

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# MIND & BODY

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## A Back Porch Legacy

How small deeds done with great love leave a mark for generations

PAMELA PRINCE PYLE

Craig Dierksheide is a man people will remember. I had met Craig many years ago at a movie theater. Life was different now for each of us, but especially for Craig. He had been diagnosed two and a half years previously with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. The average life span is two to five years from diagnosis.

Yes, life was different, and Craig was living with the end in mind. He and his wife, Katie, had made a significant impact on my friend Jodie’s marriage. The wisdom Craig and Katie shared, both by word and example, had deeply moved both her and her husband. It was a crisp afternoon on a February day in the South, and Jodie and I were going to visit Craig. She had only recently reconnected with him. When we discussed the meeting,

Craig mentioned having a back porch talk. I liked that idea. One year after his diagnosis, his doctor’s prognosis was six months due to a rapid respiratory decline. His daughter’s wedding scheduled for the next fall was quickly moved to March to beat the “death deadline.” When he passed that six-month period, he told us he took great pleasure in telling the doctor that he was wrong.

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## Sepsis: The Killer Nobody Talks About

What is sepsis, and why is it one of the leading causes of death?

Sepsis is a serious physiological dysfunction that occurs when your immune system has an exaggerated response to an infection and triggers a life-threatening chain reaction of inflammation throughout the body. Sepsis is a leading cause of death, accounting for one in five deaths worldwide in 2017. In a research paper published in JAMA, researchers found “sepsis contributed to one in every two to three deaths” in U.S. hospitals. Owing to an increased risk of infection, sepsis is the No. 1 cause of death in U.S. hospitals. Sepsis results when a domino effect of autonomic responses creates the perfect storm in the body. The

first domino falls when an infection is present. This causes the release of infection-fighting chemicals into the bloodstream. When the body’s reaction to those chemicals triggers systemic inflammation, sepsis occurs and can rapidly progress into tissue damage, multiple system organ failure, and death. The leading causes of sepsis in 2017 were diarrheal and respiratory infections, causing nearly 11 million cases. However, sepsis can result from a wide array of health concerns, such as viruses, fungal infections, non-communicable diseases, and even accidents and injuries.

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Recently published research found sepsis contributed to one in every two to three deaths in U.S. hospitals.

**Sepsis is a leading cause of death, accounting for one in five deaths worldwide.**



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MEDICALLY CORRECT

# Urgent Care Vs. Emergency Room

Save yourself some money by avoiding the ER unless you really need it

**PETER WEISS**

You don't feel well, have a low-grade temperature of 100.2, achy muscles, mild back pain, mild headache, it really burns when you pee. Emergency room (ER) or urgent care? Not only can the quality of your care depend on what you decide, but also the cost.

If you have a regular physician, then a simple call to him or her may be the easiest and best solution. It's a Saturday of a three-day weekend and you didn't get a call back from your doctor, you think you may have a bladder infection, and the local urgent care is right around the corner. It takes you 45 minutes and you are in and out with a prescription for antibiotics and pain relievers. You made a smart decision. It also didn't cost you an arm and a leg.

**Urgent care centers tend to be much less expensive than the emergency room for non-life-threatening injuries and illnesses.**

Not everyone takes this approach. Someone may have decided it's best to go to an emergency department at the local hospital. Emergency departments are for just that, emergencies. Mostly life and death, such as heart attacks, major trauma, strokes, and the like. Urgent care centers are urgent care, not emergencies. This could include painful bladder infections, minor burns, sprained ankles, flu-like symptoms, and now, sadly, COVID-like symptoms. Things that need urgent care, but aren't life-threatening.

A "friend" texted me late one afternoon saying he tripped and fell, scraped a knee, and got a deep cut on his leg but otherwise was fine. He wanted to know if he should go to the emergency room or urgent care. I get a lot of these types of texts from "friends." I'm not sure why someone would think I can determine their medical needs through a text message.

It's also amazing how some people lose all of their common sense when they don't feel well. I told him that he may need stitches and a tetanus booster. I suggested an urgent care center, but it was his decision to make.

Five hours later, I got another text saying he's in the emergency department of a large hospital and the CAT scan of his head was negative. CAT scan? Really? He decided on the hospital because he "trusted" the doctors there more. They ordered a CAT of his head because he told them he fell to the ground and had a mild headache. Emergency departments tend to do overkill on testing, but that's a discussion for another time. This friend really just needed to have his leg wound cleaned and get a tetanus booster. He was also really upset when he got the bill several weeks later. I told him that was his fault, not mine.

Urgent care centers tend to be much less expensive than the emergency room for non-life-threatening injuries and illnesses. A Health Care Cost Institute study in 2017 showed an average cost of \$1,389 for the emergency room, and that's just for basic care. That doesn't include blood tests, X-rays, CT scans, and treatment. Average urgent care basic visits run from \$100 to \$150-plus.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that there were 130 million visits to one of the 5,200 documented ERs in the



ER doctors may be inclined to overtest, which contributes to an overpriced visit.

CHINESE WISDOM FOR SEASONAL LIVING

# Live in Harmony With Autumn

Solar Term: 'End of Heat' (Aug. 23–Sept. 6)

**MOREEN LIAO**

*A solar term is a period of about two weeks and is based on the sun's position in the zodiac. Solar terms form the traditional Chinese calendar system. The calendar follows the ancient Chinese belief that living in accordance with nature will enable one to live a harmonious life. This article series explores each of the year's 24 solar terms, offering guidance on how to best navigate the season.*

**Solar Term:** 'End of Heat'  
**2021 Dates:** Aug. 23–Sept. 6

"End of Heat" is the 14th solar term. It signifies the end of the hot season, and it begins when the sun reaches the celestial longitude of 150 degrees and ends when it reaches the longitude of 165 degrees. Although the

sun has moved further away from the Earth, the heat accumulated within the planet remains plentiful. So according to the folk saying in Chinese, "People will still sweat for 18 days after the arrival of the 'End of Heat.'"

According to Chinese tradition, three things happen in this solar term: Eagles display and worship the birds they've captured before they eat them; Heaven and Earth begin to withdraw, alluding to the end of summer; and grains become ripe.

Symbolically, it's the end of a season, and Mother Nature is turning a new page.

"When the weather becomes cool, it is good autumn" is a famous poem in China, and it reflects both the external world and our minds, which is the inner world for an individual. At this time of year, we've



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United States in 2018. By the way, 43 percent of hospital admissions come through the ER.

The National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care survey estimates that one-third to one-half of all ER visits are for nonurgent care. The New England Health Institute said 56 percent of emergency room visits were "totally avoidable."

Some common reasons for ER visits in 2019 were chest pain, upper respiratory infections, urinary tract infections, fever, and trauma.

A few years back, I cut my hand on a fence while we were on vacation in Kauai. My wife is smarter than I am, and she convinced me to go get a tetanus booster. I went to a local urgent care facility, had the cut cleaned, and got my booster. I paid a small co-pay and was in and out within 45 minutes.

A lot of the increase in costs of ERs has to do with patient expectations, excessive billing, and defensive medicine. That's yet another discussion for another time.

The bottom line is if you have what you believe is a true medical emergency, then by all means go to your nearest emergency room. That's what they are there for. Time can be critical, such as in a stroke or heart

attack. Don't overthink, just go.

If you don't have a true medical emergency, then first try calling your doctor, or the one on call.

If you can't reach anyone, then an urgent care facility may be your best option. Many have extended hours. Most are not 24 hours though. Urgent care centers are usually reasonably priced, quick, and thorough.

To give you a perspective on this from the other side, I work as an ER doctor. One shift, at 2 a.m. the on-call phone kept ringing in my call room, finally cutting through my deep sleep. I picked it up and the ER doctor was on the phone. She didn't sound happy. She had a patient in the ER, a 45-year-old lawyer who has been waiting for hours and was upset that it's taken so long to finally be seen. The ER doctor was even more frustrated since she had a full house with real emergencies.

This patient had some cramping and wanted pain meds and something to help her sleep. She brought with her a full "file" of her medical problems, which included recent ultrasounds and lab tests. That's a major warning sign for an ER doctor. Beware of patients bearing a laundry list.

The patient had endometriosis, which can be painful. She wasn't able to get in to see her regular doctor and decided to come to the ER since it was convenient and easy. This patient expected the ER doctor to just "read" the notes she brought and give her what she wanted. She said that she had a trial that started in two days and didn't have time for a full workup of her pain.

I went down to the ER, examined her, and told her she didn't have a medical emergency and we aren't a clinic but an emergency department. She didn't choose to go to an urgent care center earlier since she was "busy." I gave her a list of urgent care centers that opened in a few hours. I also had an ectopic pregnancy patient rushed into the room



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ER doctors frequently encounter patients with minor ailments that should have gone to urgent care instead.

next to her which was a true life-threatening emergency. I offered to see her when I was done with the medical emergency. Needless to say, she left, but not as a happy camper. Emergency rooms aren't for managing basic or even complicated health care problems, but for saving lives during emergencies.

Try common sense when deciding where to go for any medical problem. True emergencies belong in the ER. Urgent issues belong in an urgent care center. It's really that simple. If you're not sure, you can always call the ER or urgent care and ask.

One way to tell the difference is to contemplate this quote from an unknown author:

"Always remember that if the weather or the wait time determines your need to come to the ER ... it's not an emergency."

*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-19 pandemic hit. He was also a national health care adviser for Sen. John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign.*



ALIAKSEI MAROZAU/GETTY IMAGES

just passed the hottest weather, and as we are calming down, we can relax, refresh, and anticipate the harvest that's around the corner.

This is the time to review and reflect on all the hard work we've done for our health early in the year and what outcome it has produced for us. Our body is preparing to turn toward yin and away from yang, with the help of the rich yields and produce from all of the seedlings we started earlier.

Some people may experience dry and irritated skin or dry hair, and

some might even suffer from constipation. This is because the long heat of summer has made our body "toasted," both internally and externally. Yin energy is naturally mild and slow to come out, so there may be a gap or disconnection between yang and yin, as the yang energy may have become too dominant.

