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How to avoid the trap of always wanting more

TATIANA DENNING

he secret of happiness, you see, is not found in seeking more, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less." - Socrates

I had always loved to shop. A lot. I could spend a whole Saturday going from store to store without stopping. In fact, some of my earliest memories are of happily shopping the day

Acquiring more things takes more time, more

effort, and more money. away with my Grandma Wittebort in downtown Morgantown, West Virginia. The roots run deep.

Macy's, Dillards, Pottery Barn, Banana Republic, J.Crew—I frequented them all. In fact, I shopped at Anthropologie so often that the sales ladies greeted me by name, causing my husband to raise an eyebrow on the rare occasion when he would accompany me.

When my husband would ask where I was going on weekend mornings, I'd typically reply,

"To run errands." This was true—in part. I didn't usually intend to make shopping a big part of my day, but it frequently turned out that way.

In my quest to have the latest fashion trend or home decor, I sometimes spent more money than my budget allowed, and I certainly spent more time than my schedule allowed. As a result, I often had to find time to return things that either didn't work out or fell victim to buyer's remorse. The happiness that buying more things seemed to bring was always short-lived and was sometimes even followed by regret.

Still, I believed that once I got that new shirt that I just "had to have" from Anthropologie, it would quench my desire,

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Will COVID-19 Vaccines Drive Mutated Variants?

Research suggests vaccine-linked COVID variants could be a problem

JOSEPH MERCOLA

Despite media reports suggesting unvaccinated people will drive mutations of SARS-CoV-2 (or the CCP virus, which causes COVID-19), actual research suggests that more dangerous mutations of the virus could come from the specific nature of the vaccines now being used around the world. Half of Americans have declined the vaccine.

Only 49 percent of Americans more than 18 years of age are fully vaccinated, with 56 percent having received one dose of the

two-dose Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

Some media reports are claiming these unvaccinated people are serving as viral factories for more dangerous variants of the virus. But this false narrative hides the fact that mass vaccinations may be putting us all in a far more dire situation than necessary.

Vaccines Drive Viruses to Mutate

Viral mutation as a consequence of vaccination came to wide public attention in 2018, when Quanta maga-

Continued on Page 4



Media reports allege the unvaccinated are a breeding ground for COVID variants, but research suggests the real problem may come from viral mutations in the vaccinated.





researched and true."

shall set us free. This should be on this country's academia's list of required reading."

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Got a Headache From Too Much Sun? Don't Take Tylenol

This common painkiller has some dangerous side effects, but these alternatives can replace it

JENNIFER MARGULIS

h, summer. Sunshine, fresh air, a romp at the beach. Ugh, summer. Sunburns, heatstroke, and those headaches that feel like someone's using a blacksmithing anvil and hammer right inside your skull.

When you have a headache, fever, or aches and pains, the easiest and quickest fix is to reach for that bottle of painkillers. One of the most popular headache relievers in America, and many other places in the world, is acetaminophen. The main ingredient in Tylenol, acetaminophen is found in more than 600 over-the-counter and prescription medications. Doctors often recommend treating a fever, headache, or other pain by alternating between ibuprofen and Tylenol. And you'll likely be given Tylenol if you go to the hospital with a fever.

But Is Tylenol Actually Safe? Dr. Cammy Benton, an integrative fam-

ily physician based in Huntersville, North Carolina, says Tylenol isn't safe for children and should only be used sparingly

"Honesty, doctors need to stop recommending it," Benton says. "Especially for women who are trying to conceive, pregnant moms, infants, and small children. I tell my patients to avoid acetaminophen as much as they can."

The main problem with acetaminophen, Benton explains, is that it can be damaging to the liver, especially if you take too much. Given how many products contain acetaminophen—including cough syrups, flu remedies, and even allergy medicines and some antacids—it's easy to overdose. Indeed, even just a double dose of Tylenol can cause acute liver injury.

Acetaminophen depletes the body of glutathione, a very important antioxidant that's manufactured in the liver. Glutathione is like a natural mop. As Dr. Joseph Pizzorno explains, it protects the body by binding with harmful substances in the body—from heavy metals to infectious agents—to get them out of your system. So it makes sense that

If you're getting recurrent headaches

Even just a

double dose of

Tylenol can cause

acute liver injury.

TYLENOL

or migraines, a magnesium deficiency may be to blame.

other vitamins and supplements.

Summer headaches are of-

Turmeric Tames

Inflammation

start with between a quarter and a half teaspoon in a large glass of water for children and a teaspoon for adults. But keep in mind that some people need a tablespoon or two and a squeeze of lemon.

Magnesium, a Magnificent Mineral

migraines, a magnesium deficiency may be to blame, according to recent peer-reviewed research published in the journal

clude almonds, black beans, edamame,

the last thing you want to take when you're pumpkin seeds, spinach, and dark chocolate. But even if you eat a healthy diet, your sick or in pain—even if it is the first thing most conventional doctors recommend—is body may be deficient in magnesium.

Magnesium is a natural muscle relaxer and can also help alleviate stress, anxiety, and constipation. It's a good supplement to take before bed. You can try taking magnesium citrate or magnesium taurate to treat that headache. These are available in the supplement section of any grocery store.

Magnesium in capsule, and not tablet, form is easier for the body to absorb, says Geoff Houghton, a naturopathic doctor based in Ashland, Oregon. Houghton recommends starting with the suggested dosing on the bottle and increasing as needed. As with vitamin C, magnesium is water-soluble.

Another excellent way to absorb magnesium is by putting Epsom salts in your bath, which will also help alleviate sore muscles and other aches and pains. Epsom salts contain magnesium sulfate. Putting two cups in your bath water and soak-

ing for half an hour can work wonders for a headache.

Essential Oils to Ease Headaches

Essential oils, which are concentrated plant extracts, have a variety of medicinal properties. If your head is aching, peppermint oil and lavender oil can both be helpful. Put a few drops of either oil on a wet washcloth on your forehead (just be careful not to get any

Peppermint can be so helpcumin, which has been ful for headaches that some people have found that using anti-inflammatory and peppermint shampoo reduces the frequency and severity of migraine headaches, accord-

ing to The Telegraph.

If you do need a painkiller, Benton recommends starting with turmeric. A root used in Indian cooking, turmeric contains vitamin C, beta-carotene (which is what gives it that lovely yellow-orange color), fiber, and zinc, among other nutrients. But turmeric's most touted health-giving ingredient is curcumin, which has been shown to have both anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant effects.

William Parker, an immunologist at Duke

You can buy the whole root at a natural food store in the produce aisle (when it's in season), find the powder form in the spice section, or buy it in capsules or tablets with

If you've never taken turmeric before,

If you're getting recurrent headaches or

Foods that are rich in magnesium in-

Try Iced Tea

Turmeric's most

touted health-giv-

ing ingredient is cur-

shown to have both

antioxidant effects.

White willow bark, which comes from the Salix willow tree, has been used in human cultures as a natural pain reliever for centuries. Willow bark contains salicin, a compound that is similar to aspirin. Your body converts salicin into salicylic acid, which can help alleviate fever, inflammation, and body pain.

You can buy white willow bark extract as a supplement in a tincture, capsule, or topical ointment. It's also available as a readymade herbal tea, or loose in the bulk aisle of a natural food store.

Known as liu shu pi in Chinese medicine, this slightly bitter herb is surprisingly palatable as an iced tea. But if you don't like the flavor, try masking it with ginger, honey,

Iennifer Margulis, Ph.D., is a science journalist based in Oregon. She's appeared live on prime-time TV in France and worked on a child survival campaign in Niger, West Africa. A Fulbright grantee and sought-after speaker, she authored "Your Baby, Your Way," and co-authored "The Vaccine-Friendly Plan." Learn more at JenniferMargulis.net.

MEDICALLY CORRECT

Alternatives to the Dangers and Indignities of Colonoscopies

Colorectal cancer is a prolific killer but the risks of screening can be a greater danger for many

PETER WEISS

I had my first colonoscopy when I turned 50. It wasn't fun, but I did what I was told and I believed the common line that it was something I needed to endure. The prep was unpleasant, but I kept good reading material with me all day for those frequent trips to the bathroom.

The results were negative. When I turned 60, and was due for my next colonoscopy, I was looking for something different. I was starting to question the risks and benefits of what I was being sold. I chose a virtual colonoscopy, which wasn't covered by insurance, and fortunately was negative as well. That led me to start diving deep into this specific multibillion-dollar medical industry and found some interesting facts. Remember, I'm not giving medical advice here, just information for you to

help decide what is best for you. Let's start with the heavy stuff first. Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the third-mostcommon cancer (excluding all those skin

cancers) in both men and women. It's also the second-most-common cause of cancer-related deaths in both men and women, with 52,980 deaths in 2021. It's a pretty awful disease, but don't worry, I will give you some good news shortly.

Some of the risk factors for colon cancer are under your control, such as eating less red meat, losing weight, exercising, quitting smoking, and drinking less alcohol. There are also risk factors you can have the misfortune to be born into, the big one being a family history of this disease.

So what do we do to diagnose colorectal polyps or cancer early enough to either prevent or safely treat it?

If you follow the guidelines, we should all be getting colonoscopies starting at the age of 50, and some experts even suggest starting at 45. The problem with this is, colonoscopies aren't without risks. As I said, it's a multibillion-dollar industry, with some 19 million of the procedures performed in the United States in 2017. The risks for major complications (per-



Colorectal cancer screening is extremely important and can be life saving, but there must be a better way.

Safe and uninvasive tests may be a far better initial step for many.

foration, hemorrhage) are small but up to 1.6 percent and are very much dependent on the expertise of the physician.

This percentage may sound small, but indicates that in 2017, there were as many as 304,000 major complications from the procedure in and of itself. Tell one of those injured that the risk was small. In 2021, there were 149,500 new cases of colorectal cancer diagnosed. This makes you wonder what's going on.

I am in full support for diagnosing colorectal polyps and cancers as early as possible, but I'm not in support of a perforated bowel in this pursuit for the averagerisk individual. High-risk individuals are a different story and colonoscopy is still the gold standard—for now.

Don't get me wrong, colorectal cancer screening is extremely important and can be life-saving, but there must be a better way.

Nowhere else in the world are colonoscopies used as much as here in the United States. In Canada, only 15 percent of their 970,000 colonoscopies are screening, the rest are diagnostic. That means, they get colonoscopies if they are at high risk or are in the process of being evaluated for signs of colorectal cancer such as rectal bleeding and pain. Again, I am only writing about screening testing. It's also interesting to note that Canadian colorectal cancer survival is similar to that in the United States, despite costing half as much, due in part to the cheaper costs of medications the Canadian government negotiates with

I promised you some good news. There are some really promising new tests as well as additional current tests that can be done as alternatives to colonoscopies. Remember, these are screening tests for people without any signs or symptoms for colorectal disease, such as rectal bleeding, bloating, diarrhea, etc.

Fecal immunochemical testing is one such option. Basically, you poop and spread a little on a specially treated card at home. You then send it in for evaluation, and it's examined for blood from the GI tract. If positive, you go for a full workup.

Virtual colonoscopy is another option. It's basically a CT scan of the colon that can identify small polyps and colorectal cancer. The plus side is there is no risk of perforation or hemorrhage (rare as that may be). The negative side is, if there is a polyp, you would need a diagnostic colonoscopy. This is different from a screening colonoscopy.

It's also not covered by medical insurance. We have all seen the commercials for Cologuard. The walking, talking box asking you to poop, scoop, and mail it back to rule out colorectal cancer. It's actually a really good screening test. They recommend starting screening at 45 and repeating it every three years. It finds 92 percent of colon cancers. While there also is a 13 percent false-positive rate, if a patient gets a negative test result, there's a 99.94 percent chance there is no cancer. This is an amazing screening test.

