estimated to be prediabetic. Young people with obesity were more likely to be prediabetic. That's not great news for Americans, as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development predicts that 47 percent of the United States population will be obese by 2030.

#### A Big Bundle

Diabetes is a serious yet manageable health condition that costs the United States health care system an estimated 327 billion dollars in 2017. According to Dr. Linda J. Andes, a mathematical statistician with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and one of the lead authors of the study:

"The average medical expenditures for people with diagnosed diabetes were about \$16,752 per year. After adjusting for age group and sex, average medical expenditures among people with diagnosed diabetes were about 2.3 times higher than expenditures for people without diabetes ..."

This study should be greeted with a call for greater education and awareness. Andes contin-

"We hope that this research expands the pool of available research on prediabetes in adolescents and young adults.

Monitoring the number of young adults and adolescents with prediabetes and varying levels of glucose tolerance can help determine the future risk of type 2 diabetes in youth. We also hope that this news sounds an alarm for young people, parents and clinicians - and that those who may be at risk or living with prediabetes are encouraged to take the necessary steps needed to prevent or delay progression to type 2 diabetes."

#### **Pushing Backward**

Instead, this news will likely be greeted with a chorus of "get your butt off the couch and eat better." Unfortunately, outdated and patronizing advice ignores the difficulties faced by young people today. Most food is sprayed with large amounts of agricultural chemicals, or chosen for its shelf life rather than taste, and then much of it is processed in a way that kills the little nutrition not bred out of it. Healthy, tasty, organic fruits and vegetables are costly. If you want good quality, tasty food, you're going to have to pay for it—and cook it.

There's also the issue of nutrition education. As nutrition science evolves, we are better able to measure more variables in food and how these interact with our body. But that doesn't mean consumers are getting that info.

Coca-Cola finances in-house research institutes like the "Beverage Institute for Health and Wellness," designed to promote the hydration benefits of their products while conveniently ignoring the health damage caused by sugary drinks.

Nutrition and dietetics conferences are frequently sponsored by corporations with a vested interest in the least healthy option, like McDonald's, Hershey's, and Kraft Foods. This year's Food and Nutrition Conference Expo's sponsors included PepsiCo, Big G Cereals (the manufacturer of Lucky Charms, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, and Cocoa Puffs), and Splenda Sweeteners. This isn't to say all studies have been bought, but it can difficult, sometimes confusing, and incredibly time-consuming to sift through all the noise and find truly helpful health information.

This doesn't even touch on the issue of the weight fluctuations that can occur with prescription medication, especially antidepressants and mood stabilizers. Even if you have the education needed to chose well and can afford quality food, you're still at a massive disadvantage.

Studies have found that the offspring of generations of mice fed a poor, low-fiber diet lose a high percentage of gut bacteria diversity, and they are unable to get it back. Though human studies haven't been conducted, it's not a stretch to think the same phenomenon is happening in people. At the end of all of this, the most basic act of care-taking we can perform (eating) can feel like yet another part-time job. No wonder more Americans are dying sooner.

#### The Bad Snowball

It's highly likely that some of



It's not a surprise that more young people are obese year after year given the degeneration of the American food system.

those prediabetic 12-year-olds who have been diagnosed with prediabetes are being raised by some of those 34-year-olds with the same condition, or its next evolution stage, diabetes. The percentages of young people diagnosed with prediabetes are lower than the nearly 34 percent of Americans adults with prediabetes. Children and young adults may catch

up sooner than expected, especially if the American way of life, eating, and addressing health continues the path it is currently on.

Kristina Martin works at Green Lifestyle Market and is a natural health wellness reporter for Organic Lifestyle Magazine, which first published this article.





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