

WEEK 29, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND & BODY

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TRUTH and TRADITION: In Our Own Words

WE ARE HOLDING THE LINE

In America, publishing news is easy. But publishing the truth... that's very difficult.



You might've seen some of the videos we've produced over the last year. But you likely don't know the difficulty of creating this type of honest news content to be published on the big tech platforms.

Because The Epoch Times has the courage and fortitude to both investigate and report stories that most media don't as well as to call into question the "established" narratives when the facts don't seem to line up, we have been attacked, demonized, and de-platformed by the giant tech conglomerates, the legacy media outlets, and even certain service providers.

That's not to even mention how over the last 20 years, there were dozens (maybe even hundreds, but we never thought to count) of times when the Chinese Communist Party's consulates around the world have used threats to force businesses and ad agencies to

pull their advertising from our publication.

I believe that open public discourse is vitally essential to our nation. It is paramount to a free republic.

Working here over the last eight years, at a truly independent news organization, has opened my eyes to the many forces attempting to restrict your access to truthful information. And contrary to what it seems like on the surface, **these forces are not censoring our mouths. They are actually censoring your ears and your eyes.**

They are engaged in an act of theft: robbing you of the truth.

For instance, when we examined claims about the CCP virus's origins that didn't line up with the established narrative or when we looked beneath the surface of FISA abuse that took place during the 2016 election and reported inconsistencies with the mainstream narrative, we were further attacked, censored, and de-platformed—directly limiting your access to a treasure trove of our investigative findings. **So what we are doing here at The Epoch Times is not simply reporting stories or conducting investigations.**

We are holding the line.

We are taking the attacks so that you may be informed of the truth, and so our future generations may know what truth is.

We seek to be a stalwart bastion of objective reality which can stop the descent of our society into a place where our grandkids and great grandkids have internalized ever-encroaching politically correct thought confines to the point where even forming an independent idea is a crime.

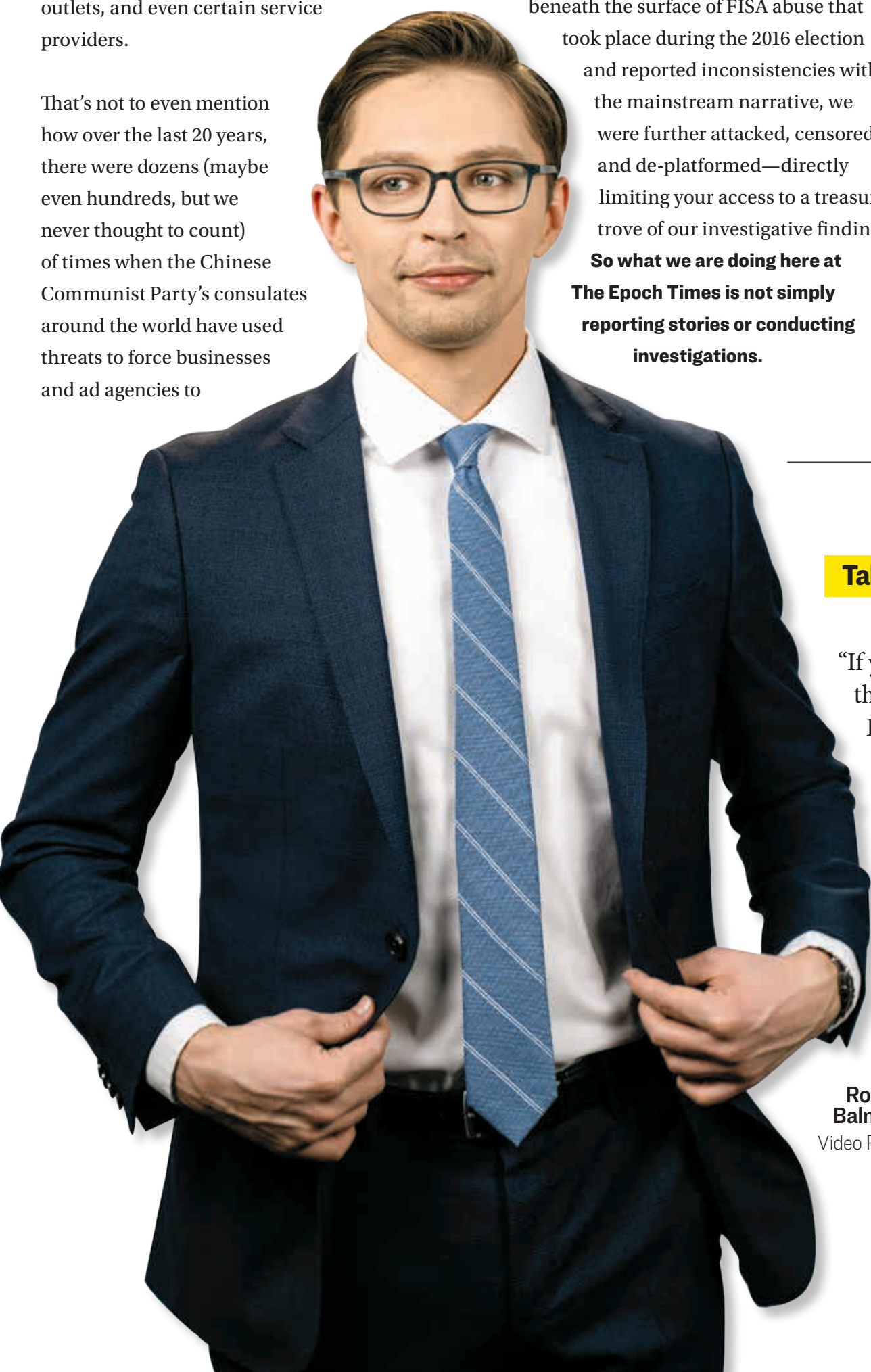
To me, that might've seemed like hyperbole 10 years ago, but having seen this encroachment first-hand, I believe it is a grim possibility that we might just "naturally" slide into it if we don't take a strong stand against it right now.