Finally, and with the most promise, there is a blood test already available that can identify colon cancer and polyps. It uses cell-free DNA blood testing and has been called a liquid biopsy test. The preliminary studies show a 91 percent early-stage colorectal cancer detection rate. Hopefully, these will become the main screening test for average-risk individuals, leaving colonoscopies as a screening test to be something soon forgotten.

Dr. Peter Weiss has been a frequent guest on local and national TV, newspapers, and radio. He was an assistant clinical professor of OB/GYN at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA for 30 years, stepping down so he could provide his clinical services to those in need when the COVID pandemic hit. He was also a national health care adviser for Sen. John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign.

plans to ask the U.S. Food and Drug Admin-

istration (FDA) for emergency use authoriza-

tion for a third COVID-19 vaccine booster

According to Pfizer's head of research,

Dr. Mikael Dolsten, initial data suggest a

third dose of the current Pfizer vaccine

can raise neutralizing antibody levels by

anywhere from five-fold to 10-fold. The

company is also working on variant-

Dolsten points to data from Israel,

where Pfizer's mRNA injection was used exclusively and is showing a

recent uptick in breakthrough cases.

This suggests protection starts to

wane around the six-month mark.

For now, the FDA isn't recommend-

ing boosters, but that can change at

any moment and most likely will. Pfizer recently announced that it intends to raise the price on its COVID-19 vaccine once the pandemic wanes, and during a recent investor conference, Pfizer Chief Financial Officer Frank D'Amelio said there's "significant opportunity" for profit once the market shifts to an-

shot in August, Bloomberg reports.

specific formulations.

Will COVID-19 Vaccines Drive Mutated Variants?

Research suggests vaccine-linked COVID variants could be a problem

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zine wrote about Andrew Read's research into Marek's disease among chickens. The article, "Vaccines Are Pushing Pathogens to Evolve," described how "just as antibiotics breed resistance in bacteria, vaccines can incite changes that enable diseases to escape their control."

The article details the history of the Marek's disease vaccine for chickens, first introduced in 1970. Today, we're on the third version of this vaccine, as it stops working within a decade. The reason? The virus had mutated to evade the vaccine. Worse, research suggests this kind a vaccine that doesn't block infection of vaccine-induced mutation seems to completely, then the virus will mutate result in increasingly deadly viruses that to evade the immune response within

It's important to realize that viruses mutate all the time, and if you have a vaccine that doesn't block infection completely, then the virus will mutate to evade the immune response within that person.

Read's 2015 paper in PLOS Biology, "Imperfect Vaccination Can Enhance the Transmission of Highly Virulent Pathogens," shared the results of an experiment that vaccinated 100 chickens against Marek's disease and left 100 unvaccinated. All of the birds were then infected with varying strains of the virus. Some strains were more virulent and dangerous than others.

Over the course of the birds' lives, the unvaccinated ones shed more of the least virulent strains into the environment, while the vaccinated ones shed more of the most virulent strains. As noted in the life science researcher and former vice Quanta article:

"The findings suggest that the Marek's vaccine encourages more dangerous viruses to proliferate. This increased virulence might then give the viruses the means to overcome birds' vaccineprimed immune responses and sicken vaccinated flocks."

Vaccinated People Can Serve as Breeding Grounds for Mutations

In a piece titled "Vaccines Could Drive The Evolution Of More COVID-19 Mutants," National Public Radio reported on Feb. 9, that "vaccines can contribute

to virus mutations." Part of the concern is whether the peo-

ple delaying their second dose of vaccine will become a particularly effective host population for viral mutations.

"They might serve as sort of a breeding ground for the virus to acquire new mutations," said Paul Bieniasz, a Howard Hughes investigator at Rockefeller University.

This is the exact claim now being attributed to unvaccinated people by those who don't understand natural

It's important to realize that viruses mutate all the time, and if you have that person. That's one of the distinct features of the COVID-19 shots—they aren't able to block infection. They allow infection to occur and work to lessen the symptoms of that infection.

This is true of other viruses as well, though the phenomenon isn't considered nearly as dangerous as what occurs among bacteria.

"We're not going to fall off a cliff tomorrow in terms of vaccine efficacy. What we're likely to see is a slow, steady erosion of efficacy over, perhaps, quite a long period of time," Bieniasz said.

If SARS-CoV-2 does end up mutating into more lethal strains, then mass vaccination is the most likely driver of that mutation.

COVID Variants Are Barely Different

Despite the scenario outlined above, the fearmongering that mass media are stirring over variants is just that: fearmongering. So far, while some SARS-CoV-2 variants appear to spread more easily, they're also less dangerous. The Delta variant, for example, is associated with more conventional flu-like symptoms, such as a runny nose and sore throat, than the hallmark COVID-19 symptoms involving shortness of breath and loss of smell.

In an interview for the documentary "Planet Lockdown," Michael Yeadon, a president and chief scientist at Pfizer, pointed out the fraud being perpetrated with regard to variants. He actually refers to them as "simians," because they're near-identical to the original. And, as such, they pose no greater threat than the original.

Yeadon notes that the most divergent variant is hardly different from the original.

"If you find the most different variance, it's 99.7 percent identical to the original one, and I can assure you ... that amount of difference is absolutely not possibly able to represent itself to you as a differ-

Your immune system is a multifaceted system that allows your body to mount defenses against all sorts of threats. Parnual boosters. In an April 2021 article, The Defender reported the expected profits from current COVID-19 vaccines and boosters in coming years:

asites, fungi, bacteria, and viruses

are the main threat categories. Each

of these invades and threatens you

in completely different ways, and

dealing with all of them, using a

antibodies against SARS-CoV-2,

because antibodies aren't your

primary defense against virus-

es, T-cells are. What this means

is that getting booster shots for

different variants isn't going to

firmed early in the pandemic.

Scientists wanted to find out if

patients who had recovered from

Before

2021, it

was quite

clear that

vaccines push

viruses to mutate

into more dangerous

strains. The only

question was to

what extent?

SARS-CoV-1, responsible for the

ago, might have immunity

turns out, they did.

against SARS-CoV-2. As it

They still had memory

T-cells against SARS-

CoV-1, and those

cells also recognized

SARS-CoV-2, despite

the two viruses being

only 80 percent simi-

lar. Now, if a 20 per-

cent difference wasn't

enough to circumvent the

immune system of these patients,

why should you be concerned with a vari-

ant that's, at most, 0.3 percent different

"When your government scientists tell

you that a variant that's 0.3 percent dif-

from the original SARS-CoV-2?

you, they are lying," Yeadon said.

So far, while some SARS

CoV-2 variants appear to

spread more easily, they

are also less dangerous.

Mutations Are Good for Vaccine

"If they're lying, and they are, why is the

pharmaceutical industry making top-up

[booster] vaccines? There's absolutely no

possible justification for their manufac-

Of course, by pushing fear of virus variants,

vaccine makers ensure a steady supply of

people willing to participate as guinea pigs

in their for-profit business model. Pfizer

variety of mechanisms.

- Pfizer expects a minimum revenue of \$15 billion to \$30 billion in 2021 alone
- Moderna expects sales of \$18.4 billion in 2021; Barclays analyst Gena Wang forecasts the company's 2022 revenue to be somewhere around \$12.2 billion and \$11.4 billion in 2023
- Johnson & Johnson expects sales of \$10 billion in 2021

Vaccine Treadmill Ahead

The way things have been going, it seems inevitable that we're facing a vaccine treadmill, where new variants will "necessitate" boosters on a regular basis. Boosters will also drive the "need" for vaccine passports to keep track of it all. As reported by The Defender:

your immune system has ways of "Annual COVID booster shots are music to the ears of investors. But some independent scientists warn that trying to outsmart the virus with booster shots designed to Whether you're going to be susceptible to variants has very little address the next variant could backfire, to do with whether or not you have creating an endless wave of new variants."

> These variants could be more virulent and transmissible than their predecessors.

Vaccinologist Dr. Geert Vanden Bosche, whose resume includes work with GSK Biologicals, Novartis Vaccines, Solvay help, because these vaccines don't Biologicals, and the Bill & Melinda Gates strengthen your T-cell immunity. Foundation, published an open letter to The importance of T-cells has the World Health Organization on March been known for a long time, and 6. In that letter, he warned that impletheir role in COVID-19 was conmenting a global mass vaccination campaign during the height of the pandemic could create an "uncontrollable monster," with evolutionary pressure forcing the emergence of new and potentially more SARS outbreak some 17 years dangerous mutations.

"There can be no doubt that continued mass vaccination campaigns will enable new, more infectious viral variants to become increasingly dominant and ultimately result in a dramatic incline in new cases despite enhanced vaccine coverage rates. There can be no doubt either that this situation will soon lead to complete resistance of circulating variants to the current vaccines," Bossche wrote.

Will COVID-19 Vaccines Save **Lives? Probably Not**

As noted in the BMJ paper, "Will COV-ID-19 Vaccines Save Lives? Current Trials Aren't Designed to Tell Us," by associate editor Peter Doshi, while the world is betting on gene modification vaccines as the solution to the pandemic, the trials aren't even designed to answer key questions, ferent from SARS-CoV-2 could masquersuch as whether the vaccines will actuade as a new virus and be a threat to your health, you should know, and I'm telling ally save lives.

If there's a silver lining to this whole mess, it's that more and more people are starting to get educated about health, biology, virology, and vaccinology. These are heady topics, but to begin to tease out the truth from fiction, many are now taking the time to listen to doctors and scientists who are explaining the science behind it all.

Dr. Joseph Mercola is the founder of Mercola.com. An osteopathic physician, bestselling author, and recipient of multiple awards in the field of natural health, his primary vision is to change the modern *health paradigm by providing people* with a valuable resource to help them take control of their health. This article was originally published on Mercola.com

For links to studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at TheEpochTimes.com

Exercises That Are Great for the Outdoors

Simple exercises that require no equipment can help you shed weight and feel great

IAN KANE

hat better way to combat our growing waistlines from all these summertime grilling get-togethers than to exercise in the great outdoors? Effective exercise sessions don't require a trip to your local fitness center. In fact, a beautiful outdoor vista might add motivation to move your body. And one of the benefits of a regular fitness routine is that it can build up your metabolism and lean body mass, both of which will help your body burn those excess barbeque calories. Exercise can also relieve stress and support a better overall temperament.

Here are six exercises that are great for people who don't go to the gym or want to change things up and exercise outdoors—whether that be a local running track or a beautiful beach. The best part is that all

you need is an exercise mat, a couple of dumbbells, and your own body weight.

And don't think you need to do the intricate bodyweight exercises of those agile fitness aficionados on YouTube. The simple movements below can do wonders for your overall physique.

Great Views and Better Health

Regular exercise can improve both your physiological and psychological well-being. And combining exercise with the great outdoors can compound those healthful benefits, greatly improve your mood, and according to the U.S. National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine, help prevent incidences of non-communicable diseases.

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To learn more, visit Dream-FlightEnt.com



Squats mainly focus on building up your gluteus maximus, (buttocks), quadriceps (front of the thigh), and hamstrings (back of the thigh).

Exercise No. 1:

Squats

Starting position: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your back straight, while looking straight ahead.

- ${\bf 1.} \, Gradually \, bend \, at \, your \, knees \, and \, lower \, your \,$ glutes as if you were sitting down. Make sure that your weight is evenly distributed on your
- 2. When your thighs are parallel with the floor, thrust your body back up to the starting position utilizing your glutes and thighs. Make sure to keep your back straight.

Perform a total of 10 to 12 reps.

Note: You may add dumbbells once you can perform 12 reps with the proper form.