**Living in Harmony With the 'End of Heat'**

Among the 12 energy channels, the organ to be focused on during this term is the stomach. What a won-

We have just passed the hottest weather, making this the perfect time to relax, refresh, and anticipate the harvest.



NITR/SHUTTERSTOCK

The End of Heat is the solar term when grains ripen, and a time to look forward to harvest.

derful arrangement that we can eat plenty of food at this time without feeling guilty! The key is to select the right cooking method, the right seasoning, and the right types of food.

The stomach is like the roots of a plant—it processes the food to support our bodies. As our body still holds a lot of the heat from the summer, we might feel hot and thirsty and tend to consume a lot of cold drinks. When we consume low-temperature drinks or food, we might feel very cool and nice as the temperature drops inside our overheated bodies. But right after this, according to Chinese medicine, the warm blood and energy from the surface of our body will travel to our organs to warm them up, so the skin will then cool down and close our pores. Once our pores close,

the heat and sweat will be blocked inside our body and may cause inflammation and congestion inside.

**Seasonal Foods and Scents**

**Food to Eat:** Light tea, soy milk, almond milk, oatmeal milk, luke-warm water, honey, fresh-squeezed juice—drink small portions frequently. Spinach and bell pepper, plus all the root vegetables such as carrots, beets, potatoes. Avoid spices such as peppers, garlic, chili, ginger, shallot, leek, anise seed, and fennel.

**Essential Oils:** Chamomile, nutmeg, cardamom, orange sweet, caraway, dill, ginger, patchouli, melissa, and fennel sweet. The use of ginger and fennel externally produces different results than the internal consumption of their constituents.

*Epoch Times contributor Moreen Liao is a descendant of four generations of traditional Chinese medicine doctors. She is also a certified aromatherapist, former dean of the New Directions Institute of Natural Therapies in Sydney, and the founder of Ausganica, a certified organic cosmetic brand. Visit LiaoMoreen.com*



# Sepsis: The Killer Nobody Talks About

What is sepsis, and why is it one of the leading causes of death?

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Sepsis escalates rapidly once it starts, requiring immediate emergency care.

**Sepsis: The Alarming Facts**  
According to the Sepsis Alliance's "Sepsis Fact Sheet":

- Sepsis kills 270,000 Americans every year—one death every two minutes.
- Sepsis is the most common killer of children worldwide, causing 3.4 million deaths each year.
- In the United States, someone is diagnosed with sepsis every 20 seconds.
- The risk of dying from sepsis increases by as much as 8 percent every hour treatment is delayed.
- In 2012, an average of 38 sepsis-related amputations were performed each day in U.S. hospitals.
- Sepsis is the No. 1 reason for hospital readmissions at a cost of more than \$3.5 billion annually.
- Up to 50 percent of sepsis survivors are left with long-term physical and/or psychological effects.

Despite these alarming statistics, more than one-third of American adults have never heard of sepsis.

**Are You at Risk for Sepsis?**  
The first clear risk factor is having an infection. Infections can be bacterial, fungal, viral, or parasitic in nature and don't have to be severe to lead to sepsis. Something as small as a bug bite or infected cut can be enough to cause the first domino to fall. Some individuals have a heightened risk for developing infections and sepsis due to their age and impaired health condition. You are most at risk for sepsis if you are:

- Aged 65 or older, or younger than 1 year
- Immunocompromised
- Diagnosed with a chronic medical condition
- A sepsis survivor

Individuals with cancer, diabetes, kidney stones, and diseases such as malaria are especially vulnerable. Anyone meeting these risk criteria



Providing daily nutritional support is one of the best things you can do to ensure healthy cells and to facilitate and regulate the biological processes of your body.



should be vigilant in monitoring symptoms and warning signs.

**Warning Signs of Sepsis**  
The Sepsis Alliance has created a memory device to help you recognize and remember the early warning signs of sepsis. It's a reminder that a critical factor to surviving sepsis is catching it in TIME.

- T = Temperature is higher or lower than normal
- I = Infection is present
- M = Mental decline or sleepy, confused, disoriented
- E = Extremely ill and in severe pain, discomfort, short of breath

If you have or suspect you have an infection and experience any of these symptoms, including fever, disturbed breathing, low blood pressure, fast heart rate, and mental confusion, seek emergency care immediately. Conventional treatments include strong antibiotics and intravenous fluids. Many sepsis patients

Something as small as a bug bite or infected cut can be enough to cause the first domino to fall.

are treated in the ICU, with some requiring long-term care. Sepsis is often so traumatizing, both mentally and physically, that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a common after-effect. Support groups for survivors can be a vital aid in long-term recovery and the return to a happy, vital life.

**Natural Support for Surviving Sepsis**  
Providing daily nutritional support is one of the best things you can do to ensure healthy cells and to facilitate and regulate the biological processes of your body.

Science has validated a variety of natural, nutrition-based ways to reduce your risk of developing sepsis, primarily focused on ensuring adequate levels of key vitamins and minerals. If you are at risk of sepsis, take steps now to prevent a minor cut or bite from developing into this potentially deadly condition.

**Vitamin D**  
Maintaining adequate levels of vitamin D is key for a healthy immune system. A 2019 study analyzed the correlation between serum levels of vitamin D and the outcome of sepsis patients. Blood samples were drawn from adult patients admitted to a hospital emergency room and suspected of having sepsis during the one-year study period. Serum vitamin D levels and the correlation of this vitamin to outcomes such as renal (kidney) failure, liver failure, and mortality were assessed. After an assessment of 168 patients, mean serum levels of vitamin D were below normal for 61.6 percent of patients admitted to the hospital for sepsis. Both age and mortality were significantly

correlated with mean vitamin D, meaning older patients and those who died were more likely to be deficient in vitamin D. A study published in August 2020 found Level 1 and 2 evidence supporting the use of vitamin D supplementation in the fight against sepsis, as well as acute respiratory diseases that can lead to sepsis. Level 1 evidence involves systematic review or meta-analysis; Level 2 refers to evidence derived from at least one large-scale randomized controlled trial.

**Vitamin C**  
The evidence for using vitamin C to fight sepsis is strong. Multiple published studies have reviewed the practice of incorporating vitamin C in the treatment of septic patients, revealing a marked reduction in mortality and duration of vasopressor administration, a key treatment for septic shock. A study published in the Journal of Research in Pharmacy Practice found that high-dose vitamin C (ascorbic acid) may be considered as a safe and effective adjunct therapy in patients who are critically ill with sepsis. During the study, patients in the ICU with septic shock who were given intravenous ascorbic acid every six hours required significantly lower doses and lesser duration of vasopressor drugs to maintain blood pressure.

**Probiotics**  
Supplementation with probiotics is considered a safe and supportive practice to combat the effects of environmental pollutants and an unhealthy diet. Adding health-promoting bacteria to your gut may also help reduce the inflammatory cytokine storm of sepsis. A 2018 study evaluated the effect

## Joint-Friendly Exercises

Strengthen your muscles and joints without aggravating existing pain or injuries

IAN KANE

A regular fitness regime can work wonders for improving your cardiovascular system, burning fat, building muscle, and promoting joint strength and resilience.

As people age, they can become more prone to joint issues. It's best to perform activities that are joint-friendly and movements that can prevent joint problems from arising in the first place.

While there are exceptions, such as when people are suffering from injuries or degenerative conditions, in most other cases, engaging in even light exercise can improve minor joint woes. That said, some exercises can be detrimental to joint health. Jogging on a treadmill or somewhere outside can help to develop

your cardiovascular system, but running is a high-impact exercise that can cause disproportionate stress on your body's joints. Running on hard surfaces can send shockwaves through your body—starting at your feet and ankles and rippling through your other bones and joints.

Age and weight can play an important factor as well, as a younger person is typically going to weigh less and have stronger joints than an older person who's obese. And putting all that additional weight on weaker joints can spell disaster.

Other activities, such as rigorous martial arts training, jumping rope, wrestling, and sports such as soccer, football, and basketball can all involve putting stress on your body's various joints. And yes, some weight-bearing exercises in the gym can

If you're just beginning to exercise, start off slow with joint friendly activities like cycling or pool based workouts.

also impact your joints, particularly if your technique is sloppy. To mitigate these potentially negative factors, you'll always want to start by utilizing proper technique with any exercises in which you engage. If you're executing your movements correctly and using good form, you can gain more benefit with less risk.

**So What Activities Can I Do?**  
If you're just beginning to exercise, start off slow with joint-friendly activities such as cycling or pool-based workouts. Moving your body around in water strengthens and supports your joints and provides a good amount of resistance to your muscles. Try joining a water aerobics class or simply swim some laps. You'll get a great cardio workout and strengthen your joints and muscles.

If you're more of the landlubber type, you can always get on a stationary bike, rowing machine, or elliptical machine, which make for low-impact exercise because your feet are always connected to a surface.

If you don't want to travel to a fitness center, you can find a set of stairs to climb. Climbing stairs is joint-friendly because each foot stride up to the next stair is shorter in length and far less impactful when it lands. You can even walk or jog up steep inclines (such as a local hill) and enjoy the same health benefits.

Tire pulling is another great exercise that can strengthen your joints. Simply find a tire that matches your ability level (smaller tires for beginners and bigger ones for people already in decent shape) and tie a thick rope around it. You can either plant your feet (without locking your knees) and pull the tire

of probiotics on cytokine levels of critically ill children with severe sepsis. The double-blind, placebo-controlled trial enrolled children from 3 months to 12 years of age who were hospitalized with severe sepsis and randomized to placebo or probiotic groups.

The probiotic group received VSL#3, a probiotic product developed to support patients with ulcerative colitis or irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), twice daily for seven days, while the placebo group received an inert maltose mixture. From the first day of probiotic supplementation, children in the experimental group had significantly lower levels of proinflammatory cytokines and higher levels of anti-inflammatory markers than the placebo group. They also had lower levels of tumor necrosis factor, a protein released during an inflammatory response, and higher levels of transforming growth factor, a cytokine that plays a key role in immune system regulation, compared to placebo.

**Selenium**  
Selenium is another essential nutrient to the health of your immune system. A trace element that is naturally present in some foods, selenium plays a key role in protecting the body from oxidative damage, including that caused by infection. Selenium deficiency is linked to biochemical changes that predispose people to disease, including viral infections and immune system dysregulation.