I hope you are enjoying this paper. I hope you share it with your friends, your family, and your entire community so that we can restore decency in this country's public discourse.

And I hope when that happens, you'll be there with us to see it.

In *Truth and Tradition*,

Roman Balmakov
The Epoch Times



Roman Balmakov
Video Producer

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TRUTH and TRADITION

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CONAN MILNER

Many of us have a love-hate relationship with sleep. It can be delicious when we're exhausted. But having to sacrifice so much time just to lie there with the worries of the day circling your head until you finally, hopefully drift off can make sleep seem more like a burden. If we manage to get the recommended eight hours a night, we devote a third of our lives to sleep. But this precious time also competes with endless temptations beckoning us to leave the lights on and stay up late.

Sleep-skipping habits start early. According to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), more than two-thirds of U.S. high school students (a population that may need as much as 10 hours of sleep a night) report getting less than eight hours on school nights. Some get much less. Copywriter Snezhina Piskova recalls that when she was a student she managed to get by on only three hours a night. A constant flow of coffee and energy drinks helped push her through the day, but her evenings were usually filled with insomnia-induced anxiety. Eventually, she suffered a terrible burnout.

Part of Piskova's appreciation for sleep came from learning about what it does for her body. She discovered that, despite being such a sedentary activity, sleep takes care of a lot of important business. "The body undergoes deep maintenance work, rebuilding muscles, and sorting through experiences," she said. "These processes can only occur in such depth while we are asleep."

Sleep is particularly beneficial to the brain. According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Health with the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), sleep helps you form and maintain the pathways in your brain that let you learn and create new memories. That's why a lack of sleep makes it harder to concentrate and respond to the world around us. Sleep also prevents disease. Research has

shown that chronic sleep loss can lead to high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, and weight gain, as well as increase our risk for certain forms of cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

But even if you manage to devote more time to sleep, getting enough can still be elusive. According to the latest Sleep in America Poll by the National Sleep Foundation, Americans feel sleepy on average three days a week and say their mood, mental acuity, and productivity all suffer as a result. The majority (55 percent) blame the problem on poor quality sleep.

One obvious factor in keeping us awake is caffeine. According to Dr. Ivy Branim, a New York City-based naturopathic doctor who specializes in treating insomnia, caffeine blocks the release of a brain chemical called adenosine. Adenosine levels rise by the end of the day, making us feel tired. But too much caffeine too late can inhibit this response.

How much is too much, and how late is too late? That depends on you. "The half-life of caffeine (the time it takes for half of this substance to be eliminated from the body) is typically between five and six hours, but for some people it can be as long as nine hours," Branim said. "Levels of 100mg and above of caffeine prevent the action of adenosine to produce tiredness. So if you are someone who metabolizes caffeine slowly, the cut-off time should be in the morning, and the caffeine content should be low."

Another factor that often interferes with sleep quality is the drugs we take to fall asleep. Branim says that alcohol and benzodiazepines (medications often prescribed for insomnia) can interfere with a deep stage of the sleep cycle called REM sleep. The acronym stands for rapid eye movement—one of the physical characteristics of this special sleep stage. "Plus alcohol can increase cortisol release," Branim said. "Spikes in cortisol due to alcohol will make us feel more alert, making sleep difficult."

Rest and Regeneration
One contributing aspect to sleep loss is that we like to brag about being busy. In most social circles, there is more cultural currency in talking about how much we are doing than how much we are sleeping.

Hearing talk about how little sleep others get might make you feel lazy in comparison. But Piskova says it's not a competition. It's about regeneration. "Every person is different," Piskova said. "I myself can function at full capacity with exactly eight hours, but my friend Anna is a hyperactive ball of energy with only six hours of sleep."

For optimal health, adults typically need between seven and nine hours of sleep per night (infants and toddlers may need as much 16 hours a night, plus naps). Only about 1 percent of the population (known as short sleepers) do well on six hours or less—a sleep schedule that would cause the rest of us problems with our mood and cognitive performance during the day. Depression, anxiety, bad judgment, not to mention feeling tired the next day, are common symptoms of sleep loss.

The reason we need to sleep as long as we do is that our brains and bodies need to cycle through three distinct sleep stages a few times per night to get fully recharged. Before we reach REM sleep, we first have to go through light and deep non-REM sleep stages, and we need to have enough of each to be rejuvenated for the next day. The duration of each stage can vary by age and individual. But according to Jason Piper, certified sleep coach and founder of Build Better Sleep, the body generally likes to prioritize deep sleep in the first half of the night, and REM in the second half.

"During deep sleep, all the good stuff of body restoration occurs. It does most of its repairs and growth during this stage also," Piper said. "Have you ever known someone that routinely goes to bed really late, how tired and aged their face looks? That is because the repair that normally happens is shortened."

It was once thought that dreaming only occurred in REM sleep, but recent research finds that we may dream at any stage of sleep. However, REM is when we have our most intense and vivid dreams. It may seem like we're just lying there, but during REM, the brain is just as active as someone who is awake. Piper describes it as a firmware update for a computer.

"During this time, memories are consolidated. Short-term memories move to long term, and more abstract thinking and connections happen," he said. "You know the saying, before making a decision, to sleep on it? That's why. Your brain



Practicing good sleep hygiene means adopting habits that help ensure a good night's sleep.

The Dimensions of SLEEP

Sleep restores us in stages and cycles, but some struggle to slumber

processes and analyzes it even while you are sleeping.

In general, deep sleep benefits the body, and REM the mind. But there is evidence of crossover. One 2008 study found that short sleep time is associated with overweight children and adolescents, which may be attributed to reduced REM sleep.

And it isn't just the duration and type of sleep that matters, but also the time.

Our mind and body prefer to cycle through the deeper stages of sleep in the dark of night. Piper says those who try to accomplish this cycle during the day are forced to work against the body's natural biological clock.

"This is not normal, nor recommended," he said. "Those who sleep during the day do not produce the same amount of melatonin or get as much deep and REM sleep as night sleepers. This is why you will see shift workers being diagnosed with higher incidences of cancer, diabetes, and heart disease."

In 2007, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) with the World Health Organization (WHO) published a decision based on experimental and epidemiological data stating that working the late shift is "probably carcinogenic to humans."

Overcoming Sleep Obstacles

Once we realize the importance of getting enough sleep, how can we ensure our sleep hours are truly rejuvenating?

Since alcohol and benzodiazepines are problematic, naturopath Dr. Christian Gonzalez recommends gentle, yet effective chamomile tea as a nightcap.

"Chamomile is generally used for its calmative and sleep inducing properties," Gonzalez said. "Its compound apigenin exerts these benefits by traveling to the brain and stimulating GABA receptors for a nervous system calming effect. This is the same target as popular benzodiazepines like Xanax, Ativan, and Valium."

Light is another factor that can influence our sleep quality. Gonzalez says natural light and dark cycles are imperative for the balance of our biological clock.

"This helps coordinate body physiology and immune function. Unfortunately, these delicate mechanisms are easily disrupted by artificial light," he said.

For this reason, Gonzalez recommends sleeping in the pitch black. He points to one study that shows that women who have artificial street light coming into the room were at significantly higher risk for breast cancer than those sleeping in total darkness.

"The reason for this is the disruption of the hormone melatonin, a potent antioxidant and immune stimulator against cancer cells," Gonzalez said. "Artificial light at night disrupts normal melatonin secretion."

Ideally, we should also distance ourselves from any light emitting devices, like cellphones and laptops, as we wind down before bed. This cuts our exposure to both light and electromagnetic frequencies—another factor that messes with our melatonin. A study conducted by The Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the University of Melbourne found that EMFs may influence the pineal gland, where melatonin is produced.

"How man-made EMFs may influence the pineal gland is still unsolved. The pineal gland is likely to sense EMFs as light but, as a consequence, may decrease the melatonin production," researchers state.

To avoid this unseen source of pineal stimulation, Gonzalez recommends sleeping with your phone in airplane mode, and kept at a distance from your body. Plus, turn the Wi-Fi off. You don't need it when you're sleeping anyway.

Practicing good sleep hygiene means adopting habits that help ensure a good night's sleep. But don't beat yourself up if it doesn't work right away. If you've tried everything and still can't sleep, clinical psychologist Jodi J DeLuca says don't force it. Instead, find some low-light activity to occupy your mind for a little while.

"Get up, leave the bedroom, and do something that doesn't require too much physical or mental energy, such as reading, listening to an audio book, working on a puzzle, writing in a journal, or working on a hobby," DeLuca said.

Like eating healthy and getting enough exercise, sleep hygiene works best with consistency. The more you can make your bedroom environment and nighttime routine conducive to sleep, the more truly rejuvenative hours you'll have each night.

"A critical component to a better night's sleep is to make sure that your brain is conditioned to associate your bed as a place for rest and sleep," DeLuca said. "When getting into bed, make a conscious effort to remind yourself that it's time to power down from the mental and physical activity of the day."

Garden therapy, or spending time planting, watering, digging, and pruning, is linked with cognitive and mental health improvements.



6 Healthiest Vegetables to Plant in Your Garden

Western culture is now almost completely removed from the process of food production, yet research studies point to the value of raising nutritious, organic foods for ourselves, even in small urban settings.

Garden therapy, or spending time planting, watering, digging, and pruning, is linked with cognitive and mental health improvements. Learning to grow your own vegetables is also rewarding and fun. If you'd like to experience these benefits or are looking for a new, therapeutic hobby, here are six of the healthiest vegetables that even a new gardener can grow in containers on a porch or in a backyard garden.

1. Kale
Kale, a member of the cabbage family, is a well-known superfood that has received a lot of attention from researchers and health publications in recent years. Kale's nutritional lineup includes vitamins A, K, and C, and essential minerals like potassium, calcium, and magnesium. Kale is also a rich source of dietary fiber, which acts like a prebiotic and increases nutrient absorption in the gut. Kale juice is high in antioxidants and protects your body against oxidative damage and chronic disease. Kale ranks much higher in nutrient density when compared with vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes, and most alliums.

Learning to grow your own vegetables is rewarding and fun, and research studies also point to the value of raising nutritious, organic foods for ourselves.

Because it's a fairly hardy plant and can be used in a variety of dishes, kale is a wonderful addition to any vegetable garden and can easily be grown in containers on a porch or in a sunroom.

2. Onion
Onion has been used for its healing properties for centuries in traditional medicine, but recent research has demonstrated that onions contain compounds useful in the treatment and prevention of cardiovascular disease, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and inflammatory diseases. Onion oil has also been studied for its topical benefits, including hair regrowth for alopecia areata patients (onion oil significantly improved hair regrowth in alopecia areata patients and was ruled an effective topical therapy) and the healing of dermal scar tissue.

One study compared wound healing results after the daily application of onion gel and found that scars were significantly softer and less noticeable after just four and eight weeks of use. Most of these health benefits can be traced to onion's high concentration of sulfur amino acids, flavonoids, phytosterols, and saponins—compounds that have anticancer, antibiotic, and antithrombotic activity. If you don't have a backyard plot, ask your local greenhouse what type of containers they recommend for growing onions—their recommendations will vary depending on the type of onion you want to grow and the climate you're in.

4. Tomatoes
Regular consumption of tomatoes is linked with decreased risk of chronic

3. Potatoes
White potatoes are a rich source of potassium, fiber, vitamin C, and resistant starch, but they have received little attention in the popular health world over the past decade due to recent diet trends that discourage carbohydrate intake and misinformation that incorrectly links all potato consumption with obesity and diabetes. Potatoes, when consumed in whole form and not as French fries or potato chips, can be healthy. In fact, researchers have demonstrated that white potatoes contain more potassium per serving than any other vegetable, and removing white potatoes from your diet may severely impact your potassium levels, especially in children, particularly if you don't consume other potassium-rich foods. Yet despite these findings, U.S. consumption of whole potatoes continues to drop.

By adding these nutritious powerhouses to your garden, you can easily improve your health and benefit from the wide variety of nutrients and satiating carbohydrates contained in these humble tubers. Plus, by growing them yourself, you can avoid some of the pitfalls of conventionally grown potatoes, like exposure to pesticides and heavy metals in soil. Like onions, you'll need to research proper containers for growing potatoes if you don't have access to a garden plot.

6. Bell Peppers
The potent antioxidant and bioactive compounds found in bell peppers (also known as sweet peppers) may protect against Alzheimer's disease. Green, yellow, and red bell peppers are all high in phenolic compounds and ascorbic acid, which protect the body's cells via free radical scavenging activity.

Interestingly, organic growing methods seem to increase the antioxidant potential of bell peppers, while conventional growing methods may decrease the amount of helpful compounds like carotenoids and vitamin C—another reason to grow these antioxidant powerhouses in your own garden. This list only scratches the surface of the numerous vegetables and fruits you can begin growing in your own garden or in containers around your home.

illnesses like cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Lycopene, the carotenoid responsible for the pink and red colors in tomato fruit, is a potent antioxidant that has been extensively studied for its ability to prevent carcinogenesis and atherogenesis. Scientists have estimated that lycopene may be up to 10 times more potent than other antioxidants like -tocopherol. An increased intake of tomato has been associated with a decreased risk of prostate and breast cancers. Tomatoes are some of the easiest plants to grow in either a container or in a garden plot, making them a prime vegetable for first-time gardeners.

5. Cauliflower
Both white and purple cauliflower species are high in phenolic compounds, which directly contribute to antioxidant action in the body. Purple cauliflower is especially high in anthocyanins, a type of phenolic compound that gives purple cauliflower its rich color. This potent antioxidant offers anti-inflammatory and antiviral protection in the body. Research indicates that cauliflower leaves may have potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Scientists are eagerly testing the various health benefits that cauliflower leaves may offer.

While cauliflower can grow quite large and needs plenty of space to grow, it has a shallow root system, making it ideal for growing in raised garden beds or containers.

Regular consumption of tomatoes is linked with decreased risk of chronic

Green, yellow, and red bell peppers are all high in phenolic compounds and ascorbic acid, which protect the body's cells via free radical scavenging activity.

For more information on the research surrounding the benefits of vegetable intake, please visit the GreenMedInfo.com vegetable research database.

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Researchers Identify Life-Shortening Behaviors

DEVON ANDRE

Are there certain behaviors that can shorten your life? Of course there are. But what are they? Activity levels and diet are often discussed, but they aren't the only things that can influence mortality risk.

New research points to a major factor that contributes to the likelihood of an early death: stress.

New research points to a major factor that contributes to the likelihood of an early death: stress. Although it isn't necessarily identified as the cause, the research

highlighted a number of activities that lead to a shorter life.

Many of them appear to be either high-stress situations or coping mechanisms.

The team, made up of researchers from the University of British Columbia, John Hopkins University, the University of Pennsylvania, The University of California, and Stanford University, looked at 57 social and behavioral factors that were linked to early death.

They collected data on over 13,600 U.S. adults between 1992 and 2008. They then looked at behavioral factors among those that died between 2008 and 2014. The top 10 lifestyle factors associated with early death were:

- Being a current smoker
- History of divorce
- Alcohol abuse
- Recent financial difficulties

'More Than Physical Health': Gym Helps 91-Year-Old Battle Isolation

HEIDI DE MARCO

Most mornings, like clockwork, you could find Art Ballard pumping iron.

At least five days a week, he drove to Foothill Gym, where he beat on the punching bag, rode a stationary bike, and worked his abs. After he joined the gym five years ago, he dropped 20 pounds, improved his balance, and made friends.

At 91, he's still spry and doesn't take any medication other than an occasional Tylenol for aches and pains.

"Doctors love me," he said. But when California enacted a statewide stay-at-home order in mid-March, his near-daily physical exercise and social interactions abruptly ended.

Ballard's health started to deteriorate: His back hurt, his legs cramped and he started becoming short of breath. As happens too often with older people, he also started to feel isolated and depressed.

"I was deeply concerned for myself because I didn't have an exercise routine at home," he said.

The University of Southern California's Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research conducted an analysis in late March, as COVID-19 established a foothold in the U.S., that found that older adults over 60 who lived alone were more likely to report feeling anxious or depressed than those living with companions.

The combination of the pandemic and nationwide lockdown orders put this already vulnerable population at greater risk, said Julie Zissimopoulos, co-director of the aging and cognition program at USC's Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics. Social distancing measures have weakened the support systems that older people who live alone depend on for basic activities, such as help with grocery shopping and transportation to doctor appointments.

"There's a huge, disproportionate impact on older adults with this virus and the health outcomes," said Lisa Marsh Ryerson, president of AARP Foundation. "During this shutdown, we've had growing public health and community acknowledgement of how serious it can be to sever the ties with our network."

Ballard, a retired jeweler, lives alone in a one-bedroom condo in Monrovia, a city of about 36,000 people about 20 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles. He lost his wife of more than 50 years, Dorothy, to Alzheimer's disease in 2015. Since then, he has em-



When California enacted a statewide stay-at-home order in mid-March, Art Ballard's near-daily physical exercise and social interactions abruptly ended.

braced his solitude and reveled in his newfound bachelorhood. He enjoys cooking and trying out recipes, listening to 1950s music and watching YouTube videos about World War II.

He has a girlfriend he met online—a retired greyhound trainer who lives in Arkansas. They haven't yet met in person.

Ballard felt he could handle the isolation of the lockdown order. He didn't have visitors during

After a couple of months of not visiting the gym, Ballard began feeling sad and frustrated, and his health started to slide.

quarantine, but his son, Dan Ballard, checked on him by phone weekly.

In the beginning, Ballard tried to keep busy. He did his shopping early in the morning and took strolls around his neighborhood. But after a couple of months of not visiting the gym, Ballard began feeling sad and frustrated, and his health started to slide. He relied more on his walker and sometimes struggled to breathe.

"My girlfriend was concerned with how I was thinking," said Ballard, who speaks to her on the phone several times a day.

For Ballard, a self-proclaimed gym addict, Foothill Gym was a second home. Just as in the 1980s sitcom "Cheers," it's a place where everybody knows his name. Not going to the "club," as he calls it, was taking a toll on his mental and physical health, so he decided to visit Brian Whelan, the owner of the small, family-run gym, in late May.

"He comes in, out of breath, with a walker," Whelan recalled. "He couldn't hold his head up

straight and it took him five minutes to catch his breath."

Whelan felt sad and angry. "Everyone here was almost in tears because this vibrant man was gone," he said. So Whelan broke the rules. He invited Ballard to visit the gym even before it officially reopened to the public.

"The gym business is more than physical health," said Whelan. "It's mental health." Ballard resumed his beloved routine the last week of May, with the gym mostly to himself.

"Every day for the past two months, I've been sad," Ballard said on the first day back. "Today, I woke up and I was happy."

Day after day, Ballard improved. "Now he comes in without a walker, head up straight, and the spark in his eyes is getting brighter," Whelan said.

The gym reopened June 15. Despite the threat of COVID-19, Ballard is back to working out six days a week. Masks are required to enter the gym but can be removed when exercising.

Ballard isn't worried. "I'm 100 percent comfortable," he said. "I'll wear a mask if they ask me to." Son Dan said he's worried about his dad being around people, but realizes the benefits.

"It's a scary balance. If he stops going to the gym and can't see anybody, I know he's going to deteriorate," he said. "At the end of the day, it's a quality-of-life decision that's his to make."

Ballard believes not being able to socialize was a bigger threat to his health than the risk of contracting the coronavirus.

"I found out how important my routine and exercise is," said Ballard. "It's given me back my life. And it's only going to get better."

Heidi de Marco is a reporter and producer for California Healthline. This story was produced by Kaiser Health News, which publishes California Healthline, a service of the California Health Care Foundation.



Divorce, loneliness, financial difficulties, and unemployment are all high-stress situations.

- History of unemployment
- Past smoking
- Low level of life satisfaction
- Never being married
- Negative outlook

The top-10 have a clear association with stress. Stress can manifest in a number of ways, including increased inflammation, poor sleep, high blood pressure, and compromised immunity.

What makes this study unique is

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.



Drinking Surged During the Pandemic. Do You Know the Signs of Addiction?

Problem drinking may be one of the side effects of the social isolation and extended downtime from the COVID-19 lockdown

ALEX SMITH

Despite the lack of dine-in customers at Waldo Thai for nearly 2 1/2 long months during the COVID-19 shutdown, Darrell Loo stayed busy.

Loo is the bar manager for the popular restaurant in Kansas City, Missouri, and he credits increased drinking and looser liquor laws during the pandemic for his brisk business. Alcohol also seemed to help his customers deal with all the uncertainty and fear.

"Drinking definitely was a way of coping with it," said Loo. "People did drink a lot more when it happened. I, myself, did drink a lot more."

Many state laws seemed to be waived overnight as stay-at-home orders were put into place, and drinkers embraced trends such as liquor delivery, virtual happy hours and online wine tasting. Curbside cocktails in 12- and 16-ounce bottles particularly helped Waldo Thai make up for its lost revenue from dine-in customers.

Retail alcohol sales jumped by 55 percent nationally during the third week of March, when many stay-at-home orders were put in place, according to Nielsen data. Online sales skyrocketed.

Many of these trends remained for weeks. Nielsen also notes that the selling of to-go alcohol has helped sustain businesses.

But the consumption of all this alcohol can be problematic for individuals, even those who haven't had trouble with drinking in the past.

Dr. Sarah Johnson, medical director of Landmark Recovery, an addiction treatment program based in Louisville, Kentucky, with locations in the Midwest, said that, virtual events aside, the pandemic has nearly put an end to social drinking.

"It's not as much going out and incorporating alcohol into a dinner or time spent with family or friends," Johnson said. "Lots of people are sitting home drinking alone now and, historically, that's been viewed as more of a high-risk drinking behavior."

There are some objective measures of problematic drinking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines heavy drinking as 15 or more drinks a week for a man or eight or more for a woman.

But Johnson said that more important clues come from changes in behavior. She says that, for some people, a bit of extra drinking now and then isn't a big deal.

"If they are still meeting all of their life obligations, like they are still getting up and making their Zoom meetings on time, and they're not feeling so bad from drinking that they can't do things, and taking care of their children and not having life problems, then it's not a problem," Johnson said. "It's when people start to have problems in other areas of their life, then it would be a signal that they are drinking too much and that it's a problem."

But there are signs to watch out for, she says. They include:

- Big increases in the amount of alcohol consumed
- Concern expressed by family or

“Routine and structure are important to overall mental health because they reduce stress and elements of unknown or unexpected events in daily life.”

Dr. Sarah Johnson, medical director of Landmark Recovery



JUMPINGBACK/SHUTTERSTOCK

friends

- Changes in sleep patterns, either more or less sleep than usual
- Any time that drinking interferes with everyday life

Johnson noted that for many people, living under stay-at-home orders without the demands of a daily commute or lunch break could be problematic.

"Routine and structure are important to overall mental health because they reduce stress and elements of unknown or unexpected events in daily life," Johnson said. "These can trigger individuals in recovery to revert to unhealthy coping skills, such as drinking."

Johnson said that while some people may be predisposed to problematic drinking or alcohol-use disorder, these can also result from someone's environment.

Johnson said that people who are unable to stop problematic drinking on their own should seek help. The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration runs a 24/7 helpline (800-662-HELP) and website, www.FindTreatment.gov, offering referrals for addiction treatment.

Peer support is also available online. Many Alcoholics Anonymous groups have started to offer virtual meetings, as does the secular recovery group LifeRing. And for people who are looking for more informal peer support, apps such as Loosid help connect communities of sober people.

Darrell Loo at Waldo Thai said that he has been concerned at times about people's drinking but that he generally has seen customers back off from the heavy drinking they were doing early in the pandemic.

Loo and others in the Kansas City restaurant business are pushing for the carryout cocktails and other looser laws to stay in place even as restaurants slowly start to reopen.

"This will go on for a while. It's going to change people's habit," Loo said. "People's spending habit. People's dining out habit. So there's definitely a need to keep doing it."

Alex Smith is a health care reporter for KCUR 89.3 FM. This story is part of a partnership that includes KCUR, NPR, and Kaiser Health News.



When children receive compassion, they have a first-hand experience of what it feels like.

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How the Pandemic Can Teach Kids About Compassion

What if this crisis became an opportunity for children to deepen their sense of care?

MARYAM ABDULLAH

As a homebound parent with a preschooler, I've had emotional highs and lows during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I've felt sad and worried about how many people are becoming ill, and confounded as I've tried to juggle homeschooling and my work responsibilities.

But I've also felt gratitude for kindnesses that have punctu-

ated so many of my days, like when a neighbor left herbs from her garden at my gate or when a faraway friend I hadn't heard from in years sent text messages of love.

These experiences have affirmed for me that when times are tough, our common human response is to show compassion.

We often assume that emergencies lead to panic, but research consistently shows that people tend to act in solidarity with a sense of togetherness. They volunteer, donate supplies, and spread goodwill, strengthening social bonds and helping everyone be resilient together.

"Affiliative, supportive, prosocial behaviors are more common, where widespread sickness and debility evoke acts of mutual aid among members of a community in crisis," explains Ste-

ven Taylor, professor and clinical psychologist at the University of British Columbia, in his book *The Psychology of Pandemics*.

Compassion—noticing others suffering and being motivated to provide relief to them—grows early in life. Five-month-old babies prefer helpers over hinderers. When babies between eight and 10 months old see people bump their knees or hurt their fingers, they already show the seeds of empathy with facial expressions, vocalizations, and gestures that reflect concern and a desire to understand others' distress. By 14 months old, toddlers help others by handing them objects out of reach.

How can parents help their children realize their instinctual capacity for compassion during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Parents can nurture the motivation of young children by inviting them to 'be a helper,' which can instill in them a compassionate self identity.

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How the Pandemic Can Teach Kids About Compassion

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Scientists have suggested three ways children develop compassion that are relevant to these times.

1. Show Compassion to Kids so They Experience It

During the pandemic, many of our children feel uncertain amid the upheaval, just like us parents. They miss school, their friends, and playing sports. For young children who don't have the breadth of words to express their worries and fears, or older children who don't have the emotional agility to get through tough moments, it can be overwhelming.

Our kids may be irritable or have more meltdowns and tantrums than usual. But rather than seeing children as uncooperative, parents can consider whether their children's behavior is simply a sign of suffering.

If we offer children warmth and tenderness when their routines are gone, we can help soothe them. Parents can extend compassion by making space to help their children become better aware of and process their feelings. Acknowledging and being sensitive to our children's emotions can act as a salve and help them to see that this moment of hardship will eventually pass.

Parents can extend compassion by making space to help their children become better aware of and process their feelings.

Parents can also frequently talk to their children about all the members of their extended family and broader community who have cared for them both recently and in the past. For example, parents can tell and retell their children stories of neighbors who brought gift baskets after their pet died or dropped off dinners when a grandparent was in the hospital. These conversations serve to remind children that they are connected to a network of people who are a generous source of compassion from which they can draw strength during times of suffering.

When children receive compassion, the have a first-hand experience of what it feels like.

2. Teach Kids to Practice Self-Compassion

In turn, just as children receive compassion from parents, they can also learn to offer it to themselves.

When children are having a hard time during the pandemic, parents can encourage them to listen and respond to their bodies and minds with greater awareness, acceptance, and kindness. For example, parents of older children can teach them to take self-compassion breaks to pause and notice their suffering amid stressful moments.

For younger children, this might mean guiding them to first pause and notice their tense muscles, rapid heartbeats, and racing thoughts. Ask them to recognize that they're having a moment of hardship and children all over the world are having these kinds of moments, too. Teach them to breathe deeply from their bellies and offer themselves words of tenderness such as "May I feel calm."

Parents can also encourage their younger children to cultivate self-compassion by

helping them plan enjoyable activities to look forward to after a hard day of home schooling or after realizing summer vacation plans are canceled.

Self-compassion allows children to process and cope with difficult emotions. Eventually, it can help them see their common humanity—that everyone suffers sometimes—and know that it's all right to feel bad.

Tending to their intense emotions helps children feel restored and renewed, which in turn prepares them to serve others. Overwhelming personal distress can make children singularly self-focused and less able to attend to others' suffering. Self-compassion practices can help them think of others and extend compassion to them.

3. Encourage Kids to Extend Compassion to Others

During the coronavirus pandemic, even though children are inclined to help, it can be hard for them to know exactly what they can do.

Children can start with small acts of

compassion with the family—sending kind thoughts to essential workers, regularly FaceTiming with isolated, older, or immunocompromised family members, or helping gather canned goods for the local food bank. Parents can also review ideas suggested on the website of Youth Service America to help inspire children toward compassionate acts.

Research suggests that small differences in language matter when we're encouraging our kids to help. Parents can nurture the motivation of young children by inviting them to "be a helper," which can instill in them a compassionate self-identity. But there's a catch: When tasks are too difficult and children experience a setback, those who were asked to "be a helper" are less likely to try to help again compared to children who were simply asked "to help." So, in circumstances when children might not succeed at helping with something, it's better to just ask them "to help."

Even young children have undoubtedly picked up on their radar that life right now is quite a bit different than it used to be. What if this pandemic became an opportunity for them to learn that being human during hard times involves transformation and resilience, and that compassion helps us all to thrive?

Maryam Abdullah, Ph.D., is the parenting program director of the Greater Good Science Center. She is a developmental psychologist with expertise in parent-child relationships and children's development of prosocial behaviors. This article was originally published on The Greater Good Magazine online.



Compassion—
noticing others
suffering and being
motivated to provide
relief to them—
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Practicing Mindfulness Can Help Us Through COVID-19 Pandemic

Tuning into the present reality, gaining a broader sense of connection can help us elevate as a society

KIRA JADE COOPER

We seem to have mastered the perfect recipe for chaos: a global ecological emergency, humanitarian crises, and to top it off, a pandemic of epic proportions. Where do we begin to make sense of the current times? Or more importantly, how can we move towards a positive systemic shift that leaves no one behind?

How about taking a breath? Mindfulness, a once-traditional Buddhist practice has become a normalized part of secular society and is lauded by many health and wellness authorities. It is now found in many public spaces such as schools, politics, military units, and hospitals.

Increasingly, researchers are finding new applications and interventions for mindfulness practices to enhance individual well-being, including the reduction of stress, anxiety,

and depression. While these have demonstrated promise for improving numerous aspects of human health, little research has explored the potential benefits for mindfulness to contribute to collective well-being, especially during times of widespread crisis.

My research has found that, depending on the practice and its application, mindfulness can be used to advance a broader sustainability agenda—as well as individual wellness. The relatively unexplored impacts of mindfulness on supporting sustainability has immense value to offer in times of crisis, particularly COVID-19.

Mindfulness and COVID-19

Researchers have found that mindfulness practice can increase compassion and empathy, which are essential traits for supporting both individual and collective resilience.

And as social distancing and quarantine measures keep us physically separate and yearning

Mindfulness practices that reinforce a notion of self as separate from the rest of nature and society can risk missing many benefits of traditional mindfulness practice.