Exercise No. 2: Push-Ups

Push-ups are ideal for building your chest, or shoulders, triceps, and biceps.

Starting position: Find an even surface to lay your exercise mat on, then kneel down on it and bring your feet together behind you. Gradually bend forward and place your palms flat on the mat, positioning your hands slightly shoulderwidth apart with your fingers facing forward.

- 1. Gradually lower your body toward your mat's surface while maintaining a rigid torso and let your elbows flare outward. Don't allow your lower back to sag or your hips to hike upward during this downward movement. Continue through the movement until your chest touches the mat.
- 2. Push upward using your arms, shoulders, and chest, while maintaining a rigid torso. Also, be sure to keep your head aligned with your spine. Continue pushing upward until your arms are only slightly bent at the elbows.

Perform a total of 8 to 12 reps.

Note: For increased difficulty, try placing your palms farther apart or bringing them close in to form a diamond with your thumbs and index



Exercise No. 3: Sit-Ups

Sit-ups are a classic exercise that strengthens your hip flexors, back, and abdominal muscles.

Starting position: Place your exercise mat on a level surface and lie down on your back with knees bent and feet anchored to the bottom of the mat. Tuck your chin into your chest (in alignment with your spine) and lengthen the back of your neck.

- 1. Interlace your fingers at the rear of your skull and point your elbows outward.
- 2. Exhale as you lift your upper body toward your knees and keep your hands clasped behind your head.
- 3. Inhale as you lower your upper body back down to the mat.

Perform a total of 10 to 15 reps.

Note: If you have poor balance when you initially try this exercise, no problem! You can place your palms down alongside your body for added stability, instead of behind your head.



Exercise No. 4: Planks

Planks help to strengthen the core muscles (the muscles that connect your upper and lower body), as wells as your glutes and hamstrings. They also increase endurance and improve posture.

Starting position: Make sure you're on a level surface. Plant elbows on mat slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and straighten your body, with the rest of your weight resting on your toes. You can ball your hands into fists or lay them flat on the mat-whichever is more comfortable.

- 1. While maintaining a regular breathing pattern (don't hold your breath), squeeze your glutes and engage your core and hamstrings (be careful not to lock your knees).
- 2. Focus on a point on the floor slightly above your head—this will neutralize your spine. Keep your head in line with your spine.
- 3. Hold the plank position for 10 to 20 seconds.

Note: When you can hold the plank position for more than 20 seconds, increase the time by five-second increments.

Exercise No. 5:

Lunges work your glutes, quadriceps, hamstrings, and calves.

Starting position: Stand on your mat with feet hip-width apart. Concentrate on your core and keep your head aligned with your spine.

- 1. Take a long step forward with your right leg. Shift your weight forward so your heel hits the floor first.
- 2. Lower your hips until your right thigh is parallel to the floor and your right shin is vertical. As your knee shifts forward, ensure it doesn't go past your right toe. If able, lightly tap your left knee to the floor while keeping weight on your right heel.
- 3. Drive back up to the starting position from your right heel upward through your thigh and glutes.
- 4. Repeat with your left side.



Exercise No. 6: Walking

Walking is excellent for your health. It's also great because it's something you can do practically anywhere and at any time. Not only does it double as a stress-reliever and endurance builder, but it also enables you to get out and enjoy nature, as well as your local community.

Walking 101: If you're just starting to walk for your health, begin with between 10 to 15 minute walks at first. As you become more comfortable, add a couple of minutes to each of your walks until you reach at least the 30-minute mark.

Note: For added challenge, you can quicken your pace or add hills to the mix.

How to avoid the trap of always wanting more

Continued from Page 1

and I wouldn't want to buy anything for a while. But that never seemed to happen. The more I bought, the more I seemed

My desire for more felt like an insatiable, bottomless pit.

Some Things Are Necessary

Stuff. Things. Possessions. It's what our economy is built upon—the buying and selling of goods and services.

There's nothing wrong with that in and of itself. I would dare say that our freemarket economy—and the vision and values it was born from—has produced one of the greatest nations on earth, a was gone. nation that allows each of us to pursue our potential.

There are certain things we need to buy in order to live our lives: shelter, clothing, and food, to name a few. But as my son learned in grade school, we have needs, and we have wants. Today, the two seem to be easily confused.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting that everyone live with only the most basic of needs and have no wants at all. It's when we get out of balance and become too focused on wanting more that it can become a problem.

The Danger of Always Wanting More

"We're unhappiest when we become dissatisfied with what we have and decide Taylor, who holds a doctorate's degree, said in Psychology Today.

should buy more, earn more, have a better car or a bigger house, or when we decide our job or even our spouse isn't good enough, we create unhappiness for or offering an "irresistible" bargain, to ourselves. Wanting more creates dissat- compel us to buy more. isfaction with our lives and often leads to frustration when we can't satisfy our pitfalls.

and anxious. It can lead us to believe as the Diderot Effect. that life isn't fair. It can lead us to greed, wanting to outdo others, and a loss of ethics. In our desire for more, we may find ourselves violating our sense of right and wrong to get what we want. Wanting more can lead to harming others, fighting for what isn't really meant to be ours, and acting impulsively. It can also feed a strong attachment to possessions. The entitlement culture that's so became dissatisfied with what he had predominant today is fed by this kind of thinking.

In Buddhism, one of the main goals is to eliminate craving or desire, which is said to be the root of all human suffering. It's said that when one can do this, he has enlightened to a truth of the universe. The Bible also warns of the dangers of

"And he said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions,""—Luke 12:15. Still, we desire more. One poll found



We may believe we can one day be satisfied, but this rarely happens, for true satisfaction does not originate from desire.

that the average woman spends nearly 400 hours per year shopping for more, amounting to about 8 1/2 years of her life. Yet, most of us wear the same 20 percent of our clothing 80 percent of the time.

Acquiring more things takes more time, more effort, and more money. It clutters up our homes, as well as our minds, and can even complicate our relationships.

So just what is it that makes us want

A Look at the Psychology

Think about that new shirt or cell phone. While it was exciting at first, before long—if you're like most of us—the thrill

Psychologists call this habituation. That new thing that we so desired loses its shine as we become accustomed to having it. We're then left wanting the next new thing, in a never-ending, downward spiral.

Fulfilling our wants leads to more wants. We may believe that we can one day be satisfied, but this rarely happens, because true satisfaction doesn't originate from desire.

I know this all too well.

Our consumer culture tells us that we shouldn't only want more, but that we need more. The advertising world specializes in helping create this culture. Science Daily points out that today, even nostalgia is used to achieve this. From that we want more," psychologist Steve the 17th through the 20th centuries, nostalgia was viewed as a disease. Today, it's used as a powerful psychological tool, According to Taylor, when we feel we giving us another reason to want, or hold on to, things. Retailers and advertisers use this and other clever tricks, such as creating a sense of urgency, scarcity,

And they get help from our own mental

Author James Clear, founder of The Wanting more can cause us to feel Habits Academy, wrote about one of jealous, resentful, angry, depressed, these pitfalls. It's a phenomenon known

> Denis Diderot was a struggling French philosopher in the 1700s. When Russia's Catherine the Great helped with his dire financial situation, Diderot used some of his newfound wealth to purchase a beautiful scarlet robe. But his happiness was short-lived. Looking at his other things, they now paled in comparison to the beauty of the new robe. He quickly and felt the urge to buy more nice things. He found that he could never fulfill his endless desire.

> "The Diderot Effect states that obtaining a new possession often creates a spiral of consumption which leads you to acquire more new things. As a result, we end up buying things that our previous selves never needed to feel happy or fulfilled," Clear said.

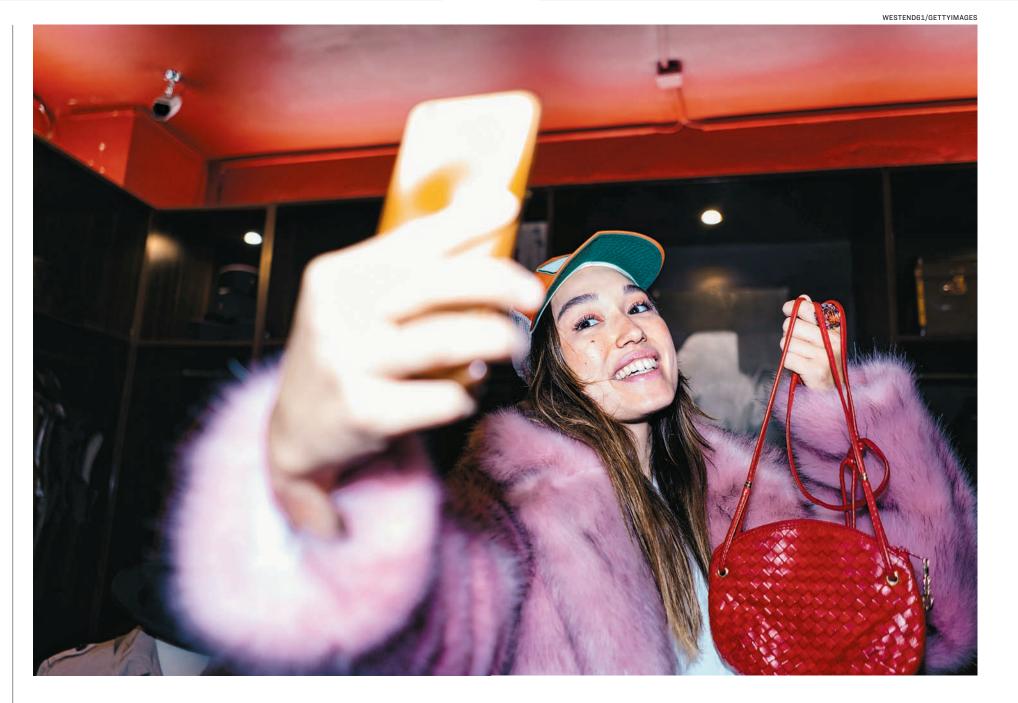
> We buy for many reasons (think "retail therapy" with these): a belief that our purchase will deliver happiness or security, as an emotional coping mechanism or means of avoidance, or because acquiring things often acts almost like a drug. Some buy more because they're competing with others and are concerned with status, reputation, and

During my medical training, an attending physician who was nearing retirement shared how he wished that he'd kept the house his wife and he originally bought. He said it was a perfectly nice house, and it would have been paid off by now. Instead, as they saw their friends "move up" to bigger and better houses over the years, they felt the need to do the same. Now, he would retire with the burden of a large mortgage.

In the words of Diderot: "Let my example teach you a lesson. Poverty has its freedoms; opulence has its obstacles."

Impact on Health

Wanting less brings a sense of contentment, satisfaction with what we have. It invokes respect for the present and is an important component of happiness. Conversely, desiring more can bring a sense of discontentment, a state that can





eventually lead to poor health.

One study in teenagers showed that

those who focused on materialism—

placing a high value on owning things—

experienced envy, depression, and

anxiety, as well as a decrease in grades

and overall life satisfaction. Those who

focused on gratitude experienced the

Several studies have shown that peo-

ple's well-being improves when they're

less concerned with materialistic goals

and values. Materialistic goals, however,

are associated with lower well-being

In his book "The High Price of Materi-

alism," psychologist Tim Kasser wrote:

"People whose values center on the ac-

cumulation of wealth or material pos-

sessions face a greater risk of unhap-

piness, including anxiety, depression,

low self-esteem, and problems with

intimacy—regardless of age, income,

Anxiety and depression lead to poor

mental health, which can undermine

physical health and manifest as things

like high blood pressure, heart disease,

and increased pain levels. As we acquire

more things and live an easier life, we

may see our health decrease in other

ways, such as becoming overweight,

It's said that the things you own end up

Just look at the amount of time spent

working to earn money to buy things,

not to mention the time spent research-

ing, thinking about, shopping for, orga-

nizing, cleaning, maintaining, repair-

ing, or replacing things. In many ways,

we become servants to our possessions.

So, how do we learn to want and buy

James Clear has listed some simple

things we can do to curtail the habits

First, reduce your exposure to tempta-

tion. Unsubscribe from advertising, and

avoid window shopping and web brows-

Next, make sure what you're buying

fits in with what you already have. If you

only own black pants and you buy a pair

of brown shoes, you're going to suddenly

find that you need some brown pants.

ing for things that might tempt you.

of desire and accumulation.

sedentary, and out of shape.

Putting It Into Practice

or culture."

opposite, seeing positive results.

Our consumer culture saddles us with a burden and then tries to sell us a solution that only makes it

In many ways, we become servants to our possessions.

Take stock of what you already have. Do you really need another white shirt (Tatiana)? Will that new throw pillow really make your life better? If not, don't buy it. If the answer is yes, wait at least 24 hours, then ask again. More often than not, you'll find your desire for that thing has faded, and the answer is now no.

Don't create reasons to

Another great idea is a shopping holiday. And no, I don't mean a vacation to go shopping. By going without buying things for a week, or a month, you can detox from your spending habit, and may even discover that you enjoy doing other things with your time.

Learn to put more val-

ue on experiences, rather than things. Invest time and energy into doing things for others. Remind yourself of what's really important—friends, family, and even a bit of quiet time for selfreflection and improvement.

Next, for every new thing you purchase, give something away. This won't only avoid clutter, but it'll make you take stock of what you already have. It's also a great time to practice gratitude for what you have.

Other tips include avoiding the traps of status and comparison, separating your identity from the things you own, and letting go of emotional attachment

It's also crucial to set limits for yourself. While self-restraint is undervalued today, it goes a long way in wanting and owning less.

Remember, there'll always be a newer, better thing to want. But amassing more doesn't make us any happier; it just raises our reference point.

The key, as Socrates said, lies in not just seeking less, but enjoying less. This requires a change in not just the external, but, more importantly, in the

As you own fewer things, you may begin to realize that you don't really need that much to be happy. You may even feel a sense of peace and freedom that comes through unburdening yourself from the desire for more.

As I continue to work on this, I know I do.

Tatiana Denning, D.O., is a preventive family medicine physician and owner of Simpura Weight Loss and Wellness. She believes in empowering her patients with the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain and improve their own health through weight management, healthy habits, and disease prevention.



The satisfaction we get from buying new things quickly fades and leaves us craving for a new round of purchasing pleasure.

Remind yourself of what's really importantfriends, family, and quiet time for selfreflection.

PERSONAL FINANCE

Find Freedom in Any Moment

When we seek inside to let go of what holds us, freedom becomes available

One of our deepest desires is for freedom: to be free of stress, anxiety, a frustrating person, a difficult situation, financial struggles, health problems, the daily grind, distractions, feeling inadequate. So many books, products, and other paid

Escape. Peace. Mindfulness. Simplicity. Self-esteem. A better relationship. Health and fitness. Freedom, for a price. One of the great discoveries of my life is

solutions offer a version of this freedom.

that this freedom is always available to us. In any moment. That might sound obvious to some of you,

but you'd be surprised at how often we forget this, even after we discover it.

It's a practice of a lifetime. Let's explore it a bit.

The Obstacle to Our Freedom

If freedom is always available to us, why is it so difficult to find?

It's important to bring awareness to the obstacle before we look at solutions.

Let's imagine you're in a situation with someone who is extremely frustrating. You just want to get away from them, to a place with peace and quiet. You want to be freed from this excruciating encounter.

What in this moment is preventing you from feeling freedom? It might seem like it's the other person, but it's never really something external. They might be the trigger for how you feel, but in reality, we are the ones who create the feeling of frustration. It comes from inside us because of how we're viewing the situation or other person.

Let me emphasize that: How we view the other person, or the situation, creates our feelings of stress, frustration, anger, or disappointment.

It doesn't really matter what the external situation is: some aggravating person, politics, a sporting event, our own behavior. If a feeling is created, it's because of our view.

This isn't to blame ourselves—we're not doing anything wrong. The goal here is really thinking anything, lazily lying in the simply to bring awareness to the cause of this obstacle.

are responsible for this difficulty, we have without any worries. This is the freedom the power to change the situation. Always.

Creating Freedom in Any Moment

So let's go back to that moment when someone is acting in a frustrating way, and we tive—freedom is experiencing the moment and freedom.

ourselves by external pursuit, such as exit-son, or for ourselves? Can we see the gift ing the situation, maybe by going for a walk that they are, or that we are? Can we feel a and finding the freedom of nature. And, in connection to them, or find compassion for

fact, I highly recommend it in most cases. But I want to use this scenario to show that freedom can be had even without walking away. This illustration is not to be a recommendation to stay in a frustrating situation.

So how can we find freedom? Here's a very often be worth trying out. simple method that can be practiced:

Recognize That You're Frustrated Take note of your feelings, whether you be

stressed, disappointed, lonely, or angry. Let yourself feel the feelings, as sensations in your body. There's nothing wrong with how you're feeling.

Then Bring Awareness to Your View

Look inside yourself to see the view that is causing the frustration: "They shouldn't act this way" or "They always criticize me, I don't know why they have to be so critical" or "I shouldn't be such a procrastinator, I suck." We're not criticizing the view, not even saying it's wrong, we're just bringing awareness to the view that's causing the lack of freedom.

Ask If the View Is Helping or Serving You. If you're feeling frustrated or hurt, it's probably not. Ask whether you're committed to staying this way, or if you'd like to change. If you'd like to change, move on to the next step.

Loosen Your Grip on the View

For example: Do you really know how someone should or shouldn't act in a given situation? Have you walked in their shoes? Do you know how everyone should act? I personally don't even know how I should act, let alone how others should act. This kind of inquiry isn't to tell ourselves that our view is wrong—it's simply to loosen our attachment to the view, to show that there might be other possibilities. Is it possible there are other perspectives? Other things things you don't know?

Experience the World Free of Views



Finding solutions to life's problems within our own reaction to them is the key to unlocking

objects, the light, the colors and textures, the space of the world around us. See the other person simply as a collection of matter and energy. Just experience the moment as direct experience, not as part of a narrative that we have in our heads.

This is true freedom, and it's simply being in the moment free of views, just experiencing. It's like when you've been out in nature, fully immersed in the experience without grass staring up at the trees and sky, floating in the ocean feeling one with the water, on The liberating thing is that if our views vacation in a hammock fully relaxed and available to us in any moment.

Bring In a New, Helpful Perspective First of all, you don't need a new perspec-

just want to get away from them, to peace without views. That said, sometimes it can be helpful to try out new perspectives. For In this situation, we can find freedom for example, can we find gratitude for this per the fear and pain they're feeling? Could we bring curiosity or a sense of exploration to the situation? This kind of thing isn't always helpful (for example, if you're in danger or in an abusive situation, get away), but can

> This all takes practice, obviously. You can't do the last few steps until you start practicing the first few steps. The last few steps can be a struggle when we're really strongly holding our views. Don't worry too much about that, just keep practicing.

The Power of Finding This Freedom

If we learn to practice this kind of freedom in any moment, we start to have much more For example:

If we were thinking about breaking up with someone because we're tired of being in frustrating conflicts with them, we might be able to let go of the frustration and find peace, even when they're upset. This might allow us to be more compassionate with them, and could shift the entire relationship. Not necessarily, but there is possibility here.

If we're frustrated with ourselves, it can be the start of a kinder relationship with ourselves.

If we're avoiding something, like doing our taxes or budget, instead of avoiding it to be free of the stress, we could actually find freedom doing the task. This allows us to find freedom in any activity: exercise, cleaning, decluttering, writing, being in a meeting.

We can eventually be free to do anything: launch a business, write and publish a book, put our creations on social media, connect with people online, be on a stage, create a movement. Because the things that were limiting us before are no longer limitations—we can be free doing all of these

What would that be like?

Leo Babauta is the author of six books and In any moment, we can simply let go of our the writer of Zen Habits, a blog with over 2 views and see the world just as it is. See the *million subscribers. Visit ZenHabits.net*

Week 31, 2021 THE EPOCH TIMES



Pay attention to what you need, as you are worth the effort.

DONNA MARTELLI

Are you taking care of yourself? Proper self-care makes it possible to function effectively in everything you do, whether at work, home, traveling, or relaxing. It's hard to keep up with life's challenges if you fail here, much less take care of anyone or anything else.

If you listen, your body will tell you what it needs. It reacts to past or present experiences, and everything around you is an influencer. The trick here is to listen actively. What is your body saying to you? Perhaps it is telling you that:

- It is tired.
- It hurts. It feels energetic.
- It is thankful.

Don't ignore the message that your body is telling you. Honor yourself by responding appropriately. How? Think of the following to help you care for yourself with honor:

- If it's tired, rest, stop pushing. • If it hurts, try to get to the source of your
- pain and see if you can do anything to
- Recognize the times that you are full of energy. What caused this, and can you replicate it?
- If you feel thankful, let it flow into every aspect of your life.

Ways to Self-Care

Many of us like to push through pain and fatigue and hope they stop bothering us. Do you? Is it hard for you to relax? Trust me, I can relate. I do the best job of relaxing when I get away from my daily work and routine. Can you say "vacation?"

Here are a few suggestions for everyday self-care that you will find helpful:

- Breathe deeply. Take in the good and exhale the bad. Do this slowly and deliberately as you fill your lungs as much as you can and empty them all the way.
- Change your self-talk from negative to positive. For example, instead of "I will never be able to get this done," say "I

When you honor your body by giving it what it needs, it

responds in

MINUTES

Effective cardio

workouts keep

your heart rate

at the prescribed

level for your age

and ability for at

least 15 minutes.

kind.

 For aches and pains, use heat or cold therapy. Watch something funny and laugh hys-

terically. There is healing in laughter. It

• Listen to music that you find uplifting.

• Remind yourself of the things for which

• Get it out on paper where you can see it:

will accomplish my goal."

write or journal your thoughts.

you are thankful.

has been called "the best medicine." Find out what works best for you. When you honor your body by giving it what it needs, it responds in kind. Is all of this perfect? No.

Is it better? Yes. The quality and quantity of your sleep are important, as this is when your body best heals itself. During deep sleep, your cells repair and rebuild, and hormones are secreted to promote bone and muscle growth. Your body also uses deep sleep to strengthen your immunity so you can fight offillness and infection. How God so won-

derfully crafted our bodies!

Exercise

It may seem contraindicative, but exercise helps everything mentioned in this article. To be effective, your workout plan needs to be a priority, and it must be something

An excellent plan of life-giving physical practice consists of these five parts:

1. Strength training (with weights, machines, or bodyweight)

2.Stretching of all your major muscle groups—a neglected area of fitness 3. Cardio that keeps your heart rate at the prescribed level for your age and ability for no less than 15 minutes at a time

4. Mindful core and abdominal work like that exemplified in Pilates

Yes, rest is a component of fitness. Rest makes it all possible.

It's necessary you know your fitness level and work there until you are strong enough to go to the next level. Performing any exercise with proper form will increase strength, no matter how small the movement. You

must never sacrifice form to obtain "more": a heavier weight, a deeper stretch, doing more cardio than necessary, etc. Doing so will defeat your purpose.

Don't do the same workout every day. Your body adapts very quickly and settles in as it figures out how to avoid overworking. For maximum benefit, it's best to surprise it every time you work out. Your body is extremely good at adapting to whatever it's asked to do, so challenge it with constant

Stretch the muscles that you have com-

I call it the "flip side of strength training." Any contraction of a muscle needs to be followed by a stretch. This often neglected fitness area feels so good!

Limit strength training to every other day. This is because while you are doing strength training, you are tearing your muscles. They need that day in between because the resting time is when they build and create new muscle fibers.

Cardio is vital because it strengthens your heart and lungs.

Don't be bored with cardio but try to find a fun way to include it. One of my friends accomplishes this by playing with her grandkids.

To the core we go, where, ideally, all movement originates.

It would be best to strengthen your pelvic floor and all the tiny muscles around your hips and spine. Again, Pilates is the best way that I have found to attain core strength.

So, rejoice at what a marvelous creature you are. Believe that you can function effectively in everything you do. You deserve every bit of honor that you can give to your body, soul, and spirit.

Donna Martelli, formerly a professional dancer with the Harkness Ballet of New York, served on the dance faculty at Butler University, Indianapolis, and is now also a certified personal trainer, and certified Pilates instructor in Indianapolis, IN. She conducts classes, seminars, and workshops in the U.S. and Europe. She is the author of "When God Says Drop It" and "Why the Dance," available on Amazon and wherever books are sold.







Athletes reach peak performance in competition with the help of downtime to recover and rebuild. Corporate athletes, however, get no such break

NANCY COLIER

for professional greatness? What makes someone able to perform successfully under high stress and constant change and to keep doing it over time without breaking down? As it turns out, we have lots of answers to this question, and most focus on the rewards necessary for greatness, the kind of culture that breeds success, and the particular skill sets necessary for peak performance.

But, Harvard Business School conducted a different kind of study, one that examined the strategies and habits of winning athletes and whether they could be transferred to apply to business—in essence, whether Continued on Page 14

we could train high-level executives as corporate athletes. It appears that the answer is "yes." We can indeed apply the wisdom of sport to help ourselves succeed in anything and everything that's challenging.

As someone who competed as a top-level equestrian for more than two decades, it has long been clear to me that the skills and mindset I learned as a competitive athlete are what allow me to succeed in every other pursuit in my life, both professionally and personally. It appears that now

Research in the field of sport demonstrates that top athletes succeed in large part because of their ability to perform under stress, and more importantly, to recover after stress has occurred.

EMF and Blue Light Concerns for VR Technology

These immersive devices subject our eyes and brains to unhealthy



DANIEL T. DEBAUN

ever take off?

Virtual reality (VR) technology first took off back in 2012. Although, did it actually

While VR has been getting better and cheaper every year, it's still missing the necessary advances to make it mainstream. Bulky headsets and relatively complex technology keep VR from being the next smartphone or TV set equivalent. While 2016 was the slated year for VR's jump to mainstream, many people still don't know what VR is or own a VR headset.

So, what is VR?

Virtual reality, or VR, is a simulated digital experience a user can enter into by wearing a headset with goggles and occasionally hand-held remotes. Computer-generated imagery takes over your visual field, and the user's motion is tracked from the headset and connected remotes to simulate being in the virtual

environment. There is a range of applications and potential uses for VR:

Games

Entertainment (movies, shows, concerts)

Simulated learning experiences for

school, jobs, activities

• Simulated travel/tourism

Medicine

 Military simulations Social activities and digital events

The VR gaming segment constitutes almost a third of the whole industry, with a predicted market of \$1.4 billion in 2021.

Continued on Page 11

2021 NTD 9^{тн} INTERNATIONAL CLASSICAL CHINESE DANCE COMPETITION **PRELIMINARY** SEMI-FINAL **FINAL** Sept. 2-3 Sept. 5 Sept. 4 **Gold Award \$10,000** SEMI-FINAL & FINAL Tickets on Sale \$30 **Hotline** 1-888-477-9228 **Tribeca Performing Arts Center** 199 Chambers Street New York, NY 10007 DANCE.NTDTV.COM



Top Uses for Apple Cider Vinegar

Learn 5 health benefits you can get from apple cider vinegar, from wound healing to weight loss

There's no shortage of stories about the with diabetes reported that consuming therapeutic effects of apple cider vinegar (ACV), from weight management to disease prevention and treatment. This popular home remedy has also been used for hundreds of years in the 4. Helps Control Candida Infection kitchen as a cooking ingredient.

Vinegar, after all, has had colorful uses recorded throughout history. Hippocrates used it medicinally for wound healing, while Sung Tse, the 10th-century inventor of forensic medicine, promoted hand-washing with sulfur and vinegar to prevent infection during autopsy. Let's dig deeper into the science backing the benefits of apple cider vinegar.

1. Aids in Weight Loss and Maintenance

Several human studies show that vinegar may increase feelings of fullness, which can lead to eating fewer calories and losing weight. In a study, taking vinegar with a high-carbohydrate meal resulted in increased feelings of fullness, leading subjects to eat 200 to 275 fewer calories throughout the day.

ACV may also be helpful in suppressing obesity-induced oxidative stress, mainly through facilitating antioxidant defense systems. This was revealed in a study using rats fed a diet high in unhealthy fats. ACV also can reduce the risk of obesity-related illnesses by lowering atherogenic risk.

Similar benefits have been seen in fruit vinegars such as apple, pomegranate, and prickly pear, which appear to prevent obesity and related cardiac complications through their potent anti-inflammatory and anti-adiposity

2. Fights Harmful Bacteria

Vinegar has demonstrated strong anti-pathogen action, including fighting bacteria. Using organic acids as supplements has, in fact, been deemed safe and effective in eliminating harmful bacteria in the intestines.

ability of ACV against pathogens in- tablespoon, of vinegar every day was cluding E. coli, S. aureus, and C. albicans. The results showed that the vinegar had antibacterial potential, with the concentration of ACV required to inhibit microbial growth varying for each species of bacteria. Follow-up research showed that ACV can also successfully eradicate methicillinresistant bacteria.

3. Assists in Managing Diabetes and **Blood Sugar Levels**

Consuming apple cider vinegar may positively affect glycemic index and oxidative stress in Type 2 diabetics.

Among healthy subjects who ate a bread meal, supplementing with vinegar lowered glucose and insulin responses, as well as increased fullness. "The results indicate an interesting potential of fermented and pickled products containing acetic acid," the researchers wrote in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

In a separate small study, subjects

2 tablespoons of ACV before bedtime decreased their fasting blood sugar by 4 percent the next morning.

Apple cider vinegar has exhibited antifungal properties, particularly against candida (yeast) species in patients with denture stomatitis, a common inflammatory reaction to wearing dentures.

A 32-year-old woman with chronic vaginal candida infection who failed to respond to other therapies also recovered with the application of ACV, which can be considered for patients who are unresponsive to conventional medical therapies for this condition.

Vinegar has demonstrated strong anti-pathogen action, including fighting bacteria.

5. Helps Improve Heart Health Animal studies suggest that ACV can optimize cholesterol and triglyceride levels, along with other common risk factors in heart disease.

Vinegar may also have acute effects on some risk factors of atherosclerosis, with significant changes seen in LDL cholesterol and total cholesterol between low and high doses of vinegar. Researchers pointed to "a probable protective value" for its use.

Cooking with vinegar or consuming it alone remain the best ways to incorporate ACV into your diet. You can also dilute vinegar with water and drink it as a beverage.

If you're wondering about the "right" amount of apple cider vinegar to take, a 2016 review stated that consuming A study probed the antimicrobial a drink with 15 milliliters, or about $\tilde{1}$ typically enough to see potential health benefits. Experts also recommend getting organic, unfiltered apple cider vinegar that retains the "mother," or a cloudy, murky appearance, for optimal health benefits.

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

For links to studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at TheEpochTimes.com



About one tablespoon of apple cider vinegar a day is typically enough to see health benefits.



EMF and Blue Light Concerns for VR Technology

These immersive devices subject our eyes and brains to unhealthy exposures

Continued from Page 9

How VR Works

placed in the headset itself, like the Samsung radicals are formed. Free radicals cause oxi-Gear VR or Google Cardboard, or they have dative damage and photoreceptor damage PC-based options (The HTC Vive, Oculus and death. Rift, and Playstation VR) that connect to a computer and have sensor-filled LCD screen goggles. There are also standalone versions that don't connect to a separate device, and **EMF Radiation Effects** instead have the VR software and programming built in.

VR is different from AR, or augmented reality. AR uses a lens to create a composite view of both digital and real-world images. It superimposes digital imagery into a viewer's real-world perspective. Perhaps the most famous example of AR in recent years was the viral game Pokémon Go. Using phone apps, gamers use their device's camera to search for Pokémon inserted in the real world through AR. VR might soon accommodate AR, but they are separate terms.

As with any new digital technology, there are health concerns associated with using EMF-emitting devices near your body for long periods of time. VR, with the use of headsets and connected computers or phones, might be exposing your body to chronic levels of EMF radiation.

Health Concerns

Though there are more applications for VR being developed, the easiest way to think of it is as a fully immersive video game.

There are health concerns related to playing virtual games like video games. These include digital eye strain, altered neurological processes (decreased hippocampus use), and induced stress responses, which can lead to chronic stress, depression, irritability, and more.

Blue Light Effects

With VR, a headset is placed directly against your head. This exposes your eyes to a very bright and immersive LED screen.

LEDs function with wavelengths of 400-495 nanometres (nm), which corresponds to the color blue on the visible light spectrum. This is one of the highest-energy types of light that human eyes can perceive. Blue light is harmful because it impacts the body's sleep cycle and affects the eyes.

TV and staring straight ahead for multiple While it may look like real life, VR is just an-

sleep, and even damaged eyes can result from too much blue light.

When the pigment in our retinas is ex-VR headsets either have a mobile device posed to high-energy blue and UV light, free

> Over time, this can lead to macular degeneration and other eye problems.

Similar to holding a phone against your ear to talk, VR headsets are packed with technology, including the LED screen and embedded sensors. Some versions use a smartphone itself.

Some are now completely wireless, while others tether you to a powerful computer with a USB or HDMI cable to stream the VR

Wireless headsets and phone-connected headsets have powerful wireless processors, which would theoretically expose you to more EMF radiation. Wired VR headsets that are attached to a computer or console keep the VR processing further from your body. However, the sensors in the headset are still collecting and sending data. The HDMI cord is still sending electromagnetic frequencies to your head.

Regardless of what VR set you have, EMF radiation is present within a few inches of

Multiple studies show that EMF radiation can create oxidative damage, DNA fragmentation (the precursor for cancerous tumors), and affects brain activity.

EMFs are associated with increased glucose metabolism in different regions of the brain. EMFs also over-activate the sensitive VGCCs (voltage-gated calcium channels) in cells that help the release of neurotransmitters and hormones. This vast increase of calcium ions in the cell also induces an oxidative stress response.

Since the brain has such a high metabolic rate, ROS and oxidative damage can happen more easily than in other organs. Oxidative damage in the brain causes nervous system impairment, meaning a disruption in brain hormones and neurotransmitters. This means a disruption in gut health, mental health, sleep, fertility, and brain and body performance.

Imagine sitting six inches away from your Increased Screen Time and 5G

hours. Digital eye strain, headaches, poor other digital screen. It's very different from



VR technol-

though some

professions

3DRENDERINGS/ SHUTTERSTOCK

may require it.

Imagine

your TV

straight

hours.

ahead for

sitting six

inches from

and staring

avoided,

looking at an actual Already, there are con-

cerns surrounding increased screen time and mental health. Over the past decade, the rise in mental health disorders coincides with the increase in screen time. While correlation doesn't mean causation, research is showing that social media and internet addiction, coupled with the negative EMF effects from technology, may be playing a role in the increase in mental health issues.

The dangers of increased screen time are more important when it comes to children and adolescents because it negatively impacts physical and cognitive abilities. Kids are also much more vulnerable to EMF and blue-light effects since they are still developing and are more vulnerable to environmental impacts.

VR takes screen time to a whole new level because as someone engages in it, they become fully immersed. No longer is it just a relatively small screen in front of you, but instead, it encompasses your entire perspec-

As 5G networks continue to evolve, VR is poised for even more growth because of 5G's increased bandwidth and upload/download speed. 5G-compatible VR would be sending much higher frequencies directly to your

Staying Protected

As VR continues to advance, it may eventually become a mainstream device. While VR is helpful in many ways, for most people, VR is just a fun way to pass the time. With that being said, short-term enjoyment may not be worth negative long-term health impacts. We don't recommend using VR headsets because of the very close proximity to EMF radiation and blue light.

Daniel T. DeBaun is an internationally recognized expert in EMF radiation, EMF shielding, and EMF-related health issues with special focus on the effect of exposure from mobile devices such as laptops, tablets, and cellphones. DeBaun's concern regarding the health impact of EMF emissions grew from over 30 years of engineering experience in the telecommunications industry, where he held a variety of executive positions at SAIC, Telcordia, AT&T, and Bell Labs. He is the co-author of "Radiation Nation: The Fallout of Modern Technology" and the CEO of DefenderShield.

Vitamin B12 Deficiency Symptoms

A deficiency of this essential vitamin is a hidden cause behind many ailments

JOSEPH MERCOLA

significant portion of Americans have some type of vitamin deficiency, one of which is vitamin B12. Vitamin B12 (cobalamin) is a water-soluble vitamin vital for optimal health. Unfortunately, many of the symptoms of deficiency mimic other health conditions and so it's often considered last in a variety of health

There are four known forms of the vitamin including methylcobalamin and 5-deoxyadenosylcobalamin, which are metabolically active. Two other forms, hydroxocobalamin and cyanocobalamin, become biologically active after they are

Vitamin B12 is an essential vitamin, which means your body can't make it. Instead, you must consume an average of 2.4 micrograms each day from food or supplements. While it's found in a wide variety of animal foods, the National Institutes of Health warns that vitamin B12 deficiency affects between 3 percent and 43 percent of older adults.

Although it affects a significant number of people, particularly the elderly and those in developing countries, B12 deficiency is one of the most overlooked conditions. Vitamin B12 plays a vital role in many functions throughout your body. For example, nerve cells healthy.

Vitamin B12 also helps prevent megaloblastic anemia. The vitamin is necessary for cardiovascular and cognitive health, and nerve strength, and regulate homocysteine the body.

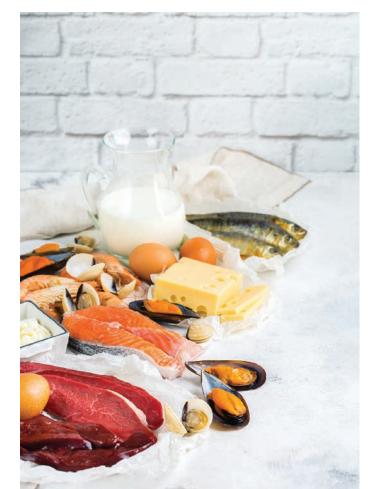
Homocysteine is an amino acid produced down homocysteine in your blood.

So, what symptoms might be a warning you are or have: that you or a loved one may have a vitamin B12 deficiency?

Symptoms of Vitamin B12 Deficiency Aren't Diagnostic

The most common cause of megaloblastic anemia is a deficiency of vitamin B12. In this condition, the bone marrow produces large and immature red blood cells, which pallor. Other symptoms of vitamin B12 deficiency include:

- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Loss of appetite
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet
- Balance or gait problems
- Loss of vision



Mental confusion

- Memory loss
- Insomnia
- Dementia
- Paranoia and delusions
- Heart palpitations
- Depression
- Joint pain

Constipation

ure to thrive, megaloblastic anemia, and delayed development. Permanent damage to the nervous system can occur, so identifying deficiency in people who don't first present with megaloblastic anemia is crucial so it can be treated as soon as possible.

provider may recognize symptoms and theorize that you have a deficiency, testing is required to confirm the condition. Certain groups of people are at greater risk of developing a vitamin B12 deficiency. These people have difficulty absorbing vitamin B12 from the food they eat, or they don't get enough in their diet.

To absorb the vitamin, your body goes it's important to create blood cells and keep through a two-step process. First, hydrochloric acid in your stomach separates the vitamin from protein in the food source. Next, vitamin B12 attaches to a protein your stomach makes—called init helps to produce hemoglobin, improve trinsic factor—so it can be absorbed into

In certain conditions, even people taking supplements cannot absorb the vitamin by the body, which in large amounts can since they don't make enough intrinsic increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. factor to bind with the vitamin so it can One function of vitamin B12 is to help break be absorbed. You may have a higher risk

> An older adult: Age increases the potential you don't make enough hydrochloric acid.

A regular coffee drinker: One study found those who drank four or more cups of coffee daily had lower plasma concentrations of circulating vitamin B concentrations.

B12 is stored in the liver.

On certain medications: Experts recommend that "special attention should also be given to patients on medications such as PPIs, H2-receptor antagonists, antacids, metformin, colchicine, cholestyramine, and patients chronically on anticonvulsants or antibiotics."

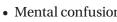
An autoimmune disease called atrophic gastritis: This condition decreases hydrochloric acid and intrinsic factor, both of which are needed to process and absorb

Pernicious anemia: People with this type of anemia don't make intrinsic factor. This means they can't absorb vitamin B12 from supplements or their food and require B12

Stomach or intestinal surgery: For example, weight loss surgery may remove a large part of the stomach, and thus reduce the amount of hydrochloric acid and intrinsic factor to absorb vitamin B12.

Disorders of the stomach or small intes**tines:** This includes celiac disease, Crohn's disease, tropical sprue, or bacterial over-

Vegetarian or vegan: Vitamin B12 is only found naturally in animal foods such as meat, fish, dairy, and eggs. Additionally, women who are strict vegetarians and are



- Panic attacks
- Infertility
- Swollen or inflamed tongue
- Incontinence
- Headache
- Weight loss

Infants who are deficient present with fail-

Although an experienced health care

leads to fatigue, lightheadedness, and skin Aregular alcohol drinker: The effect of regular alcohol consumption was measured in healthy, well-nourished, postmenopausal women, which demonstrated lower levels of vitamin B12, potentially since vitamin

shots for treatment.



ing blood cells to keep-

ing nerve cells healthy.

Vitamin B12

belongs to a

complex of B

vitamins that

postulate may

significantly

improve

COVID-19

outcomes.

Some of the

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including

depression.

Vitamin B12 is only

dairy, and eggs.

found naturally in animal

foods such as meat, fish,

researchers

pregnant or nursing don't give enough vitamin B12 to their babies. Vitamin B12 plays a vital role in many functions, from creat-

Low Levels of B12 May Be Missed

Unless you have recognizable signs of vitamin B12 deficiency, your physician may not think to test your level. Yet, even when tested, serum norms in the United States may be suboptimal. Additionally, individual requirements can vary, so you may have symptoms of deficiency even when your serum levels appear to be in the nor-

Serum levels can also be altered by the presence or absence of binding proteins. Some serum tests identify inactive forms of cobalamin, which masks deficiencies of the active form of the vitamin.

Instead, researchers recommend evaluating deficiency through the measurement of metabolites, including homocysteine, or levels of cobalamin bound to holo-transcobalamin, which more accurately represents the active form of the vitamin.

Evidence suggests that relying on serum levels of vitamin B12 can underestimate tissue deficiency by as much as 50 percent. Serum levels may be maintained as vitamin B12 is pulled from the tissue. This means that a value above the normal cutoff point doesn't necessarily mean you have adequate levels of vitamin B12 for your

In an article published in Practical Neurology, Dr. Ronald Devere notes that research and experts suggest several other ways of more accurately predicting potential deficiency. One method is to look at the spectrum of metabolic abnormalities and clinical symptoms as compared against homocysteine and MMA levels.

B12 Deficiency May Be an Underestimated Cause of Dementia

Some of the symptoms of vitamin B12 deficiency are mental health disorders, including depression. One study of 89 children and adolescents with depression found those who were depressed had "clearly low" levels of vitamin B12 and vitamin D and their homocysteine levels were "remarkably high."

Another study engaged 199 depressed adults who received vitamin B12 supplementation with antidepressants and exhibited significantly improved symptoms. In addition to depression, low levels of vitamin B12 have been associated with minimal cognitive impairment and dementia and may be an option to improve patient outcomes. One study characterized the cognitive pattern of elderly adults who had vitamin B12 deficiency and compared it against those who had Alzheimer's disease. Their results suggested a distinctly different pattern in both diseases.

The researchers found that 12 of the 19 individuals who had low levels of vitamin B12 improved with treatment and seven continued to deteriorate. The researchers went on to analyze the initial neuropsychological evaluation of the two groups of patients and found there was a different profile in those who had a form of dementia that responded to vitamin B12 supplementation and those who didn't.

In the group that responded to B12 supplementation, there were initially more psychotic problems and a greater number of deficits in executive functioning and concentration. In the group that didn't respond to supplementation, there were greater problems with language and apraxia.

The scientists discovered memory pattern challenges were also different, leading them to believe that vitamin B12 deficiency may be differentiated from Alzheimer's disease with a thorough psychological evaluation.



also available as an injection or as mist that you spray under the tongue for direct absorption into your bloodstream.

In certain

conditions, even people taking **supplements** cannot absorb the vitamin since they don't make enough intrinsic factor to bind with the vitamin so it can be absorbed.



Vitamin B12 is

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Scientists recognize that the hematological and neuropsychiatric effects of vitamin B12 deficiency may not occur systematically. The true incidence of neuropsychiatric symptoms is unknown. However, depending on the population being studied and the definition of vitamin B12 deficiency used by the researchers, the rate can vary

Testing for Vitamin B12 Deficiency With Cognitive Decline

between 4 percent and 50 percent.

As early as 2009, Devere, then-director of the taste and smell disorders clinic and Alzheimer's disease and memory disorders center in Austin, Texas, recommended guidelines for evaluating vitamin B12, folate, MMA, and homocysteine blood levels to discern those who may respond to vitamin B12 or folate supplementation to reduce cognitive impairment.

He recommended continuing to use vitamin B12 and folate serum levels in those who present with changes in cognitive functioning. In addition, he set limits for measuring MMA and homocysteine to determine if serum vitamin B12 was an accurate reflection of the vitamin level.

In one paper published in the Journal of Neuropsychiatry, the scientists found only one-third of individuals with low levels of vitamin B12 received adequate supplementation. The researchers warned that in the early phases of replacement therapy in patients who have megaloblastic anemia, clinicians should watch for falling potassium levels that may result in early death.

Administering folate in conjunction with vitamin B12 supplementation may help partially correct megaloblastic anemia. On the other hand, they suggest it could aggravate encephalopathy that may be present with vitamin B12 deficiency.

The doctors suggest that the devastating impact of dementia on the individual and their family warrants testing for vitamin B12 deficiency and potential supplementation, since deficiency in the elderly is a common condition, and modern diagnostic tools in addition to neurophysiological parameters may help improve cognitive performance.

B Vitamins May Help Prevent the Worst COVID Outcomes

Vitamin B12 belongs to a complex of B vitamins that researchers postulate may significantly improve COVID-19 outcomes. One cohort study of 43 patients diagnosed with COVID-19 admitted to the Singapore General Hospital in early 2020 analyzed the oral administration of vitamin D3, magnesium, and vitamin B12, collectively called DMB, against a control group that didn't receive DMB therapy.

The researchers found that only 17.6 ercent required oxygen therapy during hospitalization as compared to 61.5 percent of those in the control group. Of the patients who required oxygen in the DMB group, two were admitted to ICU and one wasn't. Of the control group that required supplemental oxygen, all were admitted to the ICU.

B vitamins play a significant role in a healthy functioning immune system. Additionally, the same group of vitamins plays a role in reducing the severe effects of CO-VID-19, including roles in viral replication, cytokines storm induction, adaptive immunity, and hypercoagulability.

In one paper published in the journal Maturitas, scientists detailed the various routes that each of the B vitamins may affect in the management of COVID-19 symptoms. Specifically for vitamin B12, a deficiency can increase an inflammatory response and raise homocysteine levels.

These actions may trigger endothelial dysfunction and activate a platelet and coagulation cascade that can potentially lead to blood clots.

Vitamin B12 is found almost exclusively in animal tissue. This includes foods such as beef, lamb, venison, poultry, eggs, and dairy products. Nutritional yeast is high in B12 and is recommended for vegetarians and vegans. Two tablespoons provide 7.8

A sublingual (under the tongue) fine mist spray or vitamin B12 injections are also effective as they allow the large molecule to be absorbed directly into your bloodstream and bypass the need for hydrochloric acid and intrinsic factor.

For links to studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at TheEpochTimes.com

Dr. Joseph Mercola is the founder of Mercola.com. An osteopathic physician, bestselling author, and recipient of multiple awards in the field of natural health, his primary vision is to change the modern health paradigm by providing people with a valuable resource to help them take control of their health. This article was originally published on Mercola.com

FOOD AS MEDICINE

Treating Canker Sores With Honey

There are many

contemporary choices

available for the

treatment of canker

sores, but the ancient

remedy, honey, may

still be the best choice.

Clinical trial reveals dramatic efficacy of honey compared to other treatments

MICHAEL GREGER

What works better against aphthous ulcers? Honey applied with a cotton swab threetimesadayaftermeals was compared head-tohead against an over-thecounter soothing pain-relieving paste and a prescription steroid cream.

We've known about painful aphthous ulcers, commonly referred to as canker sores, for thousands of years. "They are the most common lesion of the oral mucosa," (the lining of our mouths) notes a 2017 paper published in The Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology.

These sores were perhaps named by Hippocrates himself. What did he prescribe for it? He "recom-

mended honey for wounds of the head, ears, and penis," though the first "written record of honey as a wound-healing agent dates back to 2600-2200 BCE," notes a paper in JAMA dermatology. By that dating, Hippocrates was beaten to the punch by a And the size of the ulcers was cut in half few millennia by the ancient Egyptians on that score. Honey was also known to the ancient Chinese and is perhaps the oldest wound dressing material known to man.

Evidently, honey has been successfully used as a treatment for a number of types of wounds, including chronic ulcers. The evidence is apparently strongest for burns, but compared with what? Compared with a boiled potato peel. I'm not making that up. A study found that honey appears to work twice as well on burns as dressings made from boiled potato peels, perhaps because of an antibacterial effect, whereas potato peels only seem the researcher evaluating the ulcers didn't to cover up wounds, similar to using ca-know which of the groups each patient daver skin. Cadaver skin? I'd opt for a potato was in, but the patients themselves surely peel, which became an important burn knew because honey would have a very treatment in the developing world.

tions, so the quality of healing is more often defined by the aesthetic look of the re- honey and the study was done in Saudi sulting scar. How does honey do with scars? Arabia, so it's possible that could have In a randomized clinical trial in Iran, plastic surgery patients had half of their surgical scar covered with conventional dressings and the other half of the same scar covered in a honey dressing. The halves of to the phytonutrients from the flowers from the scars covered in honey healed about a third narrower than those covered conventionally, suggesting an improvement

in the healing process. What about canker sores? In a study reporting on 19 cases, all of the participants the participants in terms of healing. Two started out with severe pain, but after drops three times a day of a 2 percent lavonly one day of rubbing honey on the sore, their pain was reduced drastically. In fact, pain was gone in 92 percent of portantly, seemed to accelerate healing, patients after only one day of treatment. What's more, in most cases, the ulcer was gone completely by the third or fourth day. However, there was no control group, so we don't know if the participants may have gotten better anyway or if there was a placebo effect.

And yet, modern medicine continues to neglect honey as a therapeutic agent for canker sores because the evidence to support it has been largely anecdotal. Fortunately, a randomized controlled trial tested honey head-to-head against a steroid gel to see how it stood up. ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

There are all sorts of treatments doctors can prescribe for canker sores, but why not seek out the least toxic and safest agent first?

There are all sorts of treatments doctors can prescribe for canker sores—topical agents such as steroids and antibiotics, systemic medications, and even laser therapy—but why not seek out the least toxic and safest agent first?

Researchers randomized subjects with canker sores into one of three groups. Three times a day after meals, they received either an over-the-

counter soothing pain-re-

lieving paste, a prescription steroid cream, or just plain commercial honey, applied directly onto the canker sore with a sterile cotton swab. What happened? With the overthe-counter paste, pain was cut in half by the fourth day and gone by the eighth. On the prescription steroids, pain was halved at just two days and gone by four. And the honey group? Remember that series of cases that claimed total pain relief in just one day? It was finally put to the test, and, indeed, there was total pain

relief within one day—and honey is about 500 times cheaper. What about the ulcers themselves? The canker sores were mostly gone by eight days using the pain-relieving paste, by seven days on the steroids, and within three days using honey. in just one day with honey, as opposed to three or four days with the steroids or

pain-relieving paste, respectively. With the topical honey, there was a significant acceleration of healing and resolution of pain "with no systemic side effects"—or local side effects, for that matter—whereas the topical antibiotics that are sometimes used can have a variety of adverse side effects, including allergic reactions and tooth discoloration. Another nice thing about honey is that it doesn't lead to the develop-

ment of antibiotic resistance. This was a single-blind study, meaning Here, we have antibiotics to fight infection the-counter paste or topical steroid. The also introduced some bias, but given the extraordinary results, one might want to

> give honey a try. The benefits of honey may be due in part which the bees are making the honey, so why not try the flowers directly? Researchers found that a chamomile extract appeared to cut pain in half within 10 minutes of application, but they didn't follow ender oil in glycerin solution also had an immediate effect on pain and, more imwiping out the ulcers by the fourth day and diminishing pain in a day or two, compared with more than a week for the pla-

> cebo group. Regardless of how you choose to treat your canker sores, if you keep getting them, you should see a medical professional to make sure it's not some sign of an underlying disease. There are a number of conditions that can manifest with chronic canker sore-type lesions, such as inflammatory bowel disease or acute necrotizing ulcerative gingivitis. Also on the list of "diagnostic considerations for oral aphthous ulcers" are "Sweet syndrome" and "MAGIC syndrome." What's MAGIC syndrome? Just "mouth and genital ulcers with inflamed cartilage." I think I'll stay a Muggle.

> Michael Greger, MD, FACLM, is a physician, New York Times bestselling author, and internationally recognized professional speaker on a number of important public health issues. He has lectured at the Conference on World Affairs, the National *Institutes of Health, and the International* Bird Flu Summit, testified before Congress, appeared on "The Dr. Oz Show" and "The Colbert Report," and was invited as an expert witness in defense of Oprah Winfrey at the infamous "meat defamation" trial. This article was originally published on NutritionFacts.org

Developing a Sense of Humor Is No Joke

Children start trying to make us laugh from a surprising young age

YVONNE WREN

"What did the face mask say to the

"Let me cover for you!"

This timely joke was made not by a professional comedian but by a group of primary school students, who have won the 2021 title of "Britain's Funniest Class." It was selected by public vote from a shortlist chosen by legacy comic brand Beano

While the subject matter is pandemicthemed, the structure follows a pattern we are all familiar with from Christmas cracker jokes. The opening line sets the scene, before introducing the comic element: a punchline using a word that has a double meaning.

These pun-style jokes appear simple, but underpinning them is a complex set of language skills. So how early can children recognize—and start to make—jokes like

Children develop humor from a very early age, starting with a sense of shared experience and socialization. In the beginning, humor is of a physical and visual nature and includes laughing during games such as "peek-a-boo" and pulling faces. Children like to imitate and will try to make adults laugh by copying what they do. This type of humor precedes language development but nevertheless establishes the principle in children that something can be funny and that they can make people laugh

Emerging Words

The basis of much verbal humor is incongruity: the use of vocabulary which doesn't make sense or fit with what is being said, and therefore is funny. To understand this type of humor, children must be able to understand pretense—to know that something that is said need not necessarily be true. This usually happens at around ages 2 to 3, coinciding with the expansion of pretend-play skills.

To be able to tell their own jokes, children need imagination. They need to be able to come up with ideas for something that isn't true or can't be real as a basis for developing the joke. They also need to understand that context is important, that what you say can have different meanings depending on when and where it's said. cabulary to be able to express their imagined ideas and describe the context when

Storytelling and Double Meanings

Being able to tell a story is critical even to the most basic of jokes. There is a need to set up the story and then introduce an



To be able to tell their own jokes, children need imagination.

incongruous element that is resolved with a punchline. These narrative skills also start to develop between the ages of 2 and 3, when children are producing sentences in a sequence to report events that they want to talk about.

As most puns are based on double meanings, children also need to have an appreciation that words can have more than one meaning. An awareness of homonyms starts to emerge between ages 3 and 4, when children begin the process of metalinguistics—talking about language.

Once children understand that spoken words may not be true but may in fact be made up and unreal, and they can understand variation in context and double meanings, and are able to tell a simple story, they can use language to create incongruities in the form of puns and ambiguities that cease to confuse and start

Why Does This Matter?

We might think of humor as frivolous. something that doesn't really matter but provides a lighthearted distraction to everyday life. But this attitude is a significant undervaluing of the place comedy holds in our lives and the skill required to be funny.

Humor can also be an avenue to help young people develop their confidence and communications skills, as demonstrated by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' national joketelling competition for primary schoolTelling jokes

confidence,

cation, and

a sense of

belonging.

can build

My father was a comedian who started out by using jokes as a way to get noticed when he was a small, redheaded teen and the youngest in a large family. We often think of timing as critical in comedy, but the ability to choose words and use them wisely to create humor is just as important.

And although we don't all have to be funny, it certainly helps socially if we can understand the joke. Humor helps us to feel a sense of belonging within a group. It can have an almost tribal quality with exclusivity for those who "get the joke."

So, well done to Britain's funniest class. Not only are you funny, but you are also skilled linguists, using words in a sophisticated way to bring joy. And like any skill, it needs to be used to be maintained—so keep on practicing your joke-telling and

Yvonne Wren is an associate professor of speech and communication at the *University of Bristol in the UK; director,* Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit, North Bristol NHS Trust, University of Bristol. This article was first published on The Conversation.

How Rolling With the Punches Makes for a Simple Life

Life can overwhelm us, leaving no other option than to trust that something greater is in play

CHERYL SMITH

Life on earth is made up of a series of peaks and valleys—trials and victories. Fighting against the ebb and flow of what is beyond our control is as exhausting and futile as trying to manipulate the ocean's tide. What will be will be, and there is very little over which we have any control.

Life's punches hit out of nowhere, upsetting normal routines and predictability, falling into the "accept the things I cannot change" category of Reinhold Niebuhr's Serenity Prayer. Loved ones die, leaving us in a state of shock and bereavement. Sickness strikes, interrupting the best-laid plans. Cars and appliances break down forcing expensive repair and replacement costs. Jobs are lost due to downsizing, outsourcing, or other reasons beyond the scope of our preferences and decisions. Relationships end regardless of how much we don't want them to. Such is life.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow said, "Into each life, some rain must fall." Sometimes it's more than some rain. Sometimes it's a flood and none of us wields the power to control the intensity of the downpour. Since these things are inevitable, the thing that matters most is how we choose to respond to them.

Here are some things to consider when life delivers a deluge and you find yourself outside in rainy season.

Accept Reality

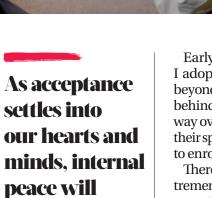
Don't overcomplicate the obvious. Even though we would prefer to pretend the storm isn't raging, false pretense will never alter the truth. As acceptance settles into our hearts and minds, internal peace will come despite external circumstances. Acceptance removes the inward struggle and is beautifully conducive to a simple life.

Accept Limitations

Coming to terms with the fact that what is happening is beyond our own power to remedy will not take the pain away, but it will relieve and lift unnecessary feelings of responsibility. Sometimes we just can't change or fix things. And yet, we may discover we

Accept Contentment

Believe that the pieces are falling into place according to a design far greater than your own. Don't try to reopen closed chapters. They were closed for reasons beyond what you can see. Don't continue to try to walk through closed doors. Move on. Trust that all things are working together for your good, and changes were necessary. Don't fight against the plan. Relax and rest in the knowledge that things are happening exactly as they should be.



come despite

circumstances.

external

Early in our marriage, my husband and I adopted two Chow puppies. They were beyond adorable, but oh, the stubbornness behind that cuteness! We found ourselves in way over our heads when it came to taming their spirited nature, so we made the decision to enroll them in obedience classes.

There, we learned an exercise that was a tremendously successful tool in conquering more than just the will of our puppies.

We were to hold the puppies, one at a time, in the palm of our hands, forcing them to remain on their backs. Can you imagine the squirming? They wriggled and whimpered and wore themselves completely out trying with all their might to figure out a way to escape the firmness of our grasp. The instructor insisted that we don't give in, but firmly hold them in place while talking to them in a commanding but gentle tone.

extremely exhausting—for us and for the puppies. The next time it got just a bit easier, as they remembered not only our refusal to let them have their own way but more importantly they recalled that we didn't let them single day. fall. With time and consistency, the puppies We're still learning. I won't say we never grew more and more.

Around this time of puppy training, we experienced several distressing situations. My 40-year-old brother-in-law died unexpectedly. My dad, who lived near us, became seriously ill and was hospitalized at the same time my mother-in-law, who lived out of state, was diagnosed with cancer. There were more family deaths and concerning health issues, including the heartbreak of infertility. Job stress and other hardships flooded our lives. To say we were completely overwhelmed was an understatement.

We began to see the change in our pup-

pies and the futility of their intense struggle against strength that was beyond their own. Ultimately, we were the ones in control, and as we convinced them they were safe in our hands, they began to learn that squirming wouldn't change the outcome, and they could release their fears and let go knowing we weren't going to let them fall. We began to recognize that the lessons our puppies were

MOTORTION FILMS/SHUTTERSTOC

Pain caused by situations

beyond our

control is

inevitable

acceptance

can help us

navigate the

Even though we often squirmed during that season of severe trials, we came to see that struggling against what was meant to be was only making things more difficult. Trust is a learned practice, and as we survived each situation, we began to squirm less and trust more, knowing there was a power greater than our own ability, and no matter what,

learning were also intended for us.

we would be OK.

That season and many other hard seasons The first time we tried, the discipline was have passed, each one instilling a deeper sense of trust. In due time, we were miraculously blessed with one beautiful baby boy of our very own who is now a teenager and graces our lives and home with such joy every

> squirm, but I will say we have learned to squirm less over the course of our 30 years of marriage. Learning to roll with instead of squirm against life's punches contributes greatly to the simple, minimal life we so cherish and love to live.

Cheryl Smith blogs at Biblical Minimalism. com. Her family sold their home, released 90 percent of their physical possessions, got out of debt, and share their story and their Christian faith on their blog. Her book, "Biblical Minimalism," is now available for purchase. In it, she approaches minimalism from a biblical perspective.

point of view

may help

you recoup

The Making of a Corporate Athlete

When it comes to professional greatness, research shows self-care is key

Continued from Page 9

Recovery is the critical process in which the body and mind not only rest, but also rebuild new strengths and develop resilience, as a muscle does between workouts.

When comparing the careers of athletes and executives, however, vast differences exist in the natural opportunities for recovery. Most of an athlete's time is spent in practice, with just a small percentage in actual competition. An executive, however, is in competition every day, all day. An athlete's high-stress season is usually fairly short with lots of time to recover in the off-season, while a corporate athlete gets a few weeks off per year if she's lucky (during which time she usually works). And finally, the average top-level athlete's career lasts less than a decade while an executive's career spans a lifetime. All that said, an executive, if he is to reap the benefits of the recovery process must find alternative ways to rest

To consistently perform well in highstress environments, executives must focus not just on the skills needed for their specific field, but more broadly, on creating a mindful and nourishing life, one that feeds them physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. To create excellence at work, a corporate athlete must ultimately create excellence in life.

Meditation is the practice of observing and separating from our thoughts, which protects us from getting caught up and sidelined by the thoughts that destroy performance.

The 'Fit' Corporate Athlete

Although executives are primarily mentally focused, the corporate athlete must, nonetheless, pay close attention to the well-being of his or her body, not just how it looks but how it is being taken care of. A corporate athlete cannot function at a high level for very long as just a head running around without a body attached. Corporate athletes are inclined to forget about their bodies, and yet, over time, this dismissive attitude is a surefire recipe for burnout. Attention to diet, exercise, sleep, and a program of physical well-being can't be excluded when excel-

lence is the goal. On an emotional level, the corporate athlete must pay close attention to her feeling state. She cannot wait for a strong emotion like anger or frustration to overwhelm her and thus land her on the bench. Just as an athlete might ask herself how she is feeling on a physical level, a corporate athlete must be aware of how she is on an emotional level and also be able to manage strong emotions when they arise. Mindfulness of emotion is thus a critical practice in the creation of excellence.

From a mental perspective, the ability to control our attention is the key ingredient in the ability to perform under and recover from stress. We must be able to focus our attention when it counts, and turn our attention away from negative and distracting thoughts. Meditation is the practice of observing and separating from our thoughts, which protects us from getting caught up and sidelined by the thoughts that destroy performance. As such, meditation is the practice of most importance, mentally, for creating peak

And finally, on a spiritual level, a corporate athlete must discover meaning in his life—why he's doing what he's doing, what really matters to him, what values he's serving. As unrelated as it may seem to the executive mindset, a top-level performer in any field, in order to sustain himself, must consciously contemplate what his life is about. A sense of meaning is, above all else, the antidote to burnout.



from high stress and stay energized at work.

Top-level executives are athletes—corporate athletes. Excellence is created not just by the obvious skills one's profession demands, but by nurturing a whole and well human being. To create and maintain high-level performance in stressful environments, we must pay attention to and nourish all areas of our life. As it turns out, self-care is, in fact, the recipe

This article is based on the work of Jim *Loehr and Tony Schwartz, the primary* researchers, and coiners of the term

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When the Mind Manifests Mobility Trouble

MAT LECOMPTE

A health setback like an injury or arthritic flare-up can influence how much you move. But these physical limitations can easily be compounded by something even more powerful: your mind.

Such physical ailments can force people to move less than they are actually able to. This decreased movement then compounds over time. While it might not be pain or physical limitations that are holding them back, these issues may nevertheless drain people of confidence and fill them with fear about leaving the house.

Over time, they may elect to remain at home and give up driving or going for walks, leading to slower, stiffer movement and much worse mobility.

These people can begin to suffer from social isolation. They don't see friends as often and can't maintain of form new relationships if they're not getting out. This can include not participating in hobbies or other engaging activity that brings joy. The isolation can lead to or contribute to

If you don't feel like you've got anything to wake up for, the limited mobility may lead to a total abandonment of healthy habits like exercise routines and eating habits. Weight gain or eating too little can zap energy and contribute to further mental and physical health problems.

Mind, mood, and mobility are closely linked. It may seem unrelated, but a stressful life event like the loss of a loved one, job loss, or retirement can contribute to



Mind, mood, and mobility are closely linked.

physical deterioration just as much as a physical ailment can.

Maintaining emotional and mental health, therefore, is essential to mobility and healthy aging.

If your mobility doesn't match up to your physical capabilities, think about why. Are depression, loneliness, anxiety, or fear potential contributors?

If they are, try to re-engage with the world around you by focusing on what you enjoy. If you can't bring yourself to venture out, try talking to a professional for help. It may help ease your mind and give you the tools you need to get moving again.

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



WISE HABITS

A Life of Meaning, Without Buying

There are great reasons to stop seeking externally for something we can only find within

LEO BABAUTA

Lately, I've been buying a lot of things: a nice watch, some cool folding knives, some tools, and outdoor gear. It's fun!

But as I give in to these impulse purchases, I notice that the thrill doesn't last that long, and it leaves me wanting more. And of course it dawns on me that this is a lesson I've learned a thousand times.

Buying things rarely gives me any kind of fulfillment.

When we buy something, it gives us a temporary boost—a bit of excitement, anticipation, some hope that it will give us something in our lives that feels missing. Maybe we hope the new purchase will help us to feel cool, capable, lovable, adventurous, fit, peaceful, connected, or find a sense of belonging. Maybe we think the purchase will help us achieve some goal or life change we've been struggling with.

The contentment can't be found externally, because the thing we really hope for is created inside ourselves.

The lesson I have to remember is that these things aren't provided by purchases, other people, or anything outside of us. The lesson I often forget is that everything we're looking for is inside of us.

We think it will be given to us by buying things—I certainly do—but whatever boost we get from that only lasts for a day or two.

The Fleeting Joy of Buying Something

When we buy something, we get an immediate boost. We're hoping to get something from this purchase—not just the actual item, but the feeling it will give us, an improved experience of life.

The excitement continues with the anticipation of buying it or the item arriving. If we ordered it online, we might check the tracking page, or look on our front porch hoping to see the package.

Then it arrives and there's a boost of joy. Maybe it lasts an hour. Maybe a day or two. On rare occasions, it might last a week. But it's fleeting ... and then we're on to looking for the next purchase.

It's a hamster wheel.

But that feeling we seek, that contentment, can't be given to us by something external, because the thing we really hope for is something we create internally. So the habit of looking for it outside of ourselves is never fulfilling, and will never end as long as we keep hoping for an external solution.

A Wellspring of What We Really Want What we really want can't be found outside of us:

- A sense of connection and belonging
- A sense of fun, adventure, joy, or excitement
- A sense of being good enough, lovable, desirable
- Feeling fit, strong, or beautiful,
- Feeling safe, secure, and stable
 A feeling of peace and freedom
- A feeling of peace and freedom

Where does that come from? We create it from within.

And our ability to create it is boundless and flowing, if we learn to tap into it.

Try it now.

Don't worry if you aren't perfect. Just try these steps and see if you get better at them over time.

Can you feel a sense of joy and gratitude for being alive right now?

Can you feel a sense of being connected to other beings who are going through something similar to what you're going through in life right now?

Can you feel a sense of wholeness with the world around you, a sense of belonging in this moment?

Can you feel the freedom of being a part of the infinite, and the peace that comes from that sense of spacious freedom? Can you feel love for yourself, and a sense of

delight in who you are, a sense of deliciousness in your being?

If you can't find these things inside of you, keep exploring. There's a sense of adventure

keep exploring. There's a sense of adventure and play that can come from being curious about these experiences.

What can you find within you, right now?

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