Studies on preterm neonatal infants have shown that low selenium concentrations are associated with increased risks of diseases related to prematurity. Meta-analysis of the pooled data showed a significant reduction in the number of infants having one or more episodes of sepsis when provided selenium supplementation.

To learn more about the dangers of sepsis and how to shore up your health through strategic, high-quality supplementation, consult GreenMedInfo.com's research database, the world's most widely referenced, evidence-based natural medical resource.

**WARNING:** Always consult a medical herbalist or your health care practitioner when using both natural and pharmaceutical medicines for any diagnosed condition. This article is for informational purposes only and not intended to be used as medical advice.

For links to studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at [TheEpochTimes.com](#)

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toward you or sling the rope over your shoulder and tow it across a field. Tire pulling isn't only good for your joints, but also for your cardiovascular system, as well as your arm, leg, shoulder, back, and core muscles.

**Joint-Friendly Strength Training**  
To develop the intermuscular tissue that buttresses your joints, you'll want to engage in strength training. And while traditional weightlifting exercises (such as squats, deadlifts, and bench presses) can be great for building up muscle quickly, they can also be hard on your joints. Here are a couple of highly effective alternatives that can reap comparable rewards.

**Resistance Bands**  
While 2020 was a tough year, it taught many of us the importance of self-reliance. Since the gyms in my state were closed down, I sought alternatives to gym equipment. Since I've been a fitness coach for many years, I knew there were great alternatives that could help me maintain muscle and joint

## Breathing Away Food Binges

Modern science is affirming what ancient people knew about the profound impact of proper breathing

KATIE PAPO

Around the world, masks are coming off and people are enjoying full, deep breaths once again. Those deep inhalations may be more important than you realize.

While breathwork was once seen as the purview of ancient yogis and new-age gurus, scientific evidence now suggests that it can be used for a variety of common physical and mental afflictions, including addiction, trauma, pain, and acute and chronic stress.

If that sounds difficult to accept, you may be overlooking the fact that your body runs on food, water, and air. Breathing is responsible for an endless series of biochemical reactions that keep you moving, thinking, and feeling.

And while you can live for weeks without food and days without water, you can't live for more than a few minutes without air. So imagine what would be possible if we were to learn how to harness this most vital life source.

And what about using breathwork for binge eating and food addiction?

Deep, diaphragmatic breathing is rarely cited as a primary tool of conventional treatment for binge eating and food addiction. Yet there are studies that demonstrate how breath affects diverse mental afflictions and disorders.

Diaphragmatic breathing has a direct effect on lowering cortisol levels. Cortisol is sometimes known as the "stress hormone." It's intimately tied to our flight-or-fight response and engages the sympathetic nervous system, which takes us out of the rest and digest state of the parasympathetic nervous system. That fact, among others, has given more mental health professionals incentive to incorporate breathwork into their protocol.

The very first skill we teach clients who have struggled with binge eating and food addiction—sometimes for decades—is proper breathwork. While we use other tools as well, our clients have reported significant shifts in their eating habits using breathwork alone. Some of these shifts include feeling more peaceful and at ease around food, identifying hunger and fullness signals, regulating emotional responses around food, and relief from feelings of compulsion or obsession to eat when not hungry.

Founder of BreathGuidance and breathwork expert Dani Mae explained the science behind the occurrence of such significant shifts. "Breath awareness supplies tools to acknowledge, measure, and adjust when you're feeling stressed, anxious, or seeking distraction and comfort," Mae said. "Your breath is directly related to both expressing and influencing your autonomic nervous system and therefore sys-



tems like digestion and stress response. By increasing breath awareness and applying breathwork, you can reduce your urge to binge as a response to subconscious habit patterns and/or stress."

Focusing on your breath and physically altering your breath patterns can be used as a technique to anchor your mind and body into your present moment, allowing you to make conscious decisions from a place of self-awareness.

If you're angry, you may take some deep breaths before you react. Similar principles can be applied to eating habits and food choices. If you find yourself experiencing patterns around food that feel out of control, breathwork facilitates a slowing down of those patterns so you have control over previously automatic behaviors. It also allows for the space and time to revive your thoughts around food and make choices that align with your goals.

Mae explained the science behind this phenomenon.

"By increasing the length of your breathing rhythm (slow, deep breaths) you increase your CO2 tolerance, which is directly linked to your ability to handle stress and anxiety," she said. "The higher your CO2 tolerance, the more equipped you are to handle stress."

Because patterns of binge eating, food addiction, and food obsession all have stress as a common factor, breathwork allows the practitioner to calm down and slow down enough to feel more in control of their mind and body.

There are additional positive side effects of breathwork on both a physical and mental level. Mae has trained diverse types of health professionals to facilitate various types of breathwork for their patients and clients. She said that with regard to those struggling with binge eating, breathwork can help with regulating emotions and stress, as well as aid digestion, elimination, and other body functions by supporting the body to maintain optimal functioning.

"By slowing and deepening your breaths, you're working out your thoracic diaphragm which is your primary muscle of respiration," she said. "This workout stretches and strengthens your diaphragm, which gives you increased capacity to massage your digestive organs like your stomach and intestines. Certain types of breathing patterns make digestion more efficient by

encouraging intestinal action and supplying more blood and oxygen to the digestive process."

Diaphragmatic breathing has been shown to support positive results in terms of emotional, mental, and physical benefits. Mae described why this may be the case.

"Diaphragmatic breathing has been shown to reduce stress hormones, relieve common GI complaints, and increase vagal tone," Mae said.

One study found that even the length of your inhale versus your exhale breath can affect your physical and mental state. Our clients learn diaphragmatic nasal breathing, with the duration of the exhale lasting longer than the inhale, for a relaxation effect.

Mae recommended this type of breathing pattern as well, citing the science behind it.

"Extending the length of your exhale (longer than your inhale) will reduce your heart rate and activate the rest and digest response," she said.

"When that response is activated in your nervous system, you receive the benefits of being able to think more clearly and feel more calm in your decision-making process. This practice is also widely used for those who are in recovery from past traumas."

A simple practice you can try at home is using diaphragmatic breathing before, during, and after eating, to help keep your nervous system engaged in the "rest and digest" response. If you notice yourself speeding up or feeling chaotic around food, simply pause and return to the breath until you feel calm again.

When you practice this technique while eating, try to bring your awareness to your physiology and note any changes. This practice, combined with complementary techniques and the appropriate professional support, can help you create a calmer and healthier relationship with food, one breath at a time.

For links to studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at [TheEpochTimes.com](#)

*Katie Papo has helped people from around the world end decades of disordered eating and heal their relationship with food, and specializes in compulsive binge eating and food addiction. Join her email list for support, follow her podcast for weekly talks, or visit her website for more information at [KatiePapo.com](#)*



There are a variety of effective exercises that can help you reach your fitness goals without joint pain getting in the way.

NITAI TERMEER/GETTY IMAGES

Breathwork facilitates a slowing down of automatic patterns, like bad eating habits, so you can take back control.

LIGHT POET/SHUTTERSTOCK



# A Back Porch Legacy

How small deeds done with great love leave a mark for generations

Continued from **Page 1**

The doctor then stated, “It must be because you were in great shape before you were diagnosed.” He paused with the timing of a great comic or perhaps to build the effort for a deeper breath and then continued the story.

“I told him, ‘Well, that makes you wrong twice, Doc.’” We broke out in laughter.

We laughed a lot that day. We also shed some tears. Craig could have shed tears over his losses, the “little deaths” that occur when disease chips away at the life we expect to keep living. However, Craig’s tears came when telling the stories of kindness that came his way.

As the afternoon progressed, I began to understand the breadth

▶ A year and a half after his diagnosis, Craig Dierksheide (seated on the wheelchair) was told he had six months to live. His daughter Anna (center) moved up her wedding from the fall to the spring to make sure to beat the “death deadline.”

**Get right with God and realize all of us are here for a very short time.**



NATALIE E. PHOTOGRAPHY

and depth of who Craig is and who Craig and Katie are together. I began to understand their legacy building, that is, how they had lived their lives and what they would leave in this world. He shared stories of many of these back porch visits, sometimes with a laugh and sometimes with tears when the stories of kindness overwhelmed him.

He asked about my work in Rwanda. I shared how God spoke so very clearly that Rwanda was my place and my purpose, and yet it has evolved as God brought

like-minded dreamers into my path and legacy builders to build a hospital in Rwanda with Africa New Life Ministries.

He grew quiet and then declared, “I don’t believe I have a legacy, certainly nothing that I could place my finger on.”

Friends, lean in closer and hear this: We all leave legacies of some kind. They can be unintentionally good or unintentionally bad. My entire purpose of writing on legacy is to let anyone know that having a legacy that is chosen, tended to, and shared leads to a

purpose-filled life that leads to a meaningful life, and ultimately a very important ingredient of a good death.

Craig then asked, “Pamela, why did you come today?” Warmth exploded through my heart as the answer bubbled up. “Craig, I came to tell you about your legacy.” Actually, it was God who came to tell Craig his legacy, and Jodie and I just happened to be the vessels he used. Craig, however, was like many of us, he couldn’t see his legacy because he only thought legacy came in big packages. Well,

## Against the Grain

Eating well might not be the American way, but it really should be

DONNA MARTELLI

Serving riches and material wealth at the expense of health and well-being is a perilous course to follow. Sadly, it’s the way of our culture and economy. Just look around. People are fat. Why is that?

The standard American diet (SAD) destroys a person’s health. God gave us everything we need for an abundant life and to maintain our health and wellness. Natural medicines and cures for diseases are all here for us to discover. I personally believe that there is a natural cure for every known disease in the world, including cancer. Sometimes that cure is as simple as not creating or using the thing causing the disease.

But these natural cures are inexpensive and can’t be patented. They don’t fall within the complex framework we’ve created around health care and medical practice. The system in place prescribes surgeries and drugs for every ailment. When side effects arise, there is another drug to take care of them, and on and on. Currently, the world system is drunk with the love of material wealth and convenience. The consequences are far reaching.

Let’s go grocery shopping. In the produce section, we see a plethora of delicious-looking fruits and vegetables. They promise to be bursting with vitamins, minerals, and flavor that just won’t quit. But they are degraded.

Processors have puffed them up, coated them with wax, and made them grow too fast, all to create more profit. All this assures those valuable nutrients, not to mention flavors, are reduced or lost. I can remember how tomatoes tasted when I was a child: not at all like the flavorless doppelgängers of today.

Leaving the produce section, we walk the center aisles. It’s all but impossible to find real food here. Boxes and cans are filled with ingredients we can’t pronounce

with roles we can’t fathom. I have bought cookies and crackers and kept them for a year, and they were still “fresh.” Something is seriously wrong here.

American women are beset with digestive issues such as diarrhea or constipation, and “the bloat” is a constant companion. Even skinny women who don’t eat much can have miserable abdominal bloating. Processed foods are often the culprit here.

Surely there must be some good meat in this store. It all looks plump and rich, but how did it get it that way? The hormones that the poor animals have ingested disrupt our normal hormonal processes. It’s inhumane for the animals and harmful for the people who eat them. Chickens processed in China, oh my. The conditions there are unsanitary at best, and we have no idea what they are doing to those chickens. Then there is the known fact that the Chinese communist regime sees our country as its principal enemy.

**Let me tell you that biting into a tomato in Romania in the late 1990s was a memorable experience.**

Have you ever been to a less-developed country where everything is natural and only imported items are processed? I have. Let me tell you that biting into a tomato in Romania in the late 1990s was a memorial experience. My senses came alive with a triumphant burst of flavor that I haven’t experienced in the United States. I never knew how delicious eggs were either until I had one for breakfast in Romania. Scrawny chicken parts may have humbly adorned our



HALFPOINT/SHUTTERSTOCK

dinner table, but rich and full flavor was nothing to look down on. The tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, and all manner of fruits and vegetables were so tasteful that it’s difficult to describe how delicious they were. Additionally, my American digestive woes vanished while I was there. I ate twice as much as I eat at home—and I lost weight.

All considered, what can you do to attain and maintain optimal health? You have to be like me: the odd one. I search for the foods that God gave us: whole foods that are grown organically. I can’t eat in a normal restaurant, a fact that bothers my family and friends because it disrupts their social life.

For people who seek a wholly nutritious and natural diet, we have to smile sweetly and resist the urge to be argumentative as family and friends urge us along to enjoy the wonders of their sad standard American diet. I have eaten that way before, but I had to change when I became sick and lethargic. It was a big step to take, but it has been immeasurable worthwhile.

I may be odd in most people’s

eyes, but I feel fantastic, and my energy is through the roof. I may inconvenience my loved ones, but I am not feeding those systems that devour their well-being. Won’t you consider these things and be an oddball with me? It will take some studying and planning, but you can find real foods if you diligently search.

And we aren’t alone in this venture. There are many people out there who feel the same as we do. Once, you make the choice to eat only organic, whole foods, you will be amazed at how well you feel.

*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, Ind. She conducts classes, seminars, and workshops in the United States and Europe. She is the author of “When God Says Drop It” and “Why the Dance,” available on Amazon and wherever books are sold.*

▶ Growing food in healthy soil and visiting local organic farms can connect us with our traditions—and each other.



COURTESY OF THE DIERKSHEIDE FAMILY



COURTESY OF THE DIERKSHEIDE FAMILY

it doesn’t.

I paused for a moment with the weightiness of that statement. “Craig, I came to tell you about your legacy.” That is a pretty bold statement to make about someone I had only briefly met before. However, it was all the back porch visits that came before mine that told Craig’s story. I felt them in that moment of revelation. I was changed. Wisdom moments, kindness moments, authentic moments, settling in like a blanket over my shoulders taking the chill from the air.

I paused for a moment. “The truth is, Craig, most folks don’t inspire others to return kindness. They don’t inspire a back porch visit many years after crossing seasons of life together. It is all the years of your caring for others that has built a legacy of relationships saturated with kindness.” He lived on a porch of influence

and was using what time he had left to continue to build into others. This was his wisdom and his legacy. And friends, if we could have those ingredients in our legacy, well, that would just be like “running the race as if to win the prize.”

Living with ALS had changed their lives radically. They were radically adaptive, radically optimistic, and radically thankful. As we left, I felt lighter, stronger, changed.

The next day, I thoughtfully considered his universal words of wisdom as I read a letter he had written to a class of nursing students that he and Katie had visited.

Craig advised they consider some of the larger factors in their lives, how lucky they were to be born in America and how important it is to invest in your family. He also challenged them to take

full advantage of what this life could offer:

- Don’t be average.
- Don’t just get a job and do the same thing your entire life.
- Don’t settle.
- Dream big.
- Make a bucket list and start working on it—today.

For myself, I looked at my children as babies and marveled at the miracle of creation. From my back porch, I now watch the big, black, starry sky and wonder what’s out there and how big our universe may be. I realize with full confidence that there is something infinitely grander than us who created us, and I am thankful for our Creator’s imagination. Get right with God and realize all of us are here for a very short time. What’s next is where it really gets good. I realized from my time with

WISE HABITS

## How to Stop From Spinning Into Meltdown

If we can catch the spark that ignites our mental wildfire, we can keep from burning ourselves

LEO BABAUTA

If you tend to get overwhelmed by negative emotions and fall victim to rage, shutdown, or anxiety attacks, life can be difficult.

A small frustration or upset can escalate into an emotional reaction that ruins your entire day.

If this is you, know that you’re not alone. This happens to a lot of people, in a variety of ways:

- Getting frustrated with someone and then having that anger heat to a rage or simmer all day, putting you in a foul mood.
- Feeling fear or hurt, you might get caught up in a mental narrative that brings on an anxiety attack or causes you to shut down. This state may take hours to recover from.
- Feeling badly about something you did or failed to do, you might spiral downward with self-loathing. You may drop into a state of discouragement about everything.

What can we do if we experience emotional overwhelm on a regular basis? Let’s take a look at what’s going on, and then look at some ideas for what we might do.

**How We Spin Into Disaster Mode** The initial difficulty that we encounter is rarely a major disaster—it’s usually just a feeling of uncertainty or fear:

- Frustration when someone behaves in a way we don’t like.
- Fear and hurt when we feel criticized.
- Self-doubt when we don’t do as well as we’d like at something.

This initial feeling of fear, uncertainty, or frustration isn’t necessar-

ily a problem. It’s just a feeling. It’s an initial tug at our hearts.

The real difficulty comes from what happens afterward:

We feel the tug and then we go into a defense mechanism of spinning one of our usual narratives;

The narrative might be about why the other person is wrong, why you are wrong, and how significant this situation is;

These thoughts increase the feeling which intensifies the thoughts, feeding a growing blaze until we’re in full-on disaster mode—the tiny spark is now a forest fire;

Then we might resort to various habits to cope with this disaster—yelling, throwing a tantrum, shutting down, hiding, comforting ourselves with food, distraction, or drugs.

Or perhaps we melt into a depressive funk.

Even this reaction isn’t that big of a deal. It’s just a passing emotional storm. We don’t need to beat ourselves up if we fall into these patterns. In fact, what we really need is more self-compassion.

**How to Stop Before Meltdown Occurs**

If you look at the process above, the spark that ignites the flame isn’t so hot or huge.

The trick is to catch it early—if we can catch it while it’s still just a spark, and hasn’t inflamed into a forest fire, it’s much more manageable.

We can simply give ourselves some space to feel fear and uncertainty, or frustration, or whatever the feeling might be. We can take a few breaths. Give ourselves some compassion. And then let go and move on with the rest of our day.

How do we catch it early? Practice. If we aren’t well-tuned into ourselves, we may have to start developing this ability in reverse. We notice when there’s a full forest fire,

and then reflect on when it was just a spark. At what point might we have caught it earlier? We can do this reflection without beating ourselves up. Pretend you are helping a friend reflect.

Then slowly, with this kind of practice, we might be able to notice in the moment when it’s just a spark. “Ooh, that hurt!” Or, “Yowza, that feels frustrating!” Catch it in the moment, before we’ve doused it with gasoline.

When we are able to catch it early, we can pause. Breathe for a few moments. Notice the feeling as a sensation in the body. Be present with the sensation without fueling the narrative that intensifies the fire.

When we get caught up in that nar-

rative (which we will), we can simply notice that happening. Notice what the narrative is, notice that it is unhelpful (it only makes things worse), and see if you can turn from the narrative back to the sensation in the body. Let yourself feel this emotion as a sensation.

From here, you can give yourself some compassion, some love. Take care of yourself, as you feel this uncertainty, fear, or frustration.

Catch it early enough, with practice, and we can take care of the poke at our hearts with compassion and grace.

*Leo Babauta is the author of six books and the writer of Zen Habits, a blog with over 2 million subscribers. Visit ZenHabits.net*

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Often we can’t reflect on the spark until we notice the raging fire.

(Far left) Craig Dierksheide, his wife Katie Dierksheide, and Dr. Pamela Prince Pyle.

(Left) Craig Dierksheide and his wife Katie Dierksheide.

Craig and in this letter that I witnessed a man doing big things in small ways. He has continued to build his legacy despite being in what he jokingly referred to as “a race to the finish line.”

Craig was using the power of his influence to teach people fundamental truths about life.

Not long after this visit, people who knew Craig gave him a birthday parade that Jodie said “could be seen for miles.”

It raised \$7,500 for ALS. Craig texted me to share the news, calling it the “BEST BIRTHDAY EVER!”

I am encouraged by the truth that a lasting legacy is most often found by the imprint we leave in the lives of others. Mother Teresa so beautifully expressed this principle: “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” Craig and Katie have built a legacy around this principle and long after we are all gone, generations will be affected.

For more information about ALS, go to als.org.

To join Craig’s legacy, give in his name to the South Carolina ALS Association at the following link: [www.als.org/donate](http://www.als.org/donate)

*Dr. Pamela Prince Pyle is a board certified internal medicine physician, who was one of three physicians selected in 1992 by Carolina Health Specialists to begin the first hospital-based internal medicine practice outside of a university setting in the United States. In 2009, Dr. Pyle began traveling to Ruwanda for medical work with Africa New Life Ministries and was instrumental in the founding and growth of the Dream Medical Center in Kigali. She is the author of “A Good Death: Learning to Live Like You Were Dying,” coming in 2022. Her website is PamelaPrincePyle.com*



JAMIE GRILL/GETTY IMAGES



# Living Forward

Being overloaded with sentimental items can become an obstacle to creating new memories

CHERYL SMITH

The minimizing process is often done in layers. Famed tidying expert Marie Kondo suggests reducing possessions in stages and starting with easy items like duplicate kitchen utensils and finishing with sentimental items like photographs. The sentimental layer of minimizing has been the most agonizing for me. I associate things with people and memories from the past, and it just feels so wrong to let the associated thing go. Somehow I feel like I'm betraying my precious parents if I dare to donate the gifts Mom bought for me or all the decoupage pictures Dad took so much time to make for me. After all, there will be no more gifts from them. I miss them so much, and holding onto the things they gave me during their time on Earth brings a great deal of comfort. Or does it? Sometimes it all starts to feel heavy. Seeing certain items seems to accentuate the blatancy of my parents' absence more than it delivers the comfort I felt the day they were given to me. It's not that day anymore. Many moons have passed, and a lot of water has flowed under the bridge during the 19 years since Dad went to Heaven and the seven years since Mom followed him there. We recently had to move again, due to circumstances beyond our control and completely against our will. As we packed and prepared for the move, I was completely dumbfounded as to how we could still have so much stuff. We began downsizing

## These items feel like an anchor.

in earnest four years ago when we sold our four-bedroom home with the oversized garage. At that time, we released about 90 percent of our physical possessions. We moved into a two-bedroom, furnished rental that provided very little storage. And we continued downsizing the entire time we lived there. We were intentional about not bringing new things into our home, yet when we got ready to move again, I was overwhelmed by all that we still owned. How could this be? As I unpack boxes and crates in our new place, I see that a lot of what I'm unpacking is sentimental in nature. Oh, there are the things that we actually use, need, and want to keep, but there are a lot of things I am clinging to simply because I feel guilty letting them go. As I contemplated all of this today, several epiphanies dawned on me. Sentimental items are tethering me to the past. These items feel like an anchor keeping me from embracing the now and what's to come. I cling because I want to maintain a bridge to yesterday, but that bridge is an uncrossable, unrealistic fantasy. Holding on to the things that belonged to or were given to me by departed loved ones will never bring them back or transport me back in time.



Instead of bringing us joy and fond remembrance, sometimes sentimental possessions that are hard to let go of can make us feel guilt and pain.

AVELLA/SHUTTERSTOCK

leave behind will not be attached. These are our memories, not his. It won't make sense to him why I kept a restaurant receipt from a meal Mom, Dad, and I shared when I was a teenager. He wasn't there, nor will he understand its purpose. So why burden him with it?

Most of the sentimental stuff hasn't seen the light of day in years. I just keep it stashed away in crates that are never opened and keep dragging it from place to place like a ball and chain. Opening it now feels like reopening an old, painful wound. I don't want to do that anymore.

As I purge the sentimental, I start to realize that these same truths apply to relationships. Some of my social connections may have at one time been healthy but have become toxic. Clinging to a detrimental relationship out of sheer guilt is counter-productive to my new forward-looking life. As I'm assessing every single thing I take out of boxes and crates before finding it a place in our new home, I'm analyzing each relationship to see if it still brings benefit, joy, and enrichment to my current life.

It feels good to shed what's no longer healthy. From now on, I want to live life looking forward. I'm excited about changing my perspective from mourning what is gone to anticipating what may come. After having gone through some scary medical stuff lately, I've been freshly reminded just how fragile life is. I don't want to waste any more time longing for what has already been lived. Deeply thankful for more time, I want to embrace this moment and live it to the full with an outlook of eagerness and gratitude. Cherished memories are important, but cherishing the moment to create new memories is essential.

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

The most cherished mementos we have from loved ones are carried inside us.

When an item evokes more sadness than happiness, it no longer deserves a place in my life. I no longer want to be reminded of what used to be but will never be again, because I want to enjoy today and the memories still to be made.

These sentimental things are no longer making me feel joyful. They bring pangs of heartache when I look at them, and as I watch my husband and son lug these crates around, I cringe thinking about how my sentimentality is the cause of their sore muscles and backs.

I am not betraying my parents (or anyone else) by letting go. Loyalty is not marked by keeping every greeting card they ever gave me or holding on to every single thing they ever bought for me. I don't have to give up everything, but I don't need to keep everything, either. It's unhealthy and unfair to the loved ones who remain and mean the world to me. Thankfully, I have the option of keeping choice, meaningful reminders of my time with them and still feel OK about not clinging to the rest. I can almost hear my very practical, sensible parents telling me it's not only OK, but high time to let go.

Letting go eases the burden my son will one day face. One day when our son has the unpleasant job of sorting through our things after we are gone, the memories associated with the things we

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# The Mystical Origins of the Pillow

For much of human history, pillows had much grander role than just cradling our sleeping heads

TATIANA DENNING

## A variety of materials were used to make pillows in ancient China, including porcelain, jade, pottery, bamboo, wood, and bronze.

**The First Pillow** The first pillow is believed to have originated in ancient Mesopotamia (today's Iraq) around the year 7,000 B.C., making the pillow about 9,000 years old (not counting ancient civilizations we may have long forgotten). This pillow was made of stone, and was used not for comfort or support, but rather for purely utilitarian purposes. It raised the head off the ground to help keep insects and other critters from climbing into a person's hair, mouth, ears, and nose. With time, ancient civilizations came to believe that the pillow could also provide support for the head. Stone was thought to be the best way to provide support, and so continued to be used for this reason. Stone was also immune to insects and bugs, unlike various softer materials. But carved stone was

expensive, which meant that only the wealthy could afford to own a purpose-built pillow. As such, the pillow came to be viewed as a status symbol in ancient times. **Ancient China** More is probably known about the use of the pillow in ancient China than in any other culture. The hard pillow maintained its popularity in ancient China. While the people of ancient China had the knowledge and ability to create a soft pillow, most looked down on it, believing a soft pillow robbed the body of its essential energy and vitality. The ancient Chinese believed the proper pillow, as well as the proper furniture, could also rectify a person's behavior and personality.

Continued on Page 14

# Getting Children Help When They Need It

How a hospital and a school district teamed up to help kids in emotional crisis

RHITU CHATTERJEE & CHRISTINE HERMAN

In 2019, the Rockville Centre school district in Long Island, New York, was shaken by a string of student deaths, including the suicides of a recent graduate and a student. "When you get these losses, one after the other, you almost can't get traction on normalcy," said Noreen Leahy, an assistant superintendent at the school district. To Leahy, the student suicides exposed a children's mental health crisis that had been brewing for years. She had observed a concerning uptick in depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation among students. Her school district had a team of mental health professionals, but Leahy said they couldn't provide the kind of long-term care many students needed. "Remember, psychologists and social workers and counselors in school districts

are there to make sure kids are learning," Leahy said. "We're not hospital wards. We don't do psychotherapy. So it's very limited what we can do for these students." She said she saw an urgent need to connect students to mental health care quickly and easily, and the 2019 tragedies drove her to find a way. Her vision ultimately led to the formation of a unique partnership between several Long Island school districts and the nearby children's hospital, Cohen Children's Medical Center, part of the Northwell Health system. That partnership provides prompt access to mental health services for students and includes ongoing support for school staff members in addressing children's mental health, creating a mental health safety net for kids and families in the area that didn't exist before.

Continued on Page 12



Schools struggle as anxiety and depression rise among children.



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## More Reasons to Love Watermelon

This incredible fruit offer more than a delicious snack

The ultimate summer fruit is ripe for the picking, and it comes with a wealth of health benefits. More than just a refreshing dessert or treat for the hotter days, watermelon is a proven medicinal food. With the scientific name *Citrullus lanatus*, watermelon is a fruit that belongs to the Cucurbitaceae family. While native to the Kalahari Desert in Africa, it is cultivated in many tropical and nontropical regions today.

Watermelons are a much-valued source of the antioxidant ascorbic acid, as well as lycopene and citrulline. These may help protect against chronic issues such as cardiovascular disease and cancers. Lycopene gives fruits and vegetables their distinctive red color. In a 2003 study, consuming regular watermelon juice led to significant increases in blood plasma concentrations of lycopene and beta carotene.

At 92 percent water, watermelon helps you stay hydrated. This is one of the reasons why fruits and vegetables promote a feeling of satiety. A 2011 study also highlighted watermelon seeds as a good source of dietary protein. Here are some of the top benefits of watermelons for health and well-being.

### 1. Cancer Prevention

Increased intake of fruits and vegetables was linked to a decreased risk of breast cancer among Chinese women. The tested fruit and vegetable groups included dark leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, carrots and tomatoes, bananas and watermelon.

The same inverse relationship between carotenoid-rich vegetables and lung cancer risk was found from the results of the Shanghai Men's Health Study from 2002 to 2009, as well as between vegetables and fruits rich in lycopene and carotenoids and prostate cancer risk in a case-control study conducted in Hangzhou, southeast China.

The reduction of cancer risk appears to be due, in part, to the lowering of insulin-like growth factor (IGF), a protein that plays a role in cell division. High IGF levels are associated with cancer.

**Supplementing with watermelon extract has a beneficial effect on arterial function and blood pressure.**

### 2. Fight Metabolic Syndrome

A promising preclinical study in 2007 showed that watermelon pomace, an abundant source of L-citrulline, significantly improved metabolic syndrome in diabetic and overweight animal models. This also helps disprove claims that fruit intake harms people with Type 2 diabetes.

Watermelon juice in particular showed anti-diabetes potential. A 2020 study demonstrated that the juice exhibited anti-diabetic action in an experimental

diabetic animal model through modulation of glucose transporters, anti-inflammatory activities, and an antioxidant defense system.

### 3. Blood Pressure and Weight Regulation

Supplementing with watermelon extract had a beneficial effect on arterial function and blood pressure, particularly among obese middle-aged adults with prehypertension or stage 1 hypertension.

Watermelon juice also prevented increased post-exercise systolic and diastolic blood pressure in females, but not in males, in a 2019 study.

"More research is warranted to examine the effect of sex on the efficacy of watermelon consumption for controlling BP," the researchers wrote.

Among prehypertensive individuals, supplementing with the fruit also improved aortic blood pressure and wave reflection, an indicator of arterial function. Further, with its pro-cardiovascular properties, the lycopene in watermelon was found in studies among obese postmenopausal women and Finnish men to reduce the stiffness and thickness of artery walls.

In a 2019 study, consuming two cups of watermelon daily reduced blood pressure and body weight. The study compared the effects of consuming the fruit versus a low-fat cookie snack for four weeks on body weight, blood pressure, glucose, insulin levels, and biomarkers for inflammation, oxidative stress, and liver function.

"As a natural food that provides fiber, micronutrients and bioactive phytochemicals, watermelon may be a healthier alternative to conventional snacks," the researchers wrote.

### 4. Prevention of Macular Degeneration

Lycopene is found in parts of the human eye and helps protect against both oxidative damage and inflammation. Thus, it may also help prevent age-related macular degeneration, a common blindness-causing condition in the elderly.

In an experimental study, subjects with low lycopene serum concentrations were at a high risk of macular degeneration. Lycopene was also seen in a separate study to effectively address immunodeficiency disorders such as HIV and cerebral microangiopathy, a cause of cognitive impairment.

Learn more about the health benefits of watermelon against a diverse lineup of diseases on the GreenMedInfo.com database.

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

The GMI Research Group is dedicated to investigating the most important health and environmental issues of the day. This article was originally published on GreenMedInfo.com



Watermelon juice shows anti-diabetes potential.

# Can Shoulder Pain Come From Your Ankles?

Common shoulder pain may have little to do with your shoulder or arms

EILEEN KOPSAFTIS

Shoulders are the most commonly injured joints in the body because they are the most mobile and the least stable. Instability is what causes this unique and complex joint to be the third most common musculoskeletal complaint presenting to physical therapy.

So, if instability is the reason for such a high rate of pain and injury, can you make the joint more stable to reduce your risk of shoulder problems happening in your life? Yes, but it may surprise you to learn you must train your whole body in order to improve your shoulder function. You can't successfully reduce your risk of shoulder issues by isolating your rotator cuff muscles or by just working your shoulder joint.

Your rotator cuff is designed to provide more stability in your mostly unstable shoulder joint; yet each year there are millions of visits to medical offices for shoulder pain due to rotator cuff problems. What is commonly seen is that one (or two) of the four rotator cuff muscles have become torn or injured. This is called Rotator Cuff Syndrome. The most common medical treatments advised for this issue are steroid injections and surgery.

Sadly, a systematic review of scientific studies reported steroid injections were not seen to work any better than manual therapy, and the clinical data doesn't find any evidence to support any intervention (surgical, non-surgical, or post-surgical) one way or the other.

So, if the common medical treatments for the most common shoulder problem don't appear to be effective enough, what can be done about it?

Let's look at shoulder anatomy to see if it can provide some clues.

A total of 18 muscles, including the four rotator cuff muscles, directly affect shoulder function. This is why the term "shoulder complex" is often used. All that mobility is possible because the arm bone (humerus) sits in a very shallow cup (glenoid fossa) that allows a great deal of motion. The job of the rotator cuff muscles is to provide stability during all that motion. So why do they appear to fail so often? There are three main reasons.

### Workouts That Isolate Muscles

First, what I have seen as a physical therapist certified in Applied Functional Science, taught by the Gray Institute, is how isolating muscles during workouts can injure the human body. While you can focus on major body parts to maintain or restore healthy function, isolating muscles is an entirely different thing.

Isolating muscles is tantamount to asking one person to lift something that requires a whole team. Your body is designed for authentic physical function. This means your whole body is a team player and nothing is designed to work all by itself. Your lungs need your heart which needs your lungs, and so on.

Muscles work together when you're performing normal physical tasks, and your whole body is in play. When you reach up to a shelf overhead, you use your whole body, not just your anterior deltoid. When you lower a heavy bag of groceries onto the kitchen table, you use your whole body to control the motion, not just your biceps.

Isolating muscles is a common reason for tendonitis and chronic pain to occur in major body parts. If tendonitis occurs without having been to the gym and isolating muscles, there are probably major body



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Your shoulder is a uniquely mobile joint, with a range of motion that carries unique risks.

parts not doing their job. Typically, this happens from sitting all day, which leads us to the second reason.

### Decreased Hip and Power Source Function

Believe it or not, your shoulder complex is dependent on having a strong foundation below. There may be 18 muscles directly affecting shoulder motion, but there is a whole body indirectly affecting shoulder function.

It is a physics thing.

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This means your shoulder doesn't perform in isolation from the rest of your body. When you push open a door, your back hip provides the opposite force to push from, not your shoulder. When you lift your arm up overhead, your shoulder pushes off of the lower body.

What this means in practical terms is that weak glutes can impair healthy shoulder function. If you sit on your backside all day and do nothing to ensure your glutes have functional strength, you may experience shoulder issues. You can treat your shoulders till the cows come home, but if you have what I respectfully call a pancake butt, you will not permanently restore healthy shoulder function. To do that, you must first restore healthy hip function.

This means squats and lunges can be your friends when it comes to achieving healthy shoulder function. Of course, you may need guidance if these motions elicit pain. There are ways to switch that pain off (depending on your medical issues) with these motions, but you need to know the right things to do. This is where expert guidance is required.

Impaired hip mobility, not just loss of strength, can also impact shoulder function, as rotation in your hips is required when you walk if your trunk is to rotate authentically and allow your shoulder girdle to move in healthy alignment. Everything is connected to everything else, which brings me to the third reason for shoulder issues.

### Impaired Ankle Function

You may be saying, "What on earth does my ankle have to do with my shoulder?"

Once worked with a highly trained 22-year-old college football quarterback who came to me with a diagnosis of shoulder and elbow

**Your rotator cuff is designed to provide more stability in your mostly unstable shoulder joint.**

**Isolating muscles is tantamount to asking one person to lift something that requires a whole team.**

tendonitis. I never touched his shoulder or elbow. His problem was unstable ankles. We worked to restore stability in his ankles, and his shoulder and elbow pain resolved in just four sessions. Everything is connected to everything else.

You see, once motion is initiated, your muscles work to control that motion. Controlling motion requires exquisite timing to occur throughout your body. This is how ankles, hips, and so forth, impact whole-body motion, including shoulder function.

If your ankle has impaired mobility or stability, your foot will not be able to transition from flexible to rigid as needed, and will create a whole chain reaction up the leg and, ultimately, to the shoulder. That young quarterback had shoulder pain during his long training sessions throwing the football because of unstable ankles. When he went to release the football, his ankle didn't provide the stability needed to control the release of the ball at the right time. His shoulder was being strained every time he released the ball because of ankle weakness and resultant instability. His shoulder was not the culprit, it was the victim.

I could have treated his shoulder with stretching, ultrasound, heat, ice, isolated exercises, and so on, without any resolution of his pain. He needed to be seen as a whole body that walked through the door, not just a shoulder. So do you. If you have shoulder issues, your whole body needs to be assessed to best determine the source of the problem.

Is it your shoulder, hips, ankles, or the portion of your spine that runs from the bottom of your neck to the bottom of your rib cage (your thoracic spine)?

If you have a history of ankle sprains or hip issues, this may be why your shoulder has pain. If you have a history of not bearing weight on a leg due to injury or surgery—and this affected the function of that ankle or hip—this may be why you have shoulder pain. If you can't turn well (poor thoracic spine function) to see to back up your car, this may be why you have shoulder pain.

The kicker is you may not have any symptoms in your hip, ankle, or rib cage. The victim (your shoulder) gets no justice because the culprit(s) are quiet.

Now that you know your shoulder is dependent on the authentic function of your ankles, hips, and thoracic spine, you know it's pivotal to assess, train, and restore any existing deficits in these areas. If there hasn't been a direct injury to your shoulder and yet pain occurs, please remember, your shoulder just may be the victim.

I have created a video that teaches how to self-assess 3-plane whole body function (HaveLifeLongWellBeing.com/self-assess/) and locate potential problem areas leading to shoulder (or back or knee or neck) pain. Doesn't it make sense to address the reason the pain is there instead of just addressing the pain itself?

Eileen Kopsaftis is the founder of HaveLifeLongWellBeing.com. An eclectically trained physical therapist, nutrition educator, and best-selling author of the book, "Pain Culprits!," her passion is to empower people with accurate knowledge and effective training to move without pain and age well into their 90s and beyond.

Exercises that isolate muscles place unnatural strain on the body that can lead to problems.







An innovative new approach helps schools get students mental health services by partnering with other schools and local mental health care providers.

# Getting Children Help When They Need It

How a hospital and a school district teamed up to help kids in emotional crisis

Continued from Page 9

At its heart is a new behavioral health center, which the hospital opened in January 2020. Students are evaluated by the center's child psychiatrist and mental health counselor, who start and continue treatment until a child can be connected to long-term care in the community.

The concerning rise in mental health issues noticed by the Long Island school administrators mirrors national trends. Roughly one in five U.S. children meet the criteria for a mental health disorder, and the rate of suicide attempts among teens has risen over the past decade, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Around the country, most kids who have mental health issues don't get treatment. There's a shortage of providers who work with children and it can take months to get an appointment.

"The wait times on average to see a mental health specialist on an emergency basis is somewhere between two to three months and for regular basis is up to 12 months, which is an unacceptable wait time," said Dr. Ujjwal Ramtekkar, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

Without timely access to care, many kids end up with worsening symptoms and eventually land in a hospital emergency department "as the fastest way to either avert [a mental health] crisis, or as the fastest way to get some kind of mental health evaluation," Ramtekkar said.

"It sort of creates this ping-pong effect," said Tina Smith, executive director of special education at Oceanside School District in Long Island.

It's common to see students go to the emergency room (ER) only to be discharged soon after and return to school without a plan for follow-up care, she said. "And then the problems start to spiral again out of control," Smith said. "And then they're sent back to the hospital [ER]."

It was with those worries in mind that, after the student suicides in 2019, Leahy began raising her concerns with colleagues, school board members, and other parents, including Gina-Marie Bounds, a hospital administrator at Cohen Children's Hospital.

Roughly

**1 in 5**  
**U.S. CHILDREN**

meet the criteria for a mental health disorder, and the rate of suicide attempts among teens has risen over the past decade.

Bounds took the idea to the head of emergency child psychiatry and other hospital officials at Cohen's and they got to work. Leahy spread the word to neighboring school districts, who were dealing with similar problems, and persuaded them to come on board. Several months later, the mental health center opened its doors.

This couldn't have come at a better time, Leahy said. As many large hospitals around the country saw a surge in the number of kids in mental health crises in their emergency departments, the new behavioral health center reports the opposite trend. The number of mental health visits to the emergency room by students from the school districts declined by at least 60 percent in 2020 when compared with the previous year.

School administrators also say the health center has played a critical role in prevention by promoting the emotional well-being of students, families, and school personnel. School and health center staffers meet twice a month via Zoom to check-in and brainstorm ways to address emerging health and wellness concerns of staff members and families.

## The Right Help at the Right Time

The goal of the new health center is to provide kids with care as soon as symptoms emerge.

The center is staffed by a child psychiatrist, a mental health counselor, and a medical assistant. It's located next to a pediatrician's office and within a few miles

**The health center has played a critical role in prevention by promoting the emotional well-being of students, families, and school personnel.**

*This story is part of a reporting partnership that includes NPR, Illinois Public Media, and KHN. Nationwide Children's Hospital, mentioned in this story, is a financial supporter of NPR.*

*If you or someone you know may be considering suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (en español: 1-888-628-9454; deaf and hard of hearing: dial 711, then 1-800-273-8255) or the Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741.*

*This story was republished from Kaiser Health News. KHN is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues. Together with Policy Analysis and Polling, KHN is one of the three major operating programs at KFF (Kaiser Family Foundation). KFF is an endowed nonprofit organization providing information on health issues to the nation.*

of the school districts it serves.

When a child first arrives, the child is evaluated to determine whether they need to be hospitalized.

"Most kids don't need that," said Dr. Vera Feuer, Northwell Health's associate vice president for school-based mental health, who helped create the center and now oversees it. "Most kids need outpatient care."

And the center starts that care right away—medication and/or therapy, depending on what each child needs—to stabilize the child and prevent a worsening of symptoms, and to connect them to ongoing care with a provider in the community.

In January, a local resident, Tara, found herself calling the health center to make an appointment for her 17-year-old sister, who had been struggling with irregular sleep patterns and panic attacks for months.

Tara had recently become her sister's legal guardian. KHN isn't using their last names and only using the sister's middle name—Jasmine—to protect their privacy.

Jasmine said she felt suffocated during her panic attacks.

"It felt like I was running, like my heart got really fast, and like I was being put in a little tiny box," she said.

Jasmine and Tara met with a mental health counselor at the behavioral health center. The follow-up sessions were helpful for Jasmine, who learned about the importance of speaking with a trusted friend or adult any time she felt triggered. And the clinic helped Jasmine get connected with a nearby psychologist whom she now sees for weekly therapy sessions, Tara said.

## Removing Barriers for the Most Vulnerable

The new health center provides an important safety net for kids who might otherwise fall through the cracks, like 17-year-old Alyssa Gibaldi, who was refused care by other mental health providers because of a disability.

Alyssa attends Oceanside High School and is extremely social, according to her mother, Jennifer.

"She's like the mayor of the school; everybody knows her," Jennifer said.

Alyssa has Down syndrome and the pandemic upped her anxiety. Last fall, she became catatonic and went into what Jennifer described as a "zombie-like state."

"She couldn't talk. She couldn't move. She couldn't speak. She couldn't feed herself," Jennifer said.

On several occasions, Jennifer called 911. Alyssa was transported in an ambulance to the ER and hospitalized. After her neurologists ruled out seizures and other conditions, they suggested Alyssa see a psychiatrist.

But Jennifer said Alyssa was turned down repeatedly by providers saying they didn't take her insurance or that they didn't work with kids with disabilities.

That's when Jennifer reached out to the school nurse, who referred the family to the new behavioral health center. The center's child psychiatrist, Dr. Zoya Popivker, reviewed Alyssa's medical records and prescribed medications for depression and anxiety.

Jennifer said they got the meds on a Saturday morning, "and by Saturday night, she was out of the catatonic state. Ever since then, she's been coming back to us, like her personality came back."

Alyssa continued to go to the behavioral health center for several months, until they were able to transition to a psychiatrist who works with kids with disabilities.

## The Case for School-Hospital Partnerships

It makes sense for children's hospitals to partner with schools, because that's where kids spend most of their day, said Ramtekkar, the psychiatrist at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

School staffers often know their students well and can spot early signs. That's why schools in many parts of the country have been working to forge partnerships with nearby mental health care providers.

But such partnerships still depend on mental health care resources in the communities they serve. A 2019 study found that 70 percent of counties didn't have a single practicing child psychiatrist.

Leahy, the assistant superintendent at Rockville Centre in Long Island, said sharing a behavioral health center across multiple school districts leads both to better collaboration and cost savings. The price her district pays for the services is less than the cost of one full-time staff member, and the state chips in to cover part of that.

Cohen Children's Hospital will add a new behavioral health center this summer, expanding to 14 school districts. At that point, about 60,000 students in Long Island will have access to immediate mental health support should they need it.

# Habits That Can Reduce Your Risk of Dementia

There are pleasing and practical things you can do to save your brain for the years ahead



Dementia awaits far too many people. Fortunately activities like maintaining a social life and getting outdoors can lower your risk.



Reading is an engaging way to entertain yourself and keep your brain healthy.



Eating well and maintaining a healthy weight can protect your brain from developing dementia.



Gardening offers amazing benefits, from delicious food to a stronger mind and body.

IAN KANE

People make choices every day that affect whether or not they will develop dementia in the years to come—and how fast it progresses if it does show up.

Dementia is a progressive disease that can eventually cause deterioration of brain function—such as your ability to form thoughts and recall memories. It can also dramatically alter your normal brain chemistry.

In some cases, it's specific or genetic dispositions. In other cases, dementia can develop as a result of existing ailments.

The good news is that simple things, such as maintaining a network of friends or getting outdoors more, can help to prevent dementia from happening in the first place.

Here are some everyday helpful habits you can integrate into your life that can help reduce your risk.

## Monitor Your Weight

Obesity is a global epidemic, not only in the West but also in many of the world's developing countries as well, according to the National Library of Medicine. Therefore, it's wise to maintain a healthy weight—especially as we enter into the midlife periods of our lives.

According to a recent Science Daily release, the number of global dementia cases is expected to triple by the year 2050, and part of that is due to having a high body mass index. In other words, being overweight.

Maintaining a healthy weight—particularly as we age—can help to protect our brains. These bodyweight factors dovetail into the next healthy habit—nutrition.

## Eat Healthily

Everyone's goal should be to control their weight, blood sugar levels, and blood pressure. All of these factors can play crucial roles in protecting our brains and reducing the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Therefore, food intake (nutrition) is of utmost importance, since, as the old saying goes, "You are what you eat."

The Mediterranean diet is one of the healthiest food plans you can follow. In multiple studies, it has been shown to be one of the diets lowest in unhealthy fats and highest in vitamin and mineral content, but also one of the easiest to incorporate into our lives.

The Mediterranean diet consists of foods such as lean meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, olive oil, and fish.

## Maintain a Social Life

Group activities, or even one-on-one get-togethers, can be great for promoting brain health—simply by being around other people. In contrast, being isolated can lead to depression and can often become a problem with older adults as their cognitive abilities decline over the years.

Aside from motivating each other to exercise, friends and positive social contact can boost your brain health. Simply being around other like-minded people acts as a tonic. Isolation, similar to depression, often becomes a problem as older adults begin feeling the effects of loved ones passing away and cognitive decline. Depression appears to be a precursor to dementia.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns that social isolation (loneliness) is associated with about a 50 percent increased risk of dementia.

So what are you waiting for? Get out there

and form (or join) a social network of friends, even if it's initially through a video chat app.

## Engage Strangers

When people are in close proximity to strangers while out in public, they have a natural propensity to be quiet and keep to themselves. But according to psychologist Gillian Sandstrom, reaching out and talking to strangers can strengthen our mental health and enrich our lives.

Whether sitting next to folks on trains, buses, or planes—or walking through parks or stores, many of us overestimate the difficulty (or danger) of connecting with strangers and underestimate the payoffs in doing so. Engaging in conversations—even if it's small talk—can greatly enhance our temperaments and brighten our moods, among many other benefits. All of those factors can help to reduce the chances of developing dementia.

You can find some great ways to strike up conversations with strangers online or in magazines.

## Read, Read, Read

Intellectual activities, particularly reading, have been associated with a significantly lower risk of dementia, according to a study published in JAMA Psychiatry.

This boon was found to be independent of other health issues and lifestyle factors (such as nutrition, exercise, drugs, alcohol, and smoking), demographics, and socioeconomic status. Reading on a regular basis can also greatly boost your cognitive engagement and even prolong your life, according to a study by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI).

## Protect Your Head

Let's start off with the good news first: The average person's brain can usually recover from common forms of head trauma, such as light concussions and jarring movements such as whiplash. However, if these relatively minor incidences occur too often or accumulate over time (as experienced by some military personnel and contact athletes), chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE)—a degenerative brain disease—can develop, which is associated with dementia.

Even if you don't look as "cool" wearing a helmet while you're riding your bike, motorcycle, scooter, or skateboard, this habit can save you many headaches and possibly dementia.

## Engage in Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra, otherwise known as "yogic sleep," is a dynamic visualization exercise that's relatively simple to learn and implement. People who practice yoga nidra have reported feeling less stressed, depressed, and anxious. Other benefits include feeling more rested and left with a renewed sense of wholeness.

## Grow Your Own Garden

No matter what country you're from, most of us agree that previous generations had certain things figured out. Before the convenience of microwaves, fast food, and the like, not only were they more in tune with the natural world, but they also enjoyed an enhanced sense of self-sufficiency.

Part of that self-reliance involved growing their own gardens, which provided many dividends beyond nutritious, chemical-free food. The physical process of tilling soil, pulling weeds, planting seeds, and hoisting containers of freshly harvested produce is great for people's cardiovascular systems and balance. This activity also promotes the development of stronger muscles.

Meanwhile, simply being out in nature and observing the various forms of flora and fauna, can calm the mind and reduce stress. Growing your own garden is like stepping back in time to a healthier and simpler lifestyle.

**Red meat offers high levels of dietary iron—heme iron. Heme iron is highly bio-available and absorbed well by the body.**

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

in 500 foods, including pork, turkey, fruit, vegetables, and beans.

Another factor is dietary habits. Many Americans have abandoned red meat for chicken, while low-carb diets have decreased consumption of iron-fortified cereals.

Red meat offers high levels of dietary iron—heme iron. Heme iron is highly bio-available and absorbed well by the body. Non-heme iron, which is found in plant foods, is difficult to absorb. Non-heme iron must be consumed at twice the rate of heme iron for the same absorption.

So, what can you do? You can increase red meat intake, for one thing. Eating red meat a couple of times a week can serve up the iron you need. Just prioritize lean unprocessed varieties.

If vegetarian, opt to include fortified cereals and juice.

To get the most from dietary iron, be sure to get enough vitamin C every day; it's required for optimal iron absorption.

A wave of depression, anxiety, and suicide has schools looking for ways to help children get the care they need.



RODNAE PRODUCTIONS/PEXELS



# The Mystical Origins of the Pillow

For much of human history, pillows had much grander role than just cradling our sleeping heads

Continued from Page 9

While people today desire comfort, the ancient Chinese valued improving one's moral character over a life of ease. This is one reason ancient Chinese pillows and furniture were made of hard materials.

The hard pillow was believed to have a variety of other benefits. It served to not only support the head and neck, but helped maintain the complex hairstyles of the time while sleeping, increase blood circulation, and improve one's intellect. According to renowned auction house Christie's, the ancient Chinese pillow also was used to keep one cool while sleeping, "Poet Zhang Lei of the Northern Song dynasty wrote: 'Pillow made by Gong is strong and blue; an old friend gave it to me to beat the heat; it cools down the room like a breeze; keeping my head cool while I sleep.'"

A variety of materials were used to make pillows in ancient China, including porcelain, jade, pottery, bamboo, wood, and bronze. It was said that the material a person rested their head upon would influence their health, therefore, one should choose wisely.

Perhaps no material was more popular for pillow making in ancient China than ceramic. According to Christie's, ceramic reached the height of its popularity during the Tang (618–907 A.D.) and Song (960–1279 A.D.) dynasties, before eventually being replaced by Western-style stuffed pillows. These pillows were often ornately shaped and decorated, and just like in Mesopotamia, were reserved for the wealthy and viewed as a symbol of status and prosperity. Butterflies, flowers, and children at play were just a few of the auspicious images commonly used on pillows, while inscriptions of Buddhist, Daoist, or Confucius teachings were often put on pillows to help improve one's moral character.

The hard pillow was also said to ward off evil spirits, something the soft pillow couldn't do. The lion, tiger, and Chinese dragon, in particular, were said to be effective at keeping evil spirits away.

"Lions were regarded as auspicious creatures with sufficient ferocity, strength, and spiritual energy to ward off evil spirits," according to Christie's. Many pillows were either made in the shape of these animals, or bore images of them.

While the hard pillow was viewed most favorably, there were pillows made of other materials for use in special circumstances. One such pillow was the medicinal pillow. According to Taiwan Today, this pillow was made of various herbs wrapped in silk cloth; it was used to improve hearing, keep the eyes sharp, return gray hair to its original color, regrow lost teeth, and cure a variety of diseases.

Due to its close proximity to the head, the pillow was also said to help promote and guide dreams. The ancient Chinese believed dreams had significant meaning, and they were taken as omens of what was to come.

"There was no sharp dichotomy in the division between the two states of spirit and matter in Chinese popular thought," according to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. "Ghosts, spirits, and visions in dreams were part of the material world and deemed to be interchangeable with life. Thus the pillow could be a material object of great importance, which mediated between the conscious and unconscious, between reality and the illusory."

Today, these beautifully created ancient pillows are sought by collectors, fetching prices in the tens of thousands of dollars.

## Ancient Egypt

While less is known about the pillow, or headrest, of ancient Egypt, we do know it served more than just a pragmatic purpose for the ancient Egyptians as well. Most of

what is known comes from the discovery of headrests in ancient tombs.

The people of ancient Egypt considered the head to be the spiritual and life center, and as such, they viewed the head as the most sacred part of the body. The pillow served to both support and, perhaps more importantly, protect the head in both life and death.

Like in Mesopotamia, pillows were typically made of stone, but blocks of wood, ceramic, and ivory were sometimes used as well. They were more narrow than ancient Chinese pillows, which supported both the head and the neck, and typically offered support only to the head—thus the name "headrest."

Religious and magical beliefs were woven throughout ancient Egyptian society, and pillows, as well as other objects, were decorated with images meant to serve as both protection and decoration. One commonly engraved image, according to Pennsylvania's Glencairn Museum, was that of Bes, "a protective deity whose role involved the protection of the home, mothers and children, and sleeping people."

It was believed that a sleeping person was particularly vulnerable to evil spirits, and the fearsome image of Bes provided protection from nighttime evils.

The ancient Egyptians placed tremendous importance on the afterlife, so much so that Tutankhamun, the boy king, was buried with eight headrests. Funerary texts contained hundreds of magical spells meant to help guide the dead safely into the afterlife.

"A handful of these spells make explicit reference to the headrest and compare it with the sun's rising in the horizon. Coffin Text 232 reads: 'A spell for the head-rest. May your head be raised, may your brow be made to live, may you speak for your own body, may you be a god, may you always be a god,' the Glencairn Museum states.

While beliefs may have changed, some parts of Africa still use these ancient-style headrests in their daily lives and find them quite enjoyable.

## Ancient Greece and Rome

Even less is known about the pillows of ancient Greece and Rome.

What we do know is that the ancient Greeks and Romans eventually developed a penchant for luxury, comfort, and self-indulgence, abandoning the idea that the hard pillow had any physical or mental benefits. With their focus on comfort, they created the predecessor to today's soft pillow.

The pillow used by everyday citizens of this time period was made of materials such as cotton, straw, or reeds, with pillows made of soft down and feathers being reserved for the wealthy. The pillow was viewed as a symbol of decadence, and people of this era are often pictured reclining on four or five luxurious pillows, even as they dined, often overindulging in food and wine.

According to Jason Linn in his University of California–Santa Barbara dissertation on nighttime in ancient Rome, "Luxury pampered these people so greatly that even under dire circumstances they permitted their guards not only to sleep, but also to do so comfortably."

The Spartans, however, held a different philosophy, and led austere lives without seeking comfort. Linn asks, "How could anyone sleep under such uncomfortable conditions?" The answer, "Doing so led to obedience, perseverance, and victories." Linn goes on to quote William Arrowsmith, saying "luxury makes a man lose his specific function."

As time marched on, reaching Europe's Middle Ages, the soft pillow fell out of common use, and it was seen only as a status symbol. Men viewed the pillow as a sign of weakness, and at one point, only the king and pregnant women were allowed to lay

their heads on a pillow at night.

By the 16th century, the pillow had come back into favor, but due to regular infestation by things such as mold, insects, and vermin, it was cumbersome to care for, with the contents of the pillow having to be changed regularly in order to maintain its cleanliness. Later on, pillows came to be used for kneeling in church, or as a place to rest holy texts. In some places, this is still done.

## Modern Day

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, people's way of life began to change across much of the world.

As technology continued to evolve, so did the story of the pillow. With the mass production capabilities of the Industrial Revolution, and the increase in the availability of cotton, the pillow was no longer only for the elite. The average person could now afford to own one, and the pillow gradually became common in every home.

As the Industrial Revolution brought material prosperity, society followed the pattern of the ancient Greeks and Romans: People sought out more comfort, ultimately ushering in a revolution of the soft pillow.

Today, pillows come in a variety of shapes, sizes, material types, and firmness levels. The types of pillows seem to be endless, with everything from gel, memory foam, down, feathers, down-alternative, cotton, innerspring, wool, latex, microbeads, kapok, buckwheat, and water available. That's quite a list! Pillows can even be customized and personalized according to a person's preference.

While the comforts of modern-day pillows may make our nights more comfortable, perhaps the ancients were onto something. I'm not inclined toward a return to a stone or ceramic pillow (though you can make your own version), but perhaps we should remember that sometimes a little discomfort in life isn't such a bad thing.

From the perspective of the ancient Chinese, seeking comfort is rarely the best path. After all, when we endure a little hardship, we become more resilient. And amid life's turmoils, if we can look within for the lesson, we'll come out the better for having gone through it.

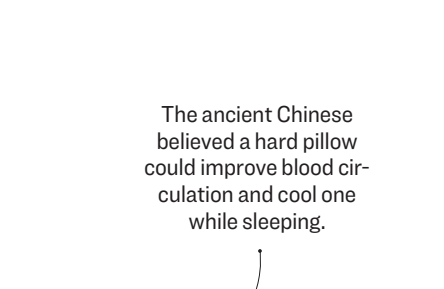
It seems even the pillow has a lesson to teach.

*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 ancient Greeks and Romans eventually developed a penchant for luxury, comfort, and self-indulgence, abandoning the idea that the hard pillow had any physical or mental benefits.

## ANCIENT CHINESE CERAMIC PILLOWS



The ancient Chinese believed a hard pillow could improve blood circulation and cool one while sleeping.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

# Can't Understand Your Teen? You're Not Alone.

If you're trying to connect with your teen, ask them about their language

JENNIFER MARGULIS

"Mo-om," my child cocks her head to one side to look at me. "Why are you being so emo?"

The words string together so quickly they're hard to follow: "Why being so-emo?" To be honest, I have no idea what my daughter's accