

WEEK 19, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES

# MIND & BODY

## Two Dozen Ways to Live a Healthier and Happier Life

Simple, common habits that can have a profound effect on your overall well-being **2**

Staying connected with loved ones and getting a dose of vitamin D from sun exposure can keep your mind and body in good states to face life's inevitable hardships.

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Tips for Fostering Resilience

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## TRUTH CAN BE BLOCKED BUT NEVER STOPPED

Pass it on, one friend at a time!



I enjoy reading The Epoch Times daily and share links, stories and “real news” updates whenever I can. Because of this, several friends and family members are now subscribers and have thanked me for sharing “real news” that is going on globally.

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### TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

## Two Dozen Ways to Live a Healthier and Happier Life

Let's face it; we all want to be healthy, happy, and feel good. Sometimes it's a struggle, especially when life dishes up a large serving of problems, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic worries, or the illness or loss of a loved one.

Ironically, that's when you need good physical and mental health the most.

Here's a list of ways to enhance your physical and mental well-being, in no particular order, culled from what I've learned from my patients, Chinese medicine, scientific research, and just plain common sense.

**1. Live in the moment.** Most of us spend a lot of time rehashing the past or worrying about some future event. It's important to remember that the only moment that's real is right now. Impatience means that you're itching to move onto the next thing or the next moment. However, that next thing is a moment like this one. Slow down and enjoy the right now.

**2. Get enough shut-eye.** Your body repairs itself and recharges when you're sleeping. Get to bed with enough time to get 7 or 8 good hours. If you struggle with insomnia, get some help. Acupuncture can be an effective treatment for sleeplessness.

**3. Laugh more often.** It feels good and

it actually releases chemicals in your brain that are good for your health.

**4. Listen to your body.** Your body is incredibly wise. It knows what it needs, how to heal, and how to let you know when it's in trouble.

Pay attention to those little signs, such as frequent headaches at work, heartburn after eating, or an achy lower back, and address them before they become big problems.

**5. Get in touch with nature.** Go outside and connect with the natural world. This is something you can do while social distancing. Connecting with nature is a building block of Chinese medicine, in which the natural world is reflected in your body. Hunker down in the winter, eat fresh green shoots in the spring, be most active in the summer, and eat lots of locally harvested produce in the fall. Also know that extreme weather conditions can make you sick, whether it's achy joints from the cold and damp, heat exhaustion in the summer, or a dry, sore throat in the fall.

**6. If you're a smoker, quit now.** This may be the most important step you take to improve your health.



Do whatever works for you to lower your stress and cultivate calmness, whether it's meditating, reading a book, or simply spending time alone.

**7. Eat for the long run.** Get a good breakfast and don't skip meals. Choose a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables daily. Try to eat a diet that's made up of lots of veggies, whole grains, light proteins, a little fruit, and small amounts of everything else. Don't eat anything your grandma wouldn't recognize as food.

### It's been said that your approach to food mirrors your approach to life.

**8. Indulge your passion.** This is pretty simple. Figure out what you love to do and then figure out how to do it more often.

**9. Calm down.** This can be challenging right now, but the Chinese say that emotions are the cause of 100 diseases. That means staying angry at your obnoxious family member or worrying about what your neighbors are doing can make you sick. Do whatever works for you to lower your stress and cultivate calmness,

whether it's meditating, reading a book, or simply spending time alone, or simply spending time alone.

**10. Stay current on regular health screenings.** Laugh all you want at your friends' colonoscopy stories, but make sure you're keeping up with your own. This includes regular mammograms, mole checks, Pap tests, blood pressure screenings, etc., based on the guidelines for your age.

[Editor's note: Sometimes best practices from research on screenings are not yet implemented in clinical settings like your hospital or family doctor's office. Also, complaints that arise from common nutritional, and lifestyle deficiencies can prompt screenings and medical care better used as secondary measures.]

**11. Get enough exercise.** Keeping your body moving is the closest thing to the fountain of youth. Physical activity keeps your heart and lungs healthy, your immunity resilient, your muscles strong, your bones dense, your butt tight, and research is suggesting that it lowers your risk of age-related memory loss.

**12. Exercise your mind, too.** Learn a new language, read the newspaper,

play word games, or pick up a new hobby. Whether it's your body or your mind, the saying "Use it or lose it" applies.

**13. Grow some food.** Whether it's a plot in your backyard or some pots on your deck, growing your own vegetables and herbs can be beneficial in several ways. You're getting exercise, connecting with nature, growing your own organic food, and have the joy of picking something to eat right out your back door.

**14. Cook and eat with joy.** It's been said that your approach to food mirrors your approach to life. Prepare your meals with care, sit down, and share them with someone you love, if possible. Repeat daily.

**15. Eat for good digestion.** In Chinese medicine, how you digest your food is as important as what food you're eating. You can eat the greatest food on the planet, but if you don't digest it well you're not getting much benefit. Slow down, chew your food, and avoid rich and greasy meals. Opt for more cooked vegetables than raw, and limit your frozen foods and drinks, especially if you're having digestive issues. Need help? Your acupuncturist can help get your digestion back on track.

**16. Make sure you're getting enough vitamin D.** I know, we're all sick of the magic supplement of the day, but D boosts immunity, helps with depression, and offers up a whole host of health benefits. Sadly, most of us aren't getting enough. You can boost vitamin D through 15 minutes of direct sunlight daily or by supplementing with D3.

**17. Change the behaviors that are making you sick.** You know that junk food, toxic relationships, sleepless nights, and lots of stress aren't good for you. If you want to feel better, now's the time to make some changes.

**18. Almost anything goes, but in moderation.** In Chinese medicine, a little sweetness can help your digestion, but a bunch of cheesecake is a toxic food bomb. Similarly, some exercise is great for your health, but too much can cause your body to break down. Too much of almost anything over time can damage your health.

**19. Connect.** Get in touch with your sense of purpose through journaling and self-exploration. Connect

with other people through social situations, connect with the divine through meditation or prayer. In Chinese medicine, connection nourishes your heart, which is the home to your soul.

**20. Just breathe.** In Chinese medicine, your lungs are an important part of immunity, so strong and healthy lungs translate into the ability to ward off colds, viruses, and flu. Breathing deeply opens up your lungs, oxygenates your brain, and helps prevent fatigue and anxiety. Try inhaling for a count of three, holding for a count of three, and exhaling for a count of six.

**21. Stand up straight.** Bad posture can negatively affect your digestion and breathing and can cause pain in your back and neck. Sitting at a computer for long hours is especially hard on your posture, too. When you're standing your ears, shoulders, hips, and feet should line up.

**22. Just say 'no.'** It's incredibly freeing to be able to say no to some of those annoying and unimportant things you don't want to do and don't really have to do. It helps decrease that stressed-out feeling of being overwhelmed.

**23. Go green.** The products you use to clean your home and the cosmetics you put on your body every day have the ability to either enhance or harm your health. Become savvy about the ingredients in your shampoos, lotions, bathroom cleaners, etc., and if the ingredients are sketchy, find cleaner, greener, healthier alternatives.

**24. Cultivate compassion.** When you're being kind to others, you're being kind to yourself. Kindness is embodied by generosity and service to others. Compassion and kindness dissolve anger, annoyance, fear, and competition—all feelings which diminish the quality of your life.

Making healthy changes to your life can feel overwhelming, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the research in this area is clear; even small changes can have a measurable impact on your health. Picking one easy change at a time and sticking with it will have the most benefit in the long run.

Lynn Jaffee is a licensed acupuncturist and the author of "Simple Steps: The Chinese Way to Better Health." This article was originally published on [AcupunctureTwinCities.com](http://AcupunctureTwinCities.com)

### IMMUNE SUPPORT

## Preventing a Possible Second

Maintaining adequate vitamin D to fuel an effective immune response can be as simple as getting some sunshine

WILLIAM F. SUPPLE JR.

Viral infections occur in a predictable seasonal pattern increasing in prevalence during the colder months of the year. In fact, a low-grade viral infection is commonly referred to as a "cold" because of when it occurs.

What environmental factor varies with the seasons and affects our biology to such an extent that it influences our susceptibility to viral infection? The answer is sunshine, or more accurately, the predictable seasonal peaks and troughs of skin-produced, solar-generated vitamin D.

Well known for its role in building and maintaining strong bones, vitamin D is also essential to the proper functioning of the immune system. Our immune system is tasked with identifying and eliminating cells invading the body that can make us sick. Without adequate levels of vitamin D, the immune system can't differentiate disease-causing cells from healthy cells. The result is a dysfunctional immune system; invading cells that cause sickness go undetected and healthy cells can be mistakenly attacked.

**Most Americans Are Vitamin D Deficient**

The amount of vitamin D the government recommends to maintain bone

health is 800 IU per day. This amount will help ensure that your bones won't crumble but it is vastly less than what our bodies need on a daily basis, and many orders of magnitude below what the immune system needs to function optimally.

The average adult uses about 4000 IU of vitamin D per day, if 800 IU is the recommended amount to take in, where does the extra 3200 IU needed come from?

A normal diet contributes next to nothing. The answer is the sun during summer months and stored excess summer-made, fat-stored vitamin D during the colder months. There is virtually no solar-generated vitamin D in skin from the sun in the vast majority of the United States (>37 degrees latitude) from November to March due to the oblique angle of the earth relative to the sun resulting in the ozone layer absorbing more ultraviolet-B (UVB) photons. Due to the use of sunscreens and an indoor lifestyle, most Americans don't generate much vitamin D from their skin during the summer months either, so they are severely depleted by the time winter rolls around.

**Chronic Inflammation, Autoimmune Disease, and Vitamin D**

Without adequate vitamin D, a dysfunctional immune system attacks healthy tissue causing chronic inflammation.

## Deadlier Wave of COVID-19 in Fall



Light-skinned people can generate 10,000 IU of vitamin D from their skins when exposed to summer sunlight for 15 minutes. Darker-skinned people can need twice as long.

Diseases linked to chronic inflammation are familiar and prevalent, and as a group are called autoimmune diseases: arthritis, atherosclerosis, Type 1 diabetes, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis among others.

Other factors can contribute to the onset of these diseases beyond vitamin D deficiency.

But people deficient in vitamin D are also more likely to develop cardiovascular disease and cancers of epithelial origin (breast, prostate, colon, lung, for example). Many studies have confirmed that living in a northern climate—and its lack of vitamin D—is a risk factor for developing these maladies. Being chronically vitamin D deficient causes immune dysfunction resulting in chronic inflam-

mation, and is a recipe for poor health going forward.

### COVID-19, Pre-existing Disease, Race, and Vitamin D

The current wave of COVID-19 hits those with the diseases listed above, plus the elderly and African Americans, the hardest. The elderly are typically severely vitamin D deficient because older skin is much less efficient at producing sunlight-generated vitamin D compared to younger skin.

Likewise, darker skin (due to increased UVB absorbing melanin content) produces less vitamin D as well, leading to greater vitamin D deficiency among African Americans. Since vitamin D deficiency is related to the incidence of these diseases, it is no wonder that older people and African Americans with any of these conditions didn't do well when infected with COVID-19.

To make matters even worse for these groups of people, they are also more likely to be taking therapeutic drugs that specifically suppress a component of their immune response in an effort to treat the symptoms of their specific disease. An elderly African American man taking an immunosuppressant biologic drug to treat a condition like psoriasis has less chance to defend himself against COVID-19.

Treatment of many autoimmune diseases involves further disruption of the immune system through the use of drugs that suppress segments of the immune response. Then, along comes COVID-19 to exploit this immune system flaw.

The immune storm that does the killing with COVID-19 reflects an immune system gone haywire. Proinflammatory cytokines—substances like interferons and interleukins secreted by immune cells—are released inappropriately and destructively causing fluid in the lungs to build up, essentially drowning the victim. COVID-19 hijacks the immune system, and if that immune system is impaired or dysfunctional due to chronic vitamin D deficiency, the outcome isn't good.

### Without adequate levels of vitamin D, the immune system can't differentiate disease-causing cells from healthy cells.

#### Preventing or Reducing Impact of Next Wave of COVID-19

Using the Spanish flu pandemic as a model, in 1918, the second wave of the flu was five times deadlier than the first wave. In real numbers, according to CDC figures, the peak death rate in late June 1918 was around 5 per 1000 persons. In early November 1918, it was 25 per 1000.

That's the bad news. The good news is that there is something we can all do to help protect ourselves from the coming scourge. It's easy, it's cheap, and it's safe. Around 5,000 to 8,000 IU vitamin D3

daily will get most people's blood levels into the range to optimize immune system function. While it is no guarantee that if you fix the underlying vitamin D deficiency your body will defeat the virus, it could be a factor. And it is easy to get your daily dose. Skin generates 10,000 IU of vitamin D when exposed to summer sunlight for 15 minutes.

Our bodies are designed to be vitamin D rich. Our inability to appreciate the importance of the sun and its vitamin D in biological function is undermining our immunity.

What to do? Consult with your doctor. Get your vitamin D levels tested, 50-100 ng/ml is optimal. If you are vitamin D deficient, and getting sunlight is a problem, supplement with vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) the most bioavailable form of vitamin D. Start to build up your blood levels of vitamin D now, and keep them there from now on.

[Editor's note: For links to sources of facts claimed in the article, please find the online version with the sources hyperlinked.]

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## FOOD AS MEDICINE

# Turmeric

## A Natural Remedy for Children and Teens With Asthma

Long-used, often-studied super herb delivers biomedical compounds with strong antioxidant, anti-inflammatory effects

There's mounting evidence of the multiple healing properties of turmeric against pain and common ailments such as osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Now, a study reveals that this herb can help alleviate asthma among children and adolescents.

As a medicinal herb, few remedies have been as widely used over the centuries as the root of *Curcuma longa* L., or turmeric. Its value to the scientific world proves to be as vast as treating 600 health conditions, thanks to its multiple healing properties. While even natural remedies may not be 100 percent free from side effects, turmeric has an exceptionally high margin of safety. In fact, turmeric is a wonder herb as its effects have been compared with that of ibuprofen, hydrocortisone, and some chemotherapy agents.

Turmeric has long been the subject of thousands of peer-reviewed studies. Grown in Asia and Brazil, this perennial plant contains biomedical compounds known as curcuminoids, one of which is curcumin. Curcuminoids provide turmeric its bright golden color.

As a strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, curcumin is an important active ingredient in turmeric. It also has antibacterial, antiviral, anti-fungal, and wound-healing actions.

Turmeric has a reputation for giving pharmaceuticals a run for their money. Research has shown that turmeric can help ease the pain of patients with osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, reverse symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, reduce atherogenic risk in Type 2 diabetes patients, and kill lethal pancreatic cancer cells.

Now, a new report has revealed that it can also be used as a natural remedy for

**As a medicinal herb, few remedies have been as widely used over the centuries as the root of *Curcuma longa* L., or turmeric.**



Turmeric gets its bright golden color from biomedical compounds known as curcuminoids.

children and adolescents suffering from childhood asthma.

### Turmeric as a Natural Remedy for Childhood Asthma

The study, titled "Curcuma longa L. ameliorates asthma control in children and adolescents," was a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial. The participants involved in the study were children and adolescents ages 7 to 18 years, all of whom had persistent asthma.

They were divided into two groups, receiving either C. longa powdered roots or placebo—approximately 30 milligrams (mg) per kilogram (kg) per day, twice daily—for six months, with the following specific doses: 7 to 10-year-olds, 500 mg/day; 11 to 14-year-olds, 750 mg/day, and 15 to 18-year-olds, 1,000 mg/day.

These doses translated to about 20, 30, and 40 mg/kg/day of curcuminoids respectively. The results of the study were as follows:

"We have shown that the powdered roots of C. longa, administered to children and adolescents with asthma, in addition to the standard treatment, compared to placebo, led to less frequent nighttime awakenings ... and better disease control after 3 and 6 months."

This report confirms a previous study that showed curcumin can effectively improve asthma among patients when used as an add-on therapy. Researchers encourage further studies to demonstrate the efficacy of turmeric and curcumin on a long-term scale.

### The Difficulties of Suffering From Childhood Asthma

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease that limits air flow and causes wheezing, labored breathing (dyspnea),

and cough. Statistics show that it may afflict more than 100 million worldwide by 2025. This inflammatory disease can be caused by several factors, including dietary, infectious, and environmental triggers, as well as genetic and epigenetic predispositions.

Having childhood asthma causes difficulties for patients. Severe asthma attacks trigger visits to the emergency room as well as the injection of epinephrine to open up constricted passages. Thus the disease is often controlled conventionally using inhaled corticosteroids and inhaled long-acting beta-adrenergic agonists.

Although some patients can effectively control their asthma, other patients are unable to do so. What's more, studies say that chronic exposure to corticosteroids can have adverse effects on children, including later in life. This is why many experts and parents clamor for safe, effective asthma treatments for children.

Read up on the growing research on asthma by checking out at least 390 abstracts housed on GreenMedInfo.com. Find out more about the healing properties of turmeric on the site, too.

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# New to Exercise? Why Tai Chi Might Be the Perfect Introduction

Tai chi's gentle exercises help relieve stress and lower both systolic and diastolic blood pressure

### DEVON ANDRE

So, you want to start exercising but have no idea where to start. You're essentially confined to your property, so that doesn't help. You also aren't necessarily interested in sweating, huffing, and puffing. You might not even be able to move very well.

That scenario can look a little bleak given the limited options. Fortunately, there is an effective exercise that can benefit your body and mind.

Tai chi is a great introduction to exercise. It requires very little space, virtually no equipment, and is accessible to people who are not in good physical shape or have mobility troubles. It can help promote balance, strength, pain relief, lower blood pressure, heart health, and help reduce stress, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.

Sometimes called "meditation in motion," tai chi is a slow, flowing form of exercise made up of a series of choreographed movements. For those with impaired mobility, it can be performed with a chair.

It is safe for people without good flexibility but can also be used by more fit, mobile individuals as a way to enjoy a moderate aerobic workout.

There is plenty of data to highlight the health benefits of tai chi, but it's most impressive effects may be stress and blood pressure reduction. One large-scale review from 2008 found that in people with high blood pressure, tai chi was able to substantially lower both systolic and diastolic pressure.

Drops in diastolic, the bottom number in a reading, went down between 7 and 32 points. Systolic, the top number, went down between 2 and 18 points.

Tai chi might be the perfect way for you to start your exercise journey. All you need are some loose-fitting, comfortable clothes and some sneakers. You can learn moves and follow instructors online or order some DVDs to your door.

Once stay-at-home orders subside, you can look for tai chi groups that meet in local parks or community centers.

This form of exercise is accessible and highly beneficial to almost anybody. It



Tai chi is a slow, flowing exercise made up of choreographed movements.

*Devon Andre holds a bachelor's degree in forensic science from the University of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Andre is a journalist for BelMarraHealth, which first published this article.*

## THE ROOT CAUSE

# Body Autonomy—the Core of Personal Freedom

COVID-19 has raised concerns that compulsory vaccines could challenge basic freedoms

### ARMEN NIKOGOSIAN

Body autonomy is defined as the right of self-governance over one's body and is a fundamental human right. Will this core of our personal freedoms be maintained or challenged in order to assuage public fears about COVID-19?

Tech billionaire and philanthropist Bill Gates has recommended maintaining some of the quarantine restrictions until a COVID-19 vaccine is prepared in 16 to 18 months. If governments were to take the advice of this self-appointed pandemic guru, what would be their response to those people who choose not to vaccinate?

With the massive attention and resources given to the COVID-19 pandemic, I fear that our basic human right to body autonomy may be called into question. During this pandemic, public fear has been fueled by exponentially exaggerated models and an initially high and then diminishing death rate.

Early in this pandemic, it was the wildly overestimated death rates driven by models that justified many of the actions taken. Early models predicted more than 2 million deaths in the United States alone, then 200,000 and then finally less than 100,000.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) director said: "Data trumps any models... modeling is an inherently imperfect science and as you get real data you rely more on that data than the model."

Our leaders are aware of this, but are governments revising their plans as the real data comes in?

The most current COVID-19 death rate is hovering right around 0.7 percent—though that number is based on vast under-reporting of infection rates in China. At that rate, however, the virus is about seven times more deadly than your average annual flu pandemic. The death rate has dropped to 1 percent from as high as 4 percent and continues to drop as we have learned more about this virus.

The first problem was how deaths associated with COVID-19 were counted. Both causative or incidental cases of COVID-19 infection were counted in countries all over the world. The second problem was an overestimation of death rate by underestimating the total number of positive cases—specifically the large number of asymptomatic cases.

The COVID-19 death rate reporting has the unique feature that individuals dying from the virus are not distinguished from those dying with the virus. Dr. Deborah Birk, the White House coronavirus response coordinator, referring to U.S. COVID-19 deaths stated, "If someone dies with COVID-19, we are counting that as a COVID-19 death."

Professor Walter Ricciardi, advisor to the Italian Health Minister, referring to Italian COVID-19 deaths, has stated, "All the people who die in hospitals with the coronavirus are deemed to be dying of the coronavirus."

In other words, if the patient was deathly ill before infection, COVID-19 would have only been incidental in their death, but it could be counted as the main cause by the use of this generous methodology. The new COVID-19 ICD-10 code (U07.1) guidelines were written without distinction between confirmed and suspected cases. In cases where there is uncertainty, the guidance states: "If the death certificate reports terms such as 'probable COVID-19' or 'likely COVID-19,' these terms would be assigned the new ICD code.

Regarding the total number of cases, a study is currently underway in the Heisenberg district of Germany. The study participants were chosen to represent the



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Like all medical interventions, the problems begin when you try to apply a "one-size-fits-all" model to the broad variability of the human race.

region's population of 250,000 people. Some preliminary results have found a large portion of the population tested positive for COVID-19 but were completely asymptomatic.

When this large group was included, their calculated death rate dropped to 0.37 percent.

Another scientific study looking at antibody testing in Los Angeles county suggests that infections from COVID-19 are far more widespread. Factoring in their new findings, the COVID-19 death rate for LA county would be reduced to as low as 0.1 percent. Various studies from around the world have looked at the proportions of asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19 in different groups. The range is still broad starting at 5 percent and going as high as 80 percent. These are individuals positive for COVID-19 but are rarely counted because they have no reason to seek medical attention. As more data comes in and more of the general population is tested, we will likely find infection rates where higher, which will further dilute the overall death rate.

As the world pauses amid this pandemic, risking severe economic and social disruption, the call for forced vaccination will inevitably be sounded by certain quarters. This raises questions about what governments will do as the death rate falls closer to figures more in line with a serious annual flu.

I am not anti-vaccine. I would get the COVID-19 vaccine if I found solid evidence that it provides the benefit of viral

immunity that outweighed the risk for any serious adverse reactions.

Vaccines can be a useful tool in the never-ending battle against infectious disease and, when used appropriately, can elevate the health of the public and the individual.

Although vaccination programs have been lauded with single-handedly reducing the incidence of many common infectious diseases of the 20th century, most vaccine-preventable infections already had up to 90 percent reductions in death rate by the 1940s—years before any large-scale public vaccination programs began in the United States.

The widespread adoption of clean water, indoor plumbing, and better hygiene are the true medical champions of the 20th century. Be that as it may, vaccines then further contributed to the near eradication of many of these pathogenic microbes only a few decades later. However, like all medical interventions, the problems begin when you try to apply a "one-size-fits-all" model to the broad variability of the human race.

A common scenario that worries some people is that of the irresponsible individual jeopardizing the health of the masses by exercising their basic human right of body autonomy by refusing a vaccination.

It is an illogical argument because if the vaccine works then the person receiving it is protected from infection. If that person is not protected, then it supports the stance of the person refusing it because the vaccine clearly doesn't work. This is by far the poorest argument for implementing a vaccine program because if that statement

holds true then the vaccine being administered is not achieving its primary and only objective: to protect the vaccinated individual from the microbe in question. This is not a problem of individuals being selfish and not caring for their fellow citizen, rather it reflects poor workmanship on the part of the pharmaceutical company tasked with designing the vaccine. If the vaccine delivers what it promises, why would anyone care what someone else does with their body?

Herd immunity is an epidemiological concept that describes the state when a population is sufficiently immune to a disease so that the infection will no longer spread within that group. The percentage of the population which needs protection via vaccination or natural immunity will vary depending on the reproduction rate of the microbe. Measles, one of the most contagious diseases known, has a very high reproduction rate and would require immunity in 93 percent of the population. COVID-19 has a much lower reproduction rate and herd immunity could be established with only 70 percent of the population exhibiting immunity.

You do not need to vaccinate the whole population to achieve a public health victory over COVID-19.

Body autonomy is the most fundamental of the human rights we are endowed with at birth and the individual (or the parent if they are a minor) chooses in all cases which bodily treatments or modifications are allowed. It is time to stop framing these discussions as pro- or anti-vaccine.

Body autonomy is the issue. Refusing vaccination is only one small facet of a broader refusal of medical treatments. Throughout medical history, you can find countless examples of past treatments that met the "standard of care" at that time and then later were found to be harmful. Based on this history, it is not unreasonable to be skeptical of any new treatments. Mandating treatments does not give you that opportunity.

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Fear has been fueled by exponentially exaggerated models.

Individuals dying from the virus are not distinguished from those dying with the virus.

## MINDSET MATTERS

# Powerful Ways to Shift Your Mindset During Covid-19

Being stuck inside, isolated, takes a toll—but we can reduce it with a few tips

JAYA JAYA MYRA

Now more than ever, people are looking to lifestyle solutions to improve their quality of living. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed everyone's lives, for both better and worse.

One of the positive side effects in times of crisis is the re-evaluation of one's life; what's working and what's not. The pressure brought on by massive change that's beyond your control can help you make both major and minor shifts in lifestyle.

If there's one thing you focus on during this time of change, focus on cultivating a strong and positive mindset. Mindset will be the filter that you evaluate everything else through and is what sets people up for success or failure, depending on a person's perspective. Here are some powerful and simple ways to cultivate a positive mindset, no matter what challenges you're facing.

## Create a New Habit

The human mind loves consistency and routines, so take this opportunity to create a new routine in your day-to-day life that will turn into a habit. My suggestion is to do something uplifting, not something that you think you should be doing. As an example, one of my daily routines is to have a cup of morning tea. Tea does have some amazing health and mood-boosting benefits, but it's also a mode of self-care and "me time" when I don't have to think about anything unwelcome.

In order to solidify a new habit, consistency is key. Pick your new activity and try to do it at the same time each day. How long it takes for something to become a habit depends on a few factors, but mostly how emotionally connected you are to it and how many sensory perceptions (smell, taste, sight, touch, hearing) are connected to it. Psychotherapist Jodi Aman says: "Neurons trigger certain pathways for different emotions attached to experiences and behaviors (habits). When they frequent the same path due to habit, that pathway becomes efficient." Basically, when you're able to connect more sensory perceptions to an experience, it becomes deeply ingrained in the mind quicker, helping your brain to form new neural connections.

## Avoid Processed and Diet Foods

You probably know that what you eat can boost your mood and overall well-being, but did you know your mood and mindset can be negatively affected if you eat processed foods and diet products?

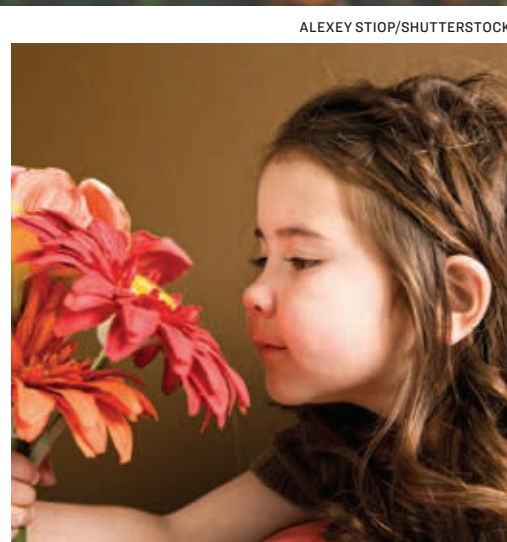
Instead of grabbing that diet soda, try some tea, water, or coffee instead. Diet products contain sugar replacements like aspartame, and aspartame tricks your brain into thinking it's going to get a reward (aka, a dopamine hit) because of the sweet taste. Not only does the brain not get its reward, but aspartame also inhibits neurotransmitters and hormones like dopamine and serotonin which can wreak havoc on your



ARTEM BELIAKIN/UNSPASH



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ALEXEY STIOP/SHUTTERSTOCK

Getting fresh air and enjoying reviving smells can ignite a better mood.

mood and mindset, fuel cravings, and bring about feelings of anxiety and depression.

Many of the chemical additives, preservatives, and colorings in processed foods have similar effects on mood, and can also contribute to a host of health problems including tumors, hyperactivity, weight gain, cancer, and more.

**Mindset will be the filter that you evaluate everything else through and is what sets people up for success or failure, depending on a person's perspective.**

## Aromatherapy and Fresh Air

The sense of smell is one of the most powerful and primordial sensory perceptions we have. Smell triggers the limbic system, which scientists regard as the most primal part of our brain. The limbic system is closely linked to memory, mood, emotions, and behavior, as well as our basic instincts. Another interesting fact is that without smell, you would not be able to distinguish taste (as we've seen all too well with COVID-19). Try adding some aromatherapy or essential oils into your day. Lavender is great for reducing stress, increasing calmness, and relaxing. Rose, jasmine, and bergamot are known to improve mood. An easy way to do this is with an oil diffuser or using high-grade oils that you can apply to your skin directly, and wear them as a fragrance. The good mood these promote can have a direct positive impact on your mindset and behavior.

You'll also want to avoid bad smells as much as possible, and this includes your stuffy house or apartment. While you may not describe your home as bad-smelling per se, it's likely not fresh either. It's well known that air quality in a house or apartment is much worse than outdoors, and this can contribute to getting ill, or just not feeling healthy in general. So consider opening a window and airing out your home, or getting some fresh air, keeping social distancing in mind. Think about how good you feel when you step outside and take that breath of fresh air. The more you can use your sense of smell and breathe to your advantage, the better.

Thanks to the limbic system's direct impact on mindset and mood, there's no effort required to make a positive shift; just take time to smell the roses.

*Jaya Jaya Myra is a wellness lifestyle expert and go-to media expert on mind-body wellness, stress management, mindfulness, food for mood, and natural, healthy living. She's a best-selling author, TEDx and motivational speaker, and creator of The WELL Method for purpose-filled healthy living. Visit [www.JayaJayaMyra.com](http://www.JayaJayaMyra.com)*

## Saturday Shake-Ups Can Improve Your Health During the Pandemic

Dancing can get you active and trigger your body to release endorphins that boost mood and lower cortisol

DEVON ANDRE

Spending all this time inside can be frustrating, but that doesn't mean there can't be things to look forward to. In my home, it's Saturday dance parties.

Yep. On Saturdays, my partner and I pour a drink, log on to Instagram, and find a dance party to join. Then we dance the day away.

It's great: We get some exercise, have our spirits lifted, and feel connected with others as we maneuver through this crisis. Even if you aren't big on the idea of Instagram, turning on

your radio or going through your own music collection will do the trick.

If you don't have Instagram, it's all good. Many people are doing the same thing on Facebook. For Instagram, I didn't have it before a few weeks ago either. It's pretty easy to use: Just create an account and search for the musicians or DJ's you like. If they are hosting live performances, just log in and they'll bring the party to you!

Dancing can be a big help and a great form of exercise during the pandemic. In fact, I was talking to a neighbor yesterday who's



FIZKES/SHUTTERSTOCK

Dancing is a fun aerobic workout that can promote lung and heart health.

been having a pretty hard time. He's 65, lives alone, and has been struggling

with anxiety and high blood pressure. He made a point of saying

that even though he's not a big music fan, turning on his radio and dancing has helped relieve stress put him in a better mood.

When you dance and your limbs start to move, blood begins to pump more and your heart rate goes up. Feel-good endorphins are released into the bloodstream that can boost mood and lower cortisol—the stress hormone.

The benefits move beyond mood. Dancing can also help with spatial awareness, strength, and balance. It is an aerobic workout that can promote lung and heart health. It can also help jog

memories, as music can transport you through previous experiences.

If you're looking for a way to break up some of the monotony and give a boost to your mental and physical health, do some dancing. It can do your brain and body good.

*Devon Andre holds a bachelor's degree in forensic science from the University of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Andre is a journalist for BelMarraHealth, which first published this article.*

ALL PHOTOS BY UNSPLASH



Weddings are uplifting for guests and sacred for participants. So when these crucial practices are suspended, we may need to find other ways to create shared meaning and experience.



## What Happens When We Lose Our Social Rituals?

Researchers weigh in on how to cope when we can't gather for graduations, weddings, and funerals

JILL SUTTIE

When the shelter-in-place orders came down in California, the first thing I thought of was my cousin's wedding—the one I was supposed to officiate. I'd been working on creating a special ceremony since the fall. But once the pandemic kicked in, everything was canceled.

Perhaps my cousin is luckier than some—after all, a wedding can be rescheduled. Even so, he had to let go of a cherished dream of when and how his wedding would take place.

He's certainly not alone. Many people have had to give up important shared rituals—graduation ceremonies, prom nights, long-awaited concerts, religious services, opening-day baseball, and even funerals. The loss, while necessary, is profound.

What can we do to cope? Is there something we can learn from this experience that will help us carry on? What will it mean for the future of our social fabric?

No one knows exactly how forgoing shared rituals will affect us individually or as a society. However, science does give us some clues. By understanding the purpose of shared rituals, we can try to preserve their intent and create a sense of shared emotion, connection, and transcendence.

## Why We Have Shared Rituals

Shared rituals play an important role in our psyches, according to social psychologist Shira Gabriel. Her research suggests that rituals—choreographed events that produce an emotionally laden experience—create a feeling of unity and sacredness that bonds us together with others.

"Rituals give us a feeling of going beyond the ordinary—of having a moment that transcends that, turning events into something special and meaningful," says Gabriel.

Why transcendent? Because when we participate in ritual, we experience a sort of emotion contagion that sociologist Emile Durkheim called "collective effervescence." That uplift and energy increase our sense of commonality (even with strangers) and make us feel we are part of a larger community. It's why we can feel so bonded to fellow Golden State Warriors fans at a game or so unified during a protest march.

Gabriel says that we often create shared rituals when we go through important life transitions, too, because they mark the passage of time as sacred. Weddings, funerals, and graduations, for example, all give us a sense of meaning, which makes forgoing them so hard.

"There's no doubt that people are going to grieve and are going to feel sad about the loss of what they had planned," she says.

Losing out on shared rituals may also be difficult for society at large, argues sociologist Randall Collins. His research has suggested that when people stop gathering together to share emotional experiences, their sense of oneness tends to dissipate, even after experiencing a community tragedy as unifying as 9/11.

He wonders if the same might happen with the COVID-19 outbreak, especially given the need for "social distancing." A big event involving the whole country—and, in fact, the whole world—will make "everybody focus on the same thing and feel

the same emotions," which creates a sense of solidarity. At the same time, however, we lose face-to-face interaction with other people. Can email, phone conversations, and video conference meetings make up for that loss?

"I would say the evidence is sort of a yes, but to a weaker degree," says Collins.

Gabriel agrees that there is something special about in-person rituals. But her research findings suggest that collective effervescence and social solidarity don't happen only during bigger public events; they can occur even in everyday interactions, too, like watching TV together or attending an interesting lecture. This means we can create that uplift more easily than we might think.

"Everyday moments of collective effervescence can make us feel more connected to others, and make us feel as if our life has meaning," says Gabriel. "Our research suggests that people who experience these things a lot are likely to be happier and feel less anxious and depressed."

## Creating More Collective Effervescence Now

It's good to know that losing shared rituals isn't dire. That doesn't mean giving them up is easy.

Therapist Lori Gottlieb, author of "Maybe You Should Talk to Someone," worries that people might discount their losses as trivial by comparing themselves to others who may be suffering more serious losses, such as losing a job or loved one. But, she adds, not being able to fulfill life dreams or expectations can be painful, too, and may require grieving.

"People need to be able to talk about what they're experiencing, because these are real losses," she says. "We're not here to rank each other's losses in terms of which one is more valid or which one is more significant."

She points to her own losses from the COVID-19 outbreak—her teen son will miss his last semester of eighth grade, and she can't hold a funeral after her father's death or sit shiva for him (a Jewish tradition that helps the bereaved honor the passing of their loved ones). Dismissing those losses or not accepting our feelings of loss is not the answer.

"As parents, partners, family members, and friends, we need to allow people to talk about the things that they're missing," she says.

That doesn't preclude reframing a loss in more positive terms or looking for potential silver linings in our current experience, she adds. Being at home with less to do and more free time may give people new opportunities for intimacy, like calling up old friends or spending time with children who are usually away at school.

"Instead of focusing on the things that you don't have, you can look at all of the new things that you do have right now," she says. "There's a lot to be gained in the midst of loss, in the form of community and connection."

## How to Make New Rituals

Sheltering in place could also inspire people to create alternative events to mark special occasions, she says, such as a video-conference dance party to celebrate a graduation, which may even end up being

more memorable than what was originally planned.

Jan Stanley, who works as a celebrant—someone who designs rituals for weddings and funerals—says that it's not too hard to create rituals online, if you keep certain things in mind. She suggests that you:

- Ask people to bring to their online gathering something symbolic to share, like a candle to light, a memory or story, a picture, or a poem. Getting people to contribute in that way can help create a sense of oneness.
- Mark the moment by having someone provide an opening statement that designates the beginning of any ritual and explains the purpose of being there. That sets the tone and makes people realize that this is a special moment in time and not just another online meeting.
- Create emotional highs, perhaps using music, dancing, poetry, moments of silence, or something else with high emotional resonance to augment the experience.
- Always have a distinct ending that includes an emotional peak, because people tend to remember an event better that way.

Though an online ritual may lack some of the power of an in-person ritual, says Stanley, it still has value. Even doing rituals alone can be useful, she adds, if it's meaningful. Research suggests that creating rituals just for ourselves can help alleviate grief after loss and make us feel less out of control, which could help now, when the world seems so uncertain.

"If you can design a ritual to be meaningful—so that it actually touches your heart or brings someone to mind or gives you a sense of your own purpose—all the better," she says.

Gabriel encourages people to also look beyond formalized rituals to everyday opportunities to share positive emotion and a sense of solidarity from a distance.

She points to examples from her own neighborhood, where people are putting up rainbows in their windows, drawing pictures on the sidewalk for others to see when they walk by, or leaving notes for one another on the ends of driveways. She mentions widely shared online videos showing people singing from their balconies, cheering in appreciation of health care workers, or creating drive-by birthday parades.

"People are drawn to collective rituals like these for a reason—we want to feel connected to other people and to feel a sensation of sacredness," she says. "These kinds of events should bring on those same sorts of feelings."

Once the shelter-in-place orders have been lifted, though, Gabriel hopes we'll gain a renewed appreciation for shared rituals. "Hopefully, we'll go back to them and we'll value them even more than we do now," she says. "And, maybe we'll have learned some new tricks along the way, some new ways to connect to other people that we didn't have before."

*Jill Suttie, Psy.D., is Greater Good's book review editor and a frequent contributor to the magazine. This article was originally published by the Greater Good online magazine.*

## CONNECT TO LEAD

## Mistakes Leaders Make During Crisis

SCOTT MANN

One of the hardest things for a leader to do is lead with the right mindset during a moment of crisis.

It's not easy.

During my military career, I led through many crises ... and I've made plenty of mistakes in those moments. In 2004 when we were in Afghanistan, one of my best friends was a company commander who had taken several of his detachments into combat in a Southern province. Their helicopter was literally shot out from underneath them.

It changed the nature of the whole operation. We had a chopper down. We had pilots on the field. We had men wounded. Now we were looking at a recovery mission.

I knew all of the guys on the field that day, but what kept creeping in was the thought that my best friend was out there. It was creating not only a distraction, but it was informing my behavior in a way that wasn't necessarily helpful. It completely altered my mindset. The way it manifested with me, was that I kept over-communicating to him in the initial moments, trying to get feedback, trying to get updates, and just trying to let him know I was there until he said, "Brother, you have got to give me space to work this." He had to call me off.

I realized in that moment that I had allowed my friendship and the fear of losing my friend to cloud my judgment. I was allowing my primal brain to dominate in a complex situation that required a different, more advanced level of thinking. I heard him, I backed off, and I reassessed and reoriented myself to start trying to work on what I could control. Where could I be a value of assistance to these guys now? Where could we be of value in the operation center? They needed me to be on my game, and that's what I did.

There were lessons learned that day that I have carried with me through every crisis since. How do we adopt the most effective mindset to lead through these difficult moments and look at past



GORDENKOFF/SHUTTERSTOCK

We cannot rely on the mindsets of instinct and emotion as the singular default during this crisis.

situations when leaders made mistakes and learn from them? In many situations like this pandemic, we have to lead ourselves and those around us, so let's have that conversation.

The first mistake is an overreaction to the event. Our mindset needs to be strong, unwavering, and calm. When a crisis unfolds, we need to sort out the immediate threat, and we need to figure out if we're safe, just like we have all done now with COVID-19. That's a primal reaction of the amygdala in our brain. Then once we do that, we can step back and really take an assessment and attune to our new

environment.

Too many leaders during this unfolding crisis are overreacting in the moment with each news brief. What happens when we do that as leaders? We take ourselves out of the fight. We're no longer credible. We've overextended, we've overreached, and now we're in the churn so deeply that we become emotionally invested and we can't lead with clarity. That overreaction mindset is a dangerous thing.

We have to remember that we don't see the full picture. We can't, at least not in the beginning. And we won't if we surrender to primal fear. More facts are going to come

in. Some things will be irrelevant. Some things will go away. Some new things will emerge.

The second mindset mistake I have seen far too often over the last few weeks is leaders going inside their own heads ... and getting trapped. We have to mentally step away and focus on the people around us to get outside of ourselves. If we can do that, then we start to become relevant and relatable again. Being stuck in your own head during a crisis breaks down trust and incites panic around you.

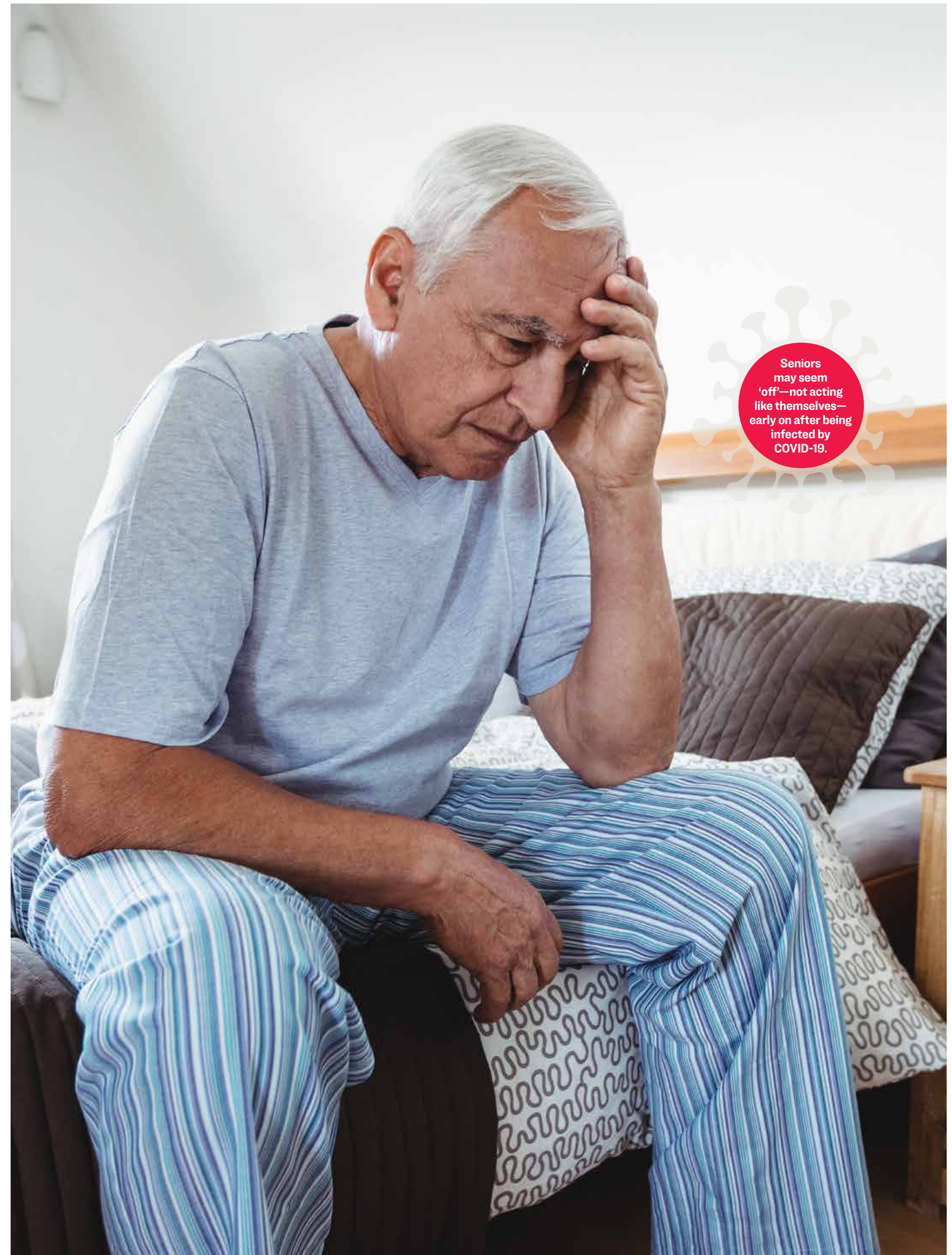
The third mindset mistake is one I see leaders fall into all the time without even being aware they have done it, and that's relying on instinct instead of skill. In the initial moment of crisis, if there's an immediate threat on you, instinct is everything, especially if instinct is informed by training. But once you've ascertained that you are not facing an immediate life or death threat, but rather a complex threat, like the collapse of the market, an angry customer, or someone close to your organization has gotten sick, then it's absolutely important that we rely on our training and our skill. We cannot allow ourselves to fall into a mindset that relies on instinct beyond those moments.

You can trust your gut, but we've got to allow your training and experience to take lead at some point.

We cannot rely on the mindsets of instinct and emotion as the singular default during this crisis. It is up to us as leaders to make the decision know to stand up and lead strong for our ourselves, our families, our teams, and our communities.

Remember ... fear is contagious, but so is leadership.

*Scott Mann is a former Green Beret who specialized in unconventional, high-impact missions and relationship building. He is the founder of Rooftop Leadership and appears frequently on TV and many syndicated radio programs. For more information, visit RooftopLeadership.com*



Seniors may seem 'off'—not acting like themselves—early on after being infected by COVID-19.

## Seniors With COVID-19 Show Unusual Symptoms, Doctors Say

Our pandemic lockdown is particularly hard on those who it most seeks to protect—vulnerable seniors

JUDITH GRAHAM

**O**lder adults with COVID-19, the illness caused by the CCP virus, have several "atypical" symptoms that complicate efforts to ensure they get timely and appropriate treatment, say physicians.

COVID-19 is typically signaled by three symptoms: a fever, an insistent cough, and shortness of breath. But older adults—the age group most at risk of severe complications or death from this condition—may have none of these characteristics.

Instead, seniors may seem "off"—not acting like themselves—early on after be-

ing infected by COVID-19. They may sleep more than usual or stop eating. They may seem unusually apathetic or confused, losing orientation to their surroundings. They may become dizzy and fall. Sometimes, seniors stop speaking or simply collapse.

"With a lot of conditions, older adults don't present in a typical way, and we're seeing that with COVID-19 as well," said Dr. Camille Vaughan, section chief of geriatrics and gerontology at Emory University.

The reason has to do with how older bodies respond to illness and infection.

At advanced ages, "someone's immune response may be blunted and their ability to regulate temperature may be altered," said Dr. Joseph Ouslander, a professor of

“

**With a lot of conditions, older adults don't present in a typical way, and we're seeing that with COVID-19 as well.**

*Dr. Camille Vaughan, section chief of geriatrics and gerontology at Emory University*

geriatric medicine at Florida Atlantic University's Schmidt College of Medicine.

"Underlying chronic illnesses can mask or interfere with signs of infection," he said. "Some older people, whether from age-related changes or previous neurologic issues such as a stroke, may have altered cough reflexes. Others with cognitive impairment may not be able to communicate their symptoms."

Recognizing danger signs is important: If early signs of COVID-19 are missed, seniors may deteriorate before getting needed care. And people may go in and out of their homes without adequate protective measures, risking the spread of infection.

*Continued on Page 10*

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## Seniors With COVID-19 Show Unusual Symptoms, Doctors Say

Our pandemic lockdown is particularly hard on those who it most seeks to protect—vulnerable seniors

*Continued from Page 9*

Dr. Quratulain Syed, an Atlanta geriatrician, describes a man in his 80s whom she treated in mid-March. Over a period of days, this patient, who had heart disease, diabetes, and moderate cognitive impairment, stopped walking and became incontinent and profoundly lethargic. But he didn't have a fever or a cough. His only respiratory symptom: sneezing off and on.

The man's elderly spouse called 911 twice. Both times, paramedics checked his vital signs and declared he was OK. After another worried call from the overwhelmed spouse, Syed insisted the patient be taken to the hospital, where he tested positive for COVID-19.

"I was quite concerned about the paramedics and health aides who'd been in the house and who hadn't used PPE [personal protective equipment]," Syed said.

Dr. Sam Torbati, medical director of the Ruth and Harry Roman Emergency Department at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, describes treating seniors who initially appear to be trauma patients but are found to have COVID-19.

"They get weak and dehydrated," he said, "and when they stand to walk, they collapse and injure themselves badly."

Torbati has seen older adults who are profoundly disoriented and unable to speak and who appear at first to have suffered strokes.

"When we test them, we discover that what's producing these changes is a central nervous system effect of coronavirus," he said.

Dr. Laura Perry, an assistant professor of medicine at the University of California—San Francisco, saw a patient like this several weeks ago. The woman, in her 80s, had what seemed to be a cold before becoming very confused. In the hospital, she couldn't identify where she was or stay awake during an examination. Perry diagnosed hypoactive delirium, an altered mental state in which people become inactive and drowsy. The patient tested positive for COVID-19 and is still in the ICU.

Dr. Anthony Perry, an associate professor of geriatric medicine at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, tells of an 81-year-old woman with nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea who tested positive for COVID-19 in the emergency room. After receiving IV fluids, oxygen, and medication for her intestinal upset, she returned home after two days and is doing well.

Another 80-year-old patient with similar symptoms—nausea and vomiting, but no cough, fever, or shortness of breath—is in intensive care after getting a positive COVID-19 test and due to be put on a ventilator. The difference? This patient is frail with "a lot of cardiovascular diseases," Perry said. Other than that, it isn't yet clear why some older patients do well while others do not.

So far, reports of cases like these have been anecdotal. But a few physicians are trying to gather more systematic information.

In Switzerland, Dr. Sylvain Nguyen, a geriatrician at the University of Lausanne Hospital Center, put together a list of typical and atypical symptoms in older COVID-19 patients for a paper

to be published in the *Revue Médicale Suisse*. Included on the atypical list are changes in a patient's usual status, delirium, falls, fatigue, lethargy, low blood pressure, painful swallowing, fainting, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and the loss of smell and taste.

Data comes from hospitals and nursing homes in Switzerland, Italy, and France, Nguyen said in an email.

On the front lines, physicians need to make sure they carefully assess an older patient's symptoms.

"While we have to have a high suspicion of COVID-19 because it's so dangerous in the older population, there are many other things to consider," said Dr. Kathleen Unroe, a geriatrician at Indiana University's School of Medicine.

**Included on the atypical list are changes in a patient's usual status, delirium, falls, fatigue, lethargy, low blood pressure, painful swallowing, fainting, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and the loss of smell and taste.**

Seniors may also do poorly because their routines have changed. In nursing homes and most assisted living centers, activities have stopped, and "residents are going to get weaker and more deconditioned because they're not walking to and from the dining hall," she said.

At home, isolated seniors may not be getting as much help with medication management or other essential needs from family members who are keeping their distance, other experts suggested. Or they may have become apathetic or depressed.

"I'd want to know, 'What's the potential this person has had exposure [to COVID-19], especially in the last two weeks?'" said Vaughan of Emory. "Do they have home health personnel coming in? Have they gotten together with other family members? Are chronic conditions being controlled? Is there another diagnosis that seems more likely?"

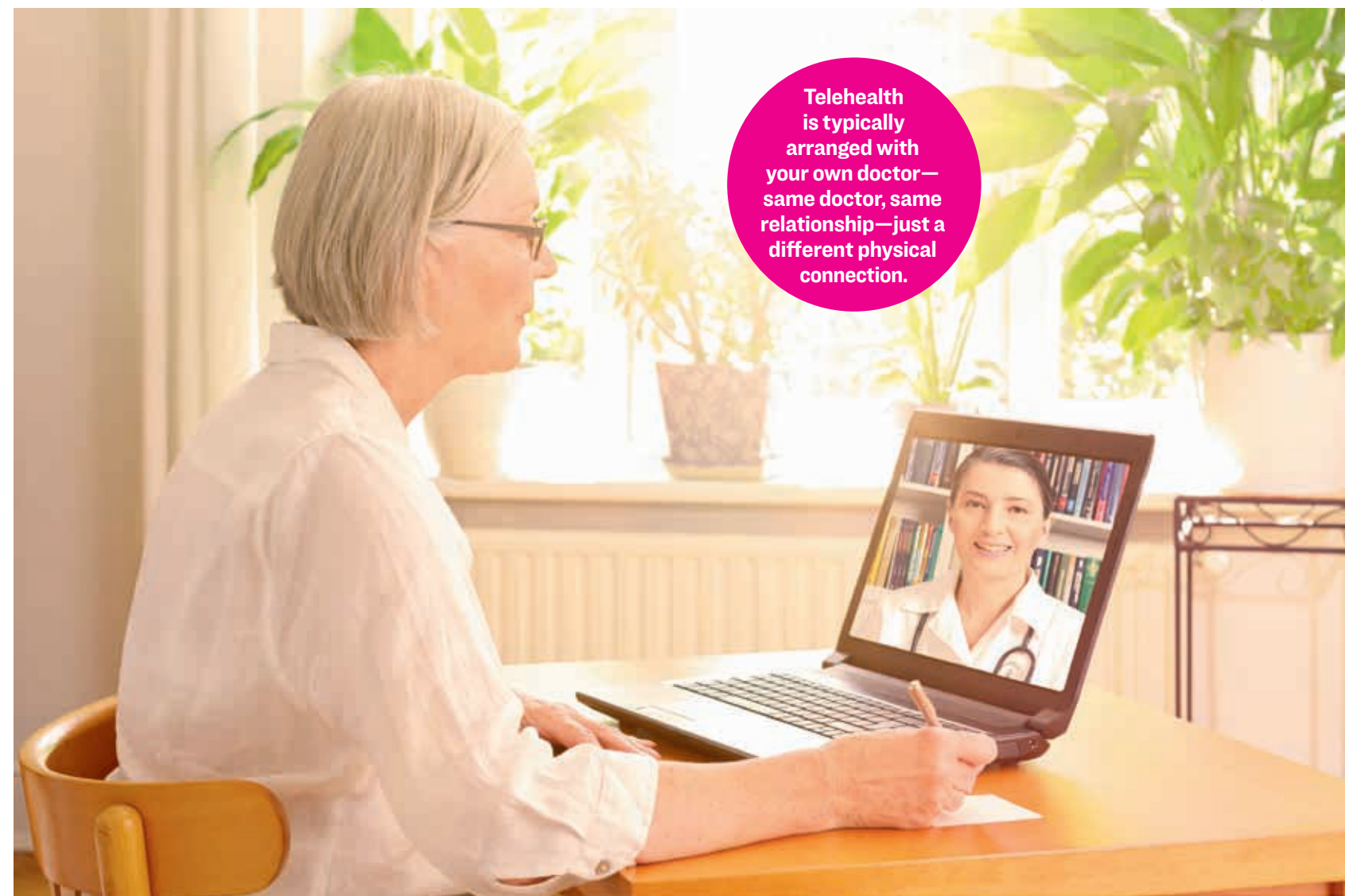
"Someone may be just having a bad day. But if they're not themselves for a couple of days, absolutely reach out to a primary care doctor or a local health system hotline to see if they meet the threshold for [COVID-19] testing," Vaughan advised. "Be persistent. If you get a no the first time and things aren't improving, call back and ask again."

*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.*

MARCOS MESA SAM WORDLEY/SHUTTERSTOCK



They may seem unusually apathetic or confused, losing orientation to their surroundings.



Telehealth is typically arranged with your own doctor—same doctor, same relationship—just a different physical connection.

## Chronic Conditions Worsen COVID-19 Risk—so Make Sure to Manage Them

Your ongoing health concerns need to be tended to, especially if they place you at greater risk from COVID-19

LAURIE ARCHBALD-PANNONE

Amid the stress and confusion of COVID-19 shutdowns and social-distancing orders, it can seem to older patients as though everything is on pause. Clinics have postponed regular office visits. Patients worry about going to pharmacies and grocery stores. There's even anecdotal evidence that people with serious issues such as chest pain are avoiding emergency rooms.

One important fact must not get overlooked amid this pandemic: Chronic health conditions still need attention.

If you had diabetes before the pandemic, you still have diabetes and should be monitoring your blood sugar levels. If you were advised to follow a low-salt diet before the pandemic to control your blood pressure, you still need to follow a low-salt diet during what my spouse calls "the duration." If you had to check in with your doctor if your weight increased from underlying congestive heart failure, you still need to check your weight daily and call your doctor.

As I remind my geriatric patients, taking care of chronic conditions is even more critical

right now as COVID-19 raises the risk for people with underlying medical problems.

**Lungs, Heart, and Even Kidneys**

If you have chronic medical conditions and you become infected with COVID-19, you'll likely face an increased risk of developing severe symptoms.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention looked at a sample of U.S. patients with COVID-19 and found that 89 percent of those hospitalized in March had underlying conditions. The percentage rose to 94 percent for patients age 65 and older.

COVID-19 primarily affects the lungs, and people with lung diseases, such as COPD, have less "pulmonary reserve," which is like having a backup generator waiting to kick in if the power goes out. So, what might have been a mild infection for someone else can develop into a severe infection for someone with lung problems.

Beyond the lungs, doctors and scientists are starting to see signs that COVID-19 may have devastating effects on the kidneys and heart. An extreme immune system response known as a cytokine storm can damage organs, and mini blood

clots have developed in some patients.

High blood pressure, congestive heart failure, or diabetes can also increase the risk of developing severe symptoms from COVID-19. In the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sample, 73 percent of older patients hospitalized with COVID-19 also had hypertension, about a third had diabetes, and just over half had cardiovascular disease.

**How to Keep Seeing Your Doctor**

Managing chronic conditions amid a pandemic is not easy. It requires adjusting daily routines and dealing with new obstacles.

One of the challenges is medical appointments. During the pandemic, most geriatric clinics have postponed in-person visits for routine check-ups to avoid exposing patients or staff to COVID-19. But that doesn't mean your doctor isn't there for you.

My clinic, for example, has transitioned most patient appointments to telehealth. This allows us to keep in touch with our patients and their symptoms and to adjust treatment plans in real time.

Online portals with "virtual waiting rooms" allow for video

visits between patient and doctor. For patients who don't have access to the internet or aren't as comfortable with technology, the telephone works, too. Patients can send photos of my clinic visits with my geriatric patients are now by telephone. We schedule time for the clinic appointment, the clinic staff registers the patient, and then I call the patient for the check-up.

I was in the middle of one of these visits recently when a patient asked me if I thought they should try telehealth. I was surprised by the question, and the patient was surprised by my answer—we were in the middle of a telehealth visit. I realized that the common picture of telehealth conveys a complex process, perhaps similar to calling a customer service line.

Telehealth is typically arranged with your own doctor—same doctor, same relationship—just a different physical connection.

**What About Prescription Refills?**

Even if a clinic no longer has routine patient appointments, the office is probably still staffed. Patients can call the clinic and may also be able to request medi-

ation refills online.

Patients should check if their insurance company will allow 90-day supplies rather than the usual 30 days so they can limit trips to the pharmacy. Some pharmacies are also providing medication delivery or curbside pickup now so high-risk patients don't have to walk inside the store.

**Staying On a Diet**

Diet is often one of the toughest adjustments needed for controlling chronic medical conditions.

Watching what we eat can be even more challenging during a pandemic. Following a low-carb diet for diabetes, following a low-salt diet for congestive heart failure, or following a low-cholesterol diet for heart disease isn't simple when people are sitting at home with stocked pantries and unable to get to the grocery store for fresh produce.

To avoid snacking out of boredom, try creating a daily meal and snack schedule.

Staying hydrated can also help. Hormones that tell us when we need to drink something don't respond as well as we age, so our bodies may need water but we may interpret that as hunger and indulge in an unhealthy snack.

If getting to the grocery store is a challenge, check if the store has senior-only hours, delivery, or curbside pickup. A friend, neighbor, or family member might be able to go grocery shopping for you. Many people are eager to help and just need to be asked.

**Staying Out of the Hospital**

Even if you don't get COVID-19, it is still critically important that you continue to manage your chronic medical conditions.

**73 percent of older patients hospitalized with COVID-19 also had hypertension, about a third had diabetes, and just over half had cardiovascular disease.**

When chronic conditions aren't managed, patients run a higher risk of ending up in the emergency room and hospital—places where COVID-19 patients are likely also being treated and that have become overburdened amid the pandemic.

One of the best ways to help them is to take care of yourself. Stay home. Stay well. Stay connected.

*Laurie Archbald-Pannone is an associate professor of medicine at the University of Virginia. This article was first published on The Conversation.*

## Best Test for COVID-19: Spit Sample or Nasal Swab?

Researchers call for 'immediate validation' after finding better test protocol for COVID-19

MICHAEL GREENWOOD

Saliva samples are a "preferable" indicator for COVID-19 infection than the deep nasal swabs now widely used, according to a new study.

The study, conducted with 44 inpatients and 98 health care workers, found that saliva samples taken from just inside the mouth provide greater detection sensitivity and consistency throughout the course of infection than the broadly recommended nasopharyngeal (NP) approach.

The study also found less variability in results with the self-sample collection of saliva, researchers say.

"Taken together, our findings demonstrate that saliva is a viable and more sensitive alternative to nasopharyngeal swabs and could enable at-home self-administered sample collection for accurate large-scale SARS-CoV-2 testing," said first

author Anne Wyllie, an associate research scientist at the Yale School of Public Health and a member of its Public Health Modeling Unit.

The researchers also report that the saliva approach detected SARS-CoV-2 in two asymptomatic health care workers who had previously tested negative for the virus in an NP swab test.

Saliva testing may be especially useful due to its accuracy in identifying mild SARS-CoV-2 infections not detected with other methods, the researchers say.

More sensitive and consistent detection is expected to be critical in helping to assess when individuals can safely return to work and when local economies can reopen during the current pandemic.

The study hasn't been subject to peer review. The research results are currently available on the pre-print server medRxiv. The researchers called for the "immediate

validation" of the results.

Nasopharyngeal testing is considered the gold standard for detecting many upper respiratory tract pathogens.

The study notes that saliva is an appealing alternative to NP swabs because collecting saliva is minimally invasive to patients; saliva samples can be reliably self-administered; and saliva has exhibited comparable sensitivity to nasopharyngeal swabs in the detection of other respiratory pathogens.

The NP testing approach involves inserting a swab deep into the nostril and into the region of the pharynx. The swab is rotated to collect secretions, removed, then sent to a certified lab for analysis.

On April 13, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration gave emergency-use authorization for a saliva-based test for COVID-19 developed by researchers at RUCDR Infinite Biologics, a biorepository backed by Rutgers University. The approved test must

be conducted in a health care setting under the supervision of a qualified professional. "With further validation, the widespread use of saliva sampling could be transformative for public health efforts," Wyllie said.

Saliva testing requires fewer resources, personal protective equipment, and personnel than does nasopharyngeal swabbing, the researcher said.

"Once tests and laboratories are validated for using saliva, this could be rapidly implemented and immediately resolve many of the resource and safety issues with SARS-CoV-2 testing," said Nathan Grubaugh, an assistant professor at the Yale School of Public Health and one of the senior authors of the study.

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# UV Rays Emitted Inside Trachea Could ‘Eradicate’ Viruses and Bacteria

Testing continues on new therapeutic use of ultraviolet light that could reduce deaths among COVID-19 patients

MICHAEL WING

A new medical technology that emits ultraviolet light inside the body could be used as a therapeutic to eradicate “a wide range of viruses and bacteria, inclusive of coronavirus,” a press release stated on April 20. Just as the sun can directly kill certain pathogens through its ultraviolet light, so too can devices that utilize this same spectrum.

Pharmaceutical company Aytu BioScience is currently testing the “Healight,” a medical device that administers intermittent ultraviolet (UVA) light inside the trachea of a patient. It’s intended as a respiratory viral intervention with the “potential to positively impact outcomes for critically ill patients infected with coronavirus and severe respiratory infections,” the release stated.

The therapeutic was developed by a research team at the Medically Associated Science and Technology (MAST) program at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. The team is currently working with Aytu BioScience and the FDA to expedite a regulatory process for near-term use of the technology.

In the same week as this announcement, the White House

also presented findings that support the use of UV light for the eradication of viruses.

**Pharmaceutical company Aytu BioScience is currently testing the ‘Healight,’ a medical device that administers intermittent ultraviolet (UVA) light inside the trachea of a patient.**

During the coronavirus task force briefing at the White House on April 23, Bill Bryan, the head of Science and Technology for Homeland Security shared data asserting the powerful effects that solar and UV light has on the CCP virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus, particularly when on nonporous surfaces such as door handles and stainless steel. Increased heat and humidity were also shown to reduce the

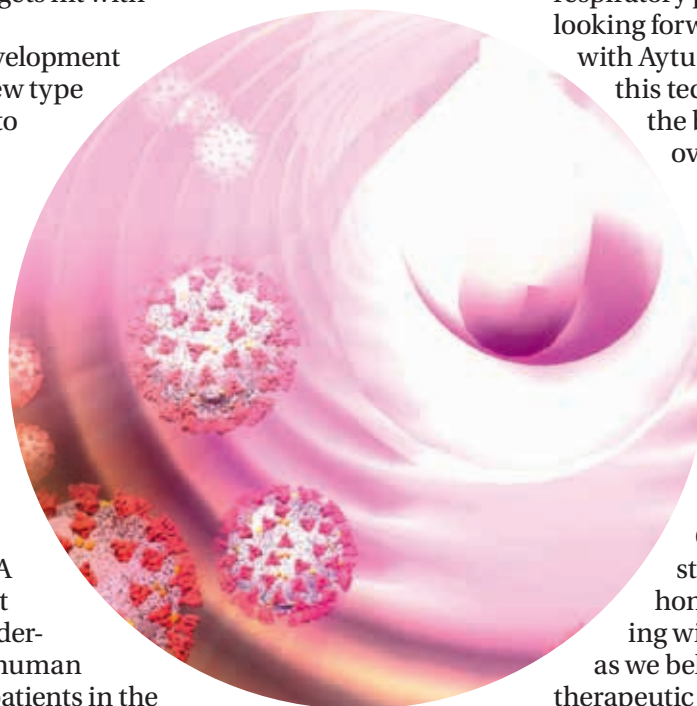
half-life of the viruses, he said. “The virus dies the quickest in the presence of direct sunlight,” Bryan said. “Very significant difference when it gets hit with UV rays.”

Now with the development of Healight, this new type of therapy is close to reality.

The technology has been in development since 2016, and a growing body of scientific data demonstrates the preclinical safety and effectiveness of the technology as an antibacterial treatment. The FDA has been looking at the data and considering how to enable human use for intubated patients in the intensive care unit.

Healight also promises broader applications “across a range of viral and bacterial pathogens,” the release states, including for bacteria implicated in ventilator-associated pneumonia.

“Our team has shown that administering a specific spectrum of UV-A light can eradicate viruses in infected human cells (including coronavirus) and



Coronavirus doesn't survive long in the presence of ultraviolet light.

bacteria in the area while preserving healthy cells,” said Dr. Mark Pimentel, executive director of MAST at Cedars-Sinai.

One of the inventors of Healight, Dr. Ali Rezaie stated: “Our lab at Cedars-Sinai has extensively studied the effects of this unique technology on bacteria and viruses. Based on our findings we believe this therapeutic approach has the potential to significantly impact the high morbidity and mortality of coronavirus-infected patients and patients infected with other respiratory pathogens. We are looking forward to partnering with Aytu BioScience to move this technology forward for the benefit of patients all over the world.”

Aytu BioScience has licensed exclusive worldwide rights to the Healight platform from Cedars-Sinai for all endotracheal and nasopharyngeal conditions. Aytu BioScience CEO Josh Disbrow stated: “We are honored to be partnering with Cedars-Sinai as we believe the Healight therapeutic platform has the potential to help many patients during this coronavirus pandemic and beyond.”

“This first-in-class technology has the potential to be a game-changer for clinicians treating patients infected with coronavirus and other respiratory conditions, and our team is working tirelessly alongside the Cedars-Sinai team to determine the safety and effectiveness of this device in humans.”

# Fewer Calls to Child Abuse Hotlines Raises Red Flags

NEIL SCHOENHERR

Child abuse and neglect hotlines report a decline in calls in recent weeks. While normally good news, it doesn’t bode well during COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, an expert said.

“Normally, a decrease in calls about alleged child abuse and neglect or maltreatment would be a welcome start to child abuse prevention month, but the context of current declines is worrisome,” said Melissa Jonson-Reid, professor of social work research at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis.

“Both theory and data suggest that stress and poverty are powerful contributors to child abuse and neglect.”

“Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis is increasing both psychological stress and economic strain. The very few studies we have on the impact of disasters on rates of child maltreatment suggest that there may be a link.”

While recent reports raise the possibility that the declines might be due to school closures, Jonson-Reid thinks more is going on. “The typical drop we see due to schools

closing in summer is too small to explain the reported drops of 30 percent to 70 percent across various states,” she said. “During stay-at-home orders, children go unseen by a host of possible reporters.”

“It is imperative that we do everything we can to be aware of the well-being of children in our communities. Social distancing need not prevent phone calls or emails to neighbors and family, help with groceries for those who cannot get out, and providing clear messages to families about where to get resources for parenting and meeting basic needs.”

In addition to the many regional efforts, she said, Prevent Child Abuse America has a number of tips and resources related to COVID-19 for parents, children, service providers, and the community on its website.

After social distancing ends, it is possible there will be a surge in reports across the country as children return to daycares, visit relatives, see their doctors, attend schools, and so on.

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*Melissa Jonson-Reid, professor of social work research at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis*



# Stress Has Adults Drinking and Getting High More

Social distancing and depression could be behind rise in substance use among COVID-19 patients

JARED WADLEY

During COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, more adults report using alcohol and drugs to cope with stress, researchers report.

More than 1 in 4 adults (28 percent) report using alcohol or drugs to feel better, according to a new study that tracked behaviors a week after the World Health Organization announced the pandemic in mid-March.

Adults reporting a variety of coping strategies to deal with mental and physical health concerns related to uncertainty with the pandemic.

Concerns include feeling tired or having little energy, trouble sleeping and relaxing, and feeling hopeless and afraid, said Shawna Lee, associate professor of social work at the University of Michigan and lead author of the research brief.

The sample includes responses from 562 adults (both parents and nonparents)—many of whom report that their depression and anxiety spiked several days or more in the previous two weeks. Among the report’s findings:

- Nearly all respondents reported they engage in social distancing, but fewer reported they were in lockdown or social isolation. When asked about worries associated with the coronavirus, 47 percent indicated they worry they can’t afford to pay bills, and 53 percent worry that money will run out.
- About 22 percent said they drink alcohol more, and 14 percent said they used marijuana more since the pandemic began.
- Symptoms of depression were high: Two out of three reported feeling tired or having little energy, trouble sleeping, and feeling hopeless. About 32

percent of respondents had symptoms that would indicate major depression.

- At least 50 percent reported symptoms of anxiety nearly every day or several days a week since the pandemic. Approximately 32 percent of respondents had symptoms that would indicate mild anxiety, about 19 percent for moderate anxiety, and 17 percent for severe anxiety.
- In the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, symptoms of depression and anxiety were much higher than would be expected in the general population. However, respondents also said they were using coping mechanisms such as acceptance (96 percent of respondents), taking action to make the situation better (89 percent), and turning to work or other activities to take their minds off things (84 percent).
- Among those in romantic relationships,

22 percent reported having disagreements with their partner related to COVID-19, 19 percent reported more disagreements than usual, and 15 percent reported more verbal fights than usual.

• Although about 1 in 4 respondents were having more conflicts in the first two weeks after the pandemic, a majority (71 percent) said they have felt emotionally closer to their partner than usual.

The findings suggest that as disruptions to daily life worsen, mental health professionals need to prepare for an increase in mental health and substance use problems, Lee said.

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# Foods That Resemble the Organs They Are Good For

Doctrine of signatures holds relevance as researchers discover once-hidden worlds of nutrition

ANDREA DONSKY

Centuries ago, many people followed a philosophy known as the doctrine of signatures. This way of thinking involved choosing certain fruits, vegetables, and other plants that resembled organs, and deciding they must be good for that body part. Does that sound a bit bizarre?

It turns out our ancestors were not far off the mark. Here are 12 examples of foods that resemble organs they’re good for, and why.

**1. Avocados and the uterus.** An avocado contains omega-3 fatty acids, which helps lower the secretion of a hormone-like substance (prostaglandin) that can make the uterus contract and cause pain. Avocados are also an excellent source of vitamin C, which can help reduce the risk of fibroids developing in the uterus.

**2. Carrots and eyes.** Perhaps the biggest contribution of carrots to eye health is their high level of beta-carotene, a potent antioxidant that the body converts to vitamin A. This vitamin plays a key role in reducing the chance of developing macular degeneration in older adults. Note, however, that carrots (or vitamin A) will not improve eyesight unless you have a vitamin A deficiency.

**3. Celery and bones.** Straight and sturdy, stalks of celery do resemble human bones, especially those in the legs and arms. Celery packs a good supply of vitamin K, which works at the cellular level, along with vitamin D, to build bone. Vitamin K also facilitates

the absorption of calcium, a mineral critical for bone health. Other nutrients in celery that support bone health include vitamin C (helps form collagen, a protein that binds bone matrix cells together), magnesium (works with calcium), and manganese (helps make connective tissue in bone).

**4. Clams and testicles.** Foods that are rich in antioxidants help to prevent inflammation that can lead to a host of chronic illnesses including testicular cancer. Clams provide a wealth of antioxidants, including an extraordinary amount of selenium and excellent levels of copper, zinc, and vitamins A and C. Clams also have a fair amount of vitamin B5, which has been shown to improve testicular function in rats.

**5. Citrus and the breast.** Citrus fruits, including lemons, oranges, limes, and grapefruit, have been named as helping to prevent breast cancer. These foods are great sources of carotenoids and flavonoids, which have been associated with a reduced risk of cancer.

**6. Ginger and the stomach.** Ginger has a long history among many societies as a natural remedy for stomach problems, including indigestion, nausea, and vomiting. In fact, scientists have identified gingerol as a phytochemical in the herb that can help prevent nausea and vomiting. Is it any surprise the herb looks like the organ?

**7. Grapes and the lungs.** If you are wondering how grapes look like the lungs, the resemblance comes from inside the organ.



Mushrooms are a good source of vitamin D, and this vitamin plays a critical role in hearing and ear health.

A shelled walnut looks like a mini brain, and the resemblance is uncanny.

That’s where the alveoli (tiny branches of tissue that allow oxygen to pass through) are located, and they look like a bunch of grapes. A link between grapes and the lungs comes from the seeds, which contain proanthocyanidin. This chemical has been shown to lower the severity of asthma brought on by allergies.

**8. Mushrooms and ears.** Mushrooms are a good source of vitamin D, and this vitamin plays a critical role in hearing and ear health. Vitamin D is important in the formation of the fragile bones that are in your ears and their healthy functioning.

**9. Olives and the ovaries.** The resemblance between olives and the ovaries is easy to see, but do these little fruits hold any benefits for these female organs? Among the foods noted to be important for uterine health are fruits and healthy oily foods. Olives fall into both of these categories.

**10. Sweet potatoes and the pancreas.** Sweet potatoes are good for the pancreas on several levels. For anyone who has pancreatitis, it’s important to eat nutrient-dense foods, and sweet potatoes fit that bill. This food is exceptionally rich in beta-carotene/vitamin A while also providing good levels of vitamin C, potassium, iron, and magnesium. Sweet potatoes also help balance the glycemic index and thus help manage diabetes and the organ involved in insulin production—the pancreas.

**11. Tomatoes and the heart.** The connection between tomatoes and the heart lies with the antioxidant lycopene, which is found at high levels in tomatoes. Lycopene is credited with helping to reduce the risk for heart disease.

**12. Walnuts and the brain.** A shelled walnut looks like a mini brain, and the resemblance is uncanny. Walnuts have nearly twice the antioxidants as other common nuts, and they also are a rich source of the omega-3 fatty acid known as DHA (docosahexaenoic acid). DHA is critical for the healthy development of the brain and also is involved in managing mood and cognition.

*Andrea Donsky is an author, registered holistic nutritionist, editor-in-chief of NaturallySavvy.com, and co-founder of The Healthy Shopper Inc. and Naturally Savvy Media. This article was first published on NaturallySavvy.com—a recipient of Healthline’s Best Healthy Living Blogs for 2019.*

# Fighting Weight Gain During COVID-19 Quarantine

Being stuck at home is lowering our caloric needs—and giving us more time to eat

MOHAN GARIKIPARITHI

Depending on where you live, it’s been about a month since North America virtually shut down. Outside of “essential” workers, many people have been directed inside and might be starting to notice some weight gain.

Some people I’ve talked to have put on eight pounds. Others have put on half that, while some have stayed steady or lost. The people that have gained the most, however, are shocked by the number.

You see, even if you don’t consider yourself particularly active, you may not realize how much movement you were getting each day before the stay-at-home orders. But those trips to the grocery store, pharmacy, and bathroom breaks at work really add up.

With those out of the picture, you’re not expending the same kind of energy you usually would. To compound the drop in movement, you might be eating the same way you did prior to the lockdown, so calories you’d typically burn are hanging around as unwanted fat.

Although your diet hasn’t changed, your caloric demands have. So, what can you do? If you’re following the same eating patterns as you were two months ago, look at how your activity may have changed. If you’re no longer working out or running the errands you normally did, you’ve prob-

ably entered a caloric surplus.

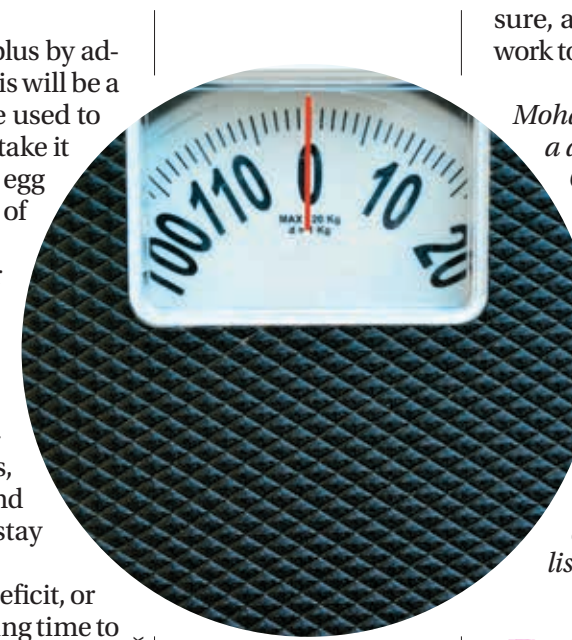
You can combat a caloric surplus by adjusting food intake. For most, this will be a very slight adjustment. If you’re used to a half-cup of oats for breakfast, take it down to a third of a cup. Eat one egg instead of two, or use one slice of bread for a sandwich.

Shaving 250–500 calories per day should be enough for most people. Easy ways to do this are to pay attention to hunger and make sure it’s not raring, and eat nutrient-dense, low-calorie foods such as vegetables, whole grains, fruits with fiber, and protein-rich foods to help you stay fuller for longer.

You can also create a caloric deficit, or maintain a balance, by dedicating time to move your body. Try to figure out about how long you spend moving per week, and try to replicate it at home.

Three hours of shopping, an hour for bathroom breaks at work, plus any other movement must be considered. Walking around your house or neighborhood can help replace that lost activity to help flatten the curve on weight gain.

You aren’t likely to have to make major adjustments to mitigate COVID-related weight gain, but it’s important to start now. The longer you put it off, the higher risk you are for conditions such as high blood pres-



You can combat a caloric surplus by adjusting food intake.

sure, and the harder you’ll have to work to lose it.

*Mohan Garikiparithi holds a degree in medicine from Osmania University (University of Health Sciences). He practiced clinical medicine for over a decade. During a three-year communications program in Germany, he developed an interest in German medicine (homeopathy) and other alternative systems of medicine. This article was originally published on Bel Marra Health.*

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## MINDSET MATTERS

# Developing a Mindset of Resilience

The hardships of COVID-19 present challenges, opportunities to grow

MYRA GIBEROVITCH

Resilience-based research tells us that how we deal with adversity is more important than the actual traumatic event. It's best to be proactive and engaged when facing challenges. We're in trouble if we fall into a state of "learned helplessness," in which we believe we have no control over changing or controlling our situation.

Psychologists define resilience as "the process of adapting well in the face of significant sources of stress."

In general, people are highly resilient and can adapt well to stressful events. Most of us are competent, adaptive, resourceful, and resilient. We cope as best as we can with difficulties such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Proactive Thoughts and Actions

If we are proactive, there's also evidence to support several protective factors that can mitigate our stress and make us more resilient. We can try to maintain a positive outlook and problem-solve solutions. That requires we recognize our strengths and conditions so we can take action, no matter how small.

It helps tremendously to have a social support network, which can be friends and family, or other community support services. And it's important to acknowledge our feelings to manage them well, which might mean looking for a constructive emotional outlet to relax and feel more upbeat.

Deep breathing, relaxation exercises, gentle hobbies such as knitting, gardening, and other soothing and calming activities can help reduce stress and lower cortisol levels. This will also help our immune system better respond to pathogens.

Our overall character is crucial;

we should seek out life-affirming activities that give meaning and purpose.

We should be kind and show we value the kind and caring people we know. This is one of many ways we can practice gratitude.

Fear and hope can contend for our attention. Fear can freeze us, or compel us to act with the assistance of courage. Find your courage and face your fear.

Grow positively from this experience and you will be rewarded with a more resilient version of yourself who is better prepared to face future challenges.

## Tips for Fostering Resilience

So how do we foster this resilience? Below are some tips from my work with Holocaust survivors over the past 30 years, from research, and life lessons. Resilience involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that we can learn and develop.

Here is an incomplete list of strategies:

## Psychologists define resilience as 'the process of adapting well in the face of significant sources of stress.'

### Adapt to Circumstances

There are many things you can't change, no matter how difficult. In that case, all you can do is adapt.

I learned this life lesson from my late mother, a Holocaust survivor. At age 15, she was interned in the Lodz ghetto in Poland and then shipped to Auschwitz death camp.



Her words inspire me whenever I am faced with a challenge.

She made everyday choices to control her environment.

One of them was choosing her attitude and taking action when responding to situations. She had a positive attitude and never dwelled on her suffering. She persevered and never gave up, not even when her entire family was deported to their deaths and she was left alone in the ghetto.

She cried herself to sleep each night and in the morning, she put her energies into staying alive.

And most importantly, she never lost hope—that things would improve—that she would survive and rebuild her life.

### Choose Your Attitude and Action

Although we have no control over the attitudes and behaviors of oth-

ers, we can choose how we react in any given situation, even in the most horrendous circumstances.

As noted by Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist Dr. Victor Frankl in his book "Man's Search for Meaning," "Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except for one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation."

Many survivors say that it was "luck" that helped them to survive. However, I've observed that many people survived because of the everyday choices they made and the actions they took or chose not to take.

### Start Your Day With a Distress Practice

Inoculate yourself against stress with some habit at the beginning of your day.

Listen to calming music with

no emotional baggage, practice deep breathing/relaxation exercises, meditation, mindfulness, prayer, emotional freedom techniques (EFT), yoga, tai chi, etc. And empower yourself with limited information from legitimate news sources.

Don't become stressed from endless hours of news-watching.

### Practice Good Hygiene

This can help you to limit the spread of the virus. Taking care of yourself by eating a healthy diet, exercising, getting enough sleep, and reading inspirational literature can be a form of self-care.

Do something special for yourself every day. Avoid alcohol, drugs, and other substances that deplete your immune system.

### Acknowledge Your Feelings

Tune into how you feel and give

yourself permission to feel fear, anxiety, sadness, worry, etc. Most of us are grieving some form of loss, be it a loved one, a job, or the stability of our upended life. Process your grief by talking about it or writing down the things you've lost and what's different for you now.

Allow yourself to be vulnerable and have patience for your process. Share your thoughts and feelings with a family member, friend, or therapist—someone you trust and who has a calming effect on you.

### Recognize Strengths and Coping Strategies

We all have them. Identify and list ways in which you've coped with adversity in the past. Be proud of your achievements and explore ways in which you can apply them

in your current situation.

### See yourself through a resilience lens and say things such as, "I can handle this," "I am coping with this situation to the best of my ability," "I am courageous," "I am strong," "I am brave," "I've got this."

Have a Positive Attitude

Visualize a positive outcome. Incorporate a positive word (e.g., wonderful, delight, awesome) into your everyday vocabulary. As your day ends, focus on at least one positive experience that happened.

### Stay Connected

Maintain close communication with family and friends, by telephone, video conference, or social media. Have lighthearted discussions. Use humor. Tell jokes. Sing songs. Write a letter.

### Seek Meaning and Purpose

Find activities that give meaning and purpose to your life. Help others. Put time into a passion project you've neglected. Connect to a

higher meaning through your belief in the divine, a deity, nature, the universe, community, etc.

### Set Boundaries

Limit watching the news: Check the news once a day and not before you go to sleep. It may keep you awake.

### Look to Heroes

Redirect your attention to those who are helping us to stay safe. When we do, we feel a "moral elevation" that inspires us, fuels optimism, and makes us want to do the same thing.

Focus on our common humanity and kindness. We aren't in this alone. Many people around the world are working hard to help us recover. Some are doing medical research, others are making sure elderly neighbors have enough groceries and social connection.

### Practice Gratitude

Show gratitude to those who are doing their best to fight the outbreak. Tell them how much you appreciate what they're doing to keep us safe.

### Consider keeping a gratitude journal. Keep it simple. At the end of the day, think about or write down at least three things you are grateful for. Remember to appreciate your body. Turn to this list when you're feeling down.

Develop a vocabulary of gratefulness because what you say influences how you think and what you do.

### Appreciate Simple Pleasures

Both of my parents appreciated the simple pleasures in life such as family, friends, their health, and a refrigerator filled with food. They took nothing for granted.

Find ways to self-soothe and lift your spirits. Read inspirational stories, eat simple nutritious food, and take time to talk with far-away friends in phone calls with time limits.

**Conclusion**  
While we find ourselves in lockdown, our minds remain unrestricted. We can take this time to develop an inner life that nourishes us during times of despair. Let's grow positively from this experience. Look at the bigger picture and positives of this situation. Pollution is clearing quickly, we are returning to a simpler way of life, and we are finding creative ways to stay connected with each other.

*Myra Giberovitch holds a master's degree in social work from McGill University and has studied holistic health and energy psychology. She integrates traditional psychology with alternative approaches to healing and growth. This article was originally published on NaturallySavvy.com*



## Allow yourself to be vulnerable and have patience for your process.

yourself permission to feel fear, anxiety, sadness, worry, etc. Most of us are grieving some form of loss, be it a loved one, a job, or the stability of our upended life. Process your grief by talking about it or writing down the things you've lost and what's different for you now.

Allow yourself to be vulnerable and have patience for your process. Share your thoughts and feelings with a family member, friend, or therapist—someone you trust and who has a calming effect on you.

If you have no one to talk to, write in a journal.

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*Myra Giberovitch holds a master's degree in social work from McGill University and has studied holistic health and energy psychology. She integrates traditional psychology with alternative approaches to healing and growth. This article was originally published on NaturallySavvy.com*

# Finding a Silver Lining in COVID-19

In the stillness imposed by self-quarantine, we can find a chance to start over

JOE DARAGO

As I remember it, my college buddy had spent a few weeks laboring over his paper. He wouldn't even go out with us on our routine fast-food runs. Instead, he stayed in the dorm banging away on his computer.

After hours and hours of work, he was making progress, but when I asked him how it was going, he expressed he wasn't happy with how it was turning out.

There was a lot of time and effort, but little satisfaction. In the beginning, he was confident the direction he chose to go with his paper would easily yield him a good grade. But now, with 75 percent of it done, he wasn't so sure.

Unfortunately, he was in too deep. The day before the assignment was due, it was too late to change course.

Then it happened. His computer mouse froze, and he panicked as he realized he forgot to back up his work. After hitting Control-Alt-Delete, it was all gone! Every word of it.

After he got over the initial shock, he rolled up his sleeves and faced his new

reality. His adrenaline raged, but his mind began to calm.

And he had a crazy idea. "What if," he thought, "I changed direction and took a different angle?"

At first, he tried to talk himself out of it. He had put so much time and energy into his old idea. But after taking one last look at the clock, he put on a pot of coffee and got to work, seeing his new direction through.

The end result certainly wasn't perfect, but he was ultimately happy with the paper.

As we continue through this pandemic, I have a similar thought running through my head. For many of us, this crisis has forced us to change direction. Many of my friends have lost jobs, businesses, investments, and loved ones. Familiar routines are gone, and the security many people felt before was gone in an instant.

While there's a great deal of tragedy in the pandemic—and I don't want to be careless about the reality and loss many people are experiencing—there is another reality that is beginning to emerge. Perhaps this crisis presents an unexpected opportunity.

Is it possible to find a silver lining in the dark cloud of COVID-19?

We are now more than a month into our own Control-Alt-Delete experience of sheltering at home. Adrenaline might still be high from the sudden change, but maybe our minds are calm enough to evaluate and reconsider.

Could we harness this unexpected and unwanted crisis and tame it for a better future for us and our families? One thing is for sure, things will never be the same. The only real question is, how will they be different for you?

As Dave Hollis wrote, "In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to."

As I write this, the president has just announced operation "Open Up America Again." And when things begin to ease back into a new normal, my hope is I will take the opportunity this crisis afforded me to keep focused on two essential truths:

### 1. Life Really Is More.

If you are a frequent reader of articles from *Becoming Minimalist*, this is not news to you. Joshua Becker, the founder of *Becoming Minimalist*, has been shouting it from the rooftops for years, and this virus has chimed in with a simi-

lar chorus.

Life is more than earning a ton of money, more than pursuing vain success, and so much more than amassing material possessions.

For some of us, what we have been chasing has been stripped away in an instant—and now we're left with a longing for what's truly important. Others of us have now been forced to hit the pause button long enough to let the dust settle in our lives and see what a mess we're making.

For me, it's more clear than ever that life is found in love for others, in kindness and generosity, in relationships with family and friends, and in the pursuit of my faith.

I have to find a way to remove what's distracting me from these essential things and continue to hear this call clearly even when things return "back to normal." Life is so much more.

### 2. Life Is to Be Lived—Right Now.

My family has been in transition for the better part of a year. My oldest got married, and another kid is graduating college this month and has already rented

an apartment. After 25 years of being a pastor, I embraced a new calling last year as the Executive Director of The Hope Effect. And to top it off, we sold our house and moved to another.

Life was moving at a blistering pace when the virus hit and slowed things down in a hurry. The good thing is—it has been driving home the importance of living now and not just waiting to live later.

Later might never come. Or perhaps even worse, it might come and I wasted years getting there. It's too easy to just let life happen to us.

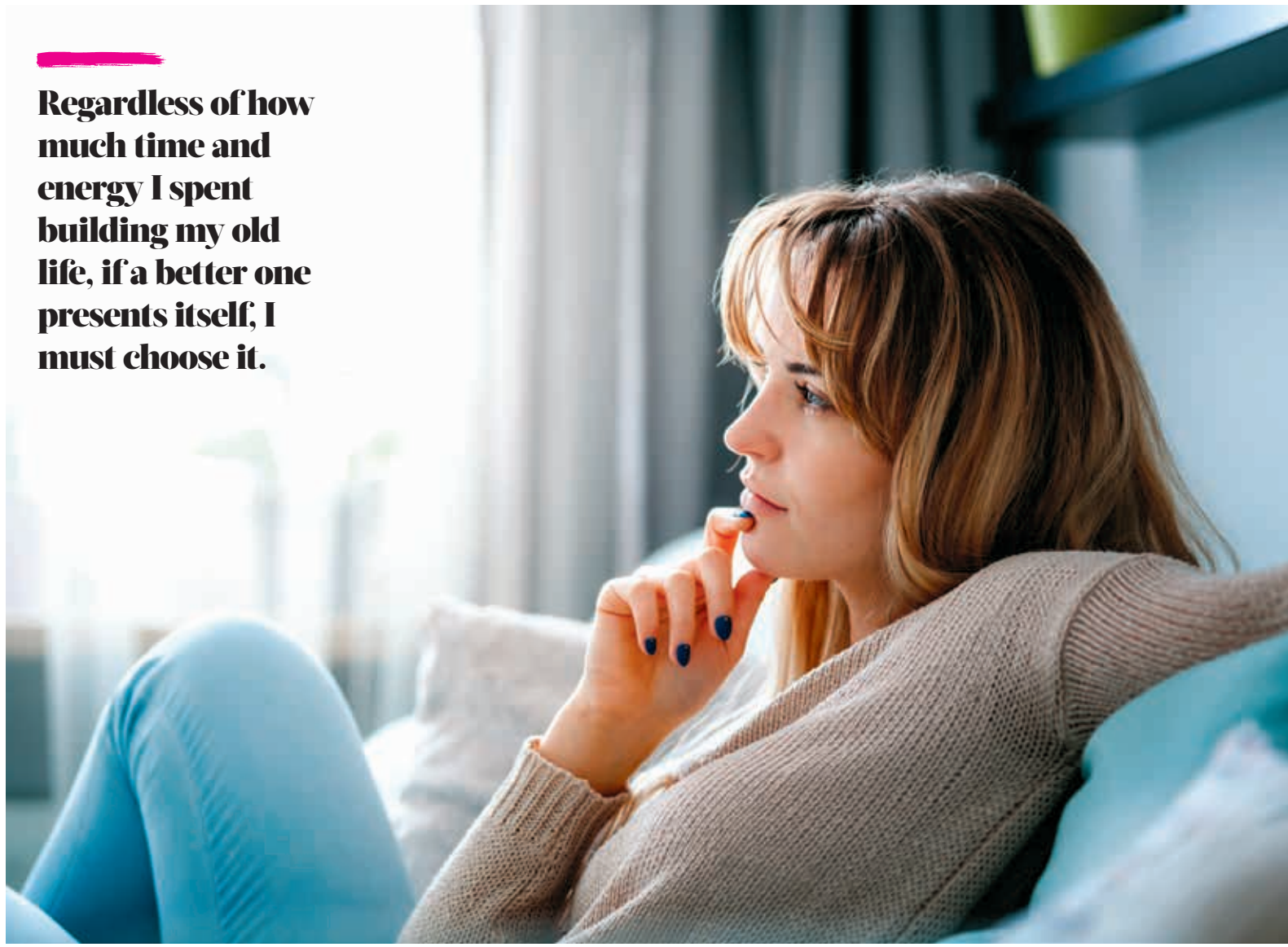
The virus has helped me to be more grateful for what I have, for the important work I get to do, for the health I have to do it, and for the resources I have to live simply with the ones I love around me.

My new normal cannot be filled with wasted effort or trivial pursuits. Regardless of how much time and energy I spent building my old life, if a better one presents itself, I must choose it.

However many more days, weeks, or years I am afforded, I want them to be lived on purpose with purpose.

*Joe Darago is executive director of The Hope Effect, a nonprofit organization co-founded by Joshua Becker, funded significantly by the Becoming Minimalist community, that is helping to change how the world cares for orphans. This article was originally published on Becoming Minimalist.*

## Regardless of how much time and energy I spent building my old life, if a better one presents itself, I must choose it.



LESZEK GLASNER/SHUTTERSTOCK



# What We Sacrifice in the Pursuit of Immortality

Our loss of spirituality feeds a narcissistic need for perpetual youth

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

“Is the first person who will live to 150 alive today?” asked a recent Wall Street Journal article. The piece features biology professor Steven Austad who contends that “today’s college students ... can expect to live a century or more because their health will be unlike anything seen before in human history.”

I had to suppress a giggle over that statement, especially as Austad went on to say that this extended life span “will be due to our new ability to prevent and delay most or all of the diseases and disabilities that plague later life.” I’m sure many of us would be curious to hear Austad explain how the COVID-19 pandemic fits his view of the future.

Nevertheless, Austad’s words demonstrate how important the quest for eternal youth is in today’s society. Why is there such a push to extend youth, and to avoid old age and death?

“Obviously men have always feared death and longed to live forever,” writes Christopher Lasch in “The Culture of Narcissism,” but there are several reasons why we’ve seen a greater emphasis on this quest in recent years.

The first is our spiritual state. “The fear of death takes on new intensity in a society that has deprived itself of religion,” Lasch explains.

As Pew Research notes, Christianity declined from being the religion of 78 percent of U.S. adults in 2007 to 65 percent in 2018–19. By contrast, the percentage of religiously unaffiliated adults grew from 16 percent to 26 percent over the same period. Upright religious belief is rooted in faith in some kind of powerful benevolence. It wants goodness from us and rewards that goodness. This central belief provides peace of mind and hope. Without this belief, is it any wonder that some people would try to prolong their youth, the best

years of their lives?

Secondly, many dread old age because society has lost its respect for its elders, ignoring their wisdom, experience, and the emotional maturity that people gain even as their bodies weaken and minds dull.

“Our society notoriously finds little use for the elderly,” writes Lasch. “By devaluing experience and setting great store by physical strength, dexterity, adaptability, and the ability to come up with new ideas, society defines productivity in ways that automatically exclude ‘senior citizens.’”

Gray hair used to be a sign of wisdom. Now, generational divides are growing sharper, and younger generations no longer look to the elderly for advice. With diminished purpose and weakened personal connections in old age, can we really blame people for trying to avoid that point in their lives?

Finally, many dread old age because they are too wrapped up in themselves.

**Many dread old age because society has lost its respect for its elders, ignoring their wisdom, experience, and the emotional maturity that people gain even as their bodies weaken and minds dull.**

Our decreased birth rates are one sign of this. Lasch explains:

“Narcissism emerges as the typical form of character structure in a society that has lost interest in the future. Psychiatrists who tell parents not to live through their offspring; married couples who postpone or reject parenthood, often for good practical reasons; social reformers who urge zero population growth, all testify to a pervasive uneasiness about reproduction—to widespread doubts, indeed, about whether our society should reproduce itself at all. ... When men find themselves incapable of taking an interest in earthly life after their own death, they wish for eternal youth, for the same reason they no longer care to reproduce themselves.”

Many of us would prefer to stay young forever. Unfortunately, that’s not going to happen on this earth. But might we remove our dread of old age and death if we deepened our connection to the divine, as well as our connections to the generations which have come before and those which will follow us?

Perhaps it’s time we invested in these things once again.

*Annie Holmquist is editor of Intellectual Takeout, an online magazine and sister publication of Chronicles. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.*



EDVARD NALBANTJAN/SHUTTERSTOCK

In a society obsessed with appearance and increasingly devoid of deeper belief, it is no wonder we prize youth and ignore the value and wisdom of our elders.

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