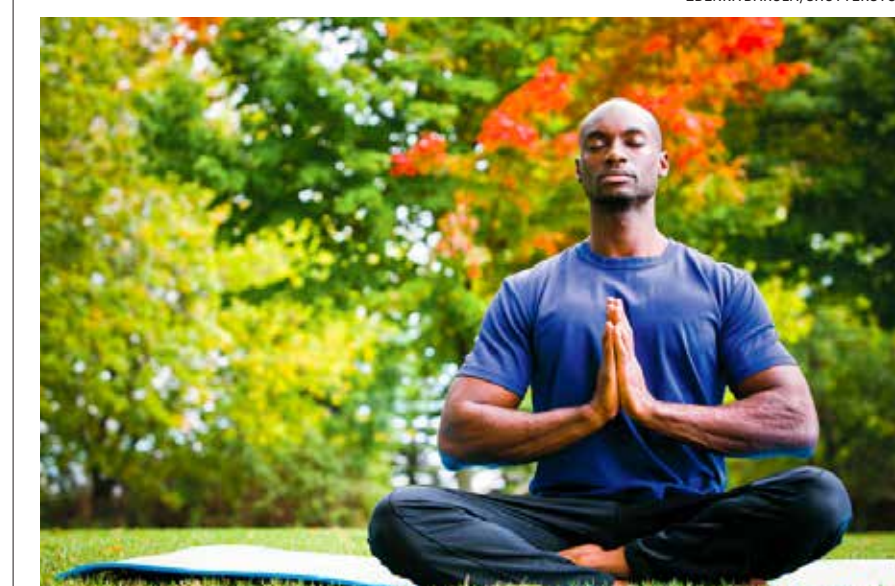
for connection, the role of mindfulness in nurturing feelings of interconnectedness and reducing risk factors for loneliness and isolation has become increasingly important.

Mindfulness has also been found to deepen the connection to nature.

Together, this understanding and commitment to well-being

for all are critical processes to mitigate our current unsustainable ways of being and doing. Since mindfulness has been found to reduce consumerism and promote more sustainable consumption habits, it supports a path for tackling large sustainability challenges.

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Meditation can help us develop the ability to still our minds and better tune in to the present moment.

Health Benefits of Ginsenosides

Research is revealing multiple therapeutic benefits of ginseng compounds

Panax ginseng, often referred to as Asian or Korean ginseng, is a well-known and traditionally used herbal medicine touted for its numerous therapeutic benefits.

The main pharmacological compounds in Panax ginseng, called ginsenosides, have been studied for their anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting properties, but researchers have uncovered additional health benefits and believe that ginsenosides may be a safe alternate treatment for a variety of medical conditions.

1. Reduced Chronic Inflammation

Chronic inflammation, characterized as acute inflammation that lasts more than four weeks, can contribute to a variety of diseases like cancer and diabetes. Prolonged inflammation is caused by persistent injury, toxic exposure, infection, or autoimmune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, as well as many other factors, including obesity and stress. It can be deadly when not corrected.

Researchers have demonstrated that various ginsenosides can reduce chronic inflammation by suppressing the expression of proinflammatory cytokines in the body, effectively moderating the inflammatory response.

While inflammation is an important way the body responds to injury or infection, chronic in-

flammation can lead to inflammatory diseases. Ginsenosides can help prevent inflammatory diseases early on and they also exhibit protective and anti-cancer effects.

2. Enhanced Brain Function and Potential Neuroprotective Effects

Researchers discovered that ginsenosides may have a protective effect against neurological disorders and nervous system diseases such as Alzheimer's, epilepsy, depression, and Parkinson's disease. Conventional treatment of these disorders includes surgery or medication, but long-term use of medication is often not sustainable and can lead to drug poisoning, while surgery introduces the risk of infection and is not always successful.

In various studies, the administration of ginsenosides improved spatial memory, promoted nerve growth and health, improved mental work capacity and long-term memory, and regulated multiple signaling pathways in the brain associated with neurological disorders, reducing the risk of disease and improving symptoms in subjects.

While still in the early stages of study, researchers are eager to determine the exact mechanisms behind ginsenosides' strong neurological benefits.

3. Reduced Fatigue

Ginseng supplements, long believed to improve energy and

physical health, are a promising treatment for fatigue, especially for those suffering from chronic illnesses or postoperative fatigue.

In a randomized, placebo-controlled trial, researchers demonstrated that ginsenosides greatly improved fatigue levels in 174 participants after just four weeks of treatment, without any significant adverse effects.

These results could be due to improved energy metabolism, enhancement of mental clarity, and suppression of oxidative stress. Researchers are still unsure as to the exact nature of ginseng's anti-fatigue properties.

4. Improved Erectile Dysfunction and Sexual Health

One of the claimed health benefits of ginseng is improved sexual performance. In multiple studies, ginsenosides played a therapeutic role in the treatment of erectile dysfunction by increasing endothelial nitric oxide synthase expression, an enzyme important for vascular health in corpus cavernosum tissue.

Ginsenosides also increase secretions of luteinizing hormone, a hormone that signals the production of testosterone, and researchers have demonstrated that ginsenosides extracted from Asian Panax ginseng can increase testosterone levels.

Similar studies also showed improved levels of sperm count and sperm motility, suggesting that ginsenosides may be a useful



Ginseng is a root with compounds called ginsenosides that have multiple therapeutic benefits.

therapeutic tool for the treatment and prevention of male reproductive diseases or disorders.

5. Reduced Risk of Diabetes and Improved Hyperglycemia

Researchers have found that ginsenosides found in the extract of Panax ginseng have anti-diabetic effects, thanks to improved lipid and insulin sensitivity and regulated glycolipid metabolism.

In a report studying the root extracts of ginseng, researchers discovered that ginsenosides actually increase insulin production while decreasing cell apoptosis in pancreatic.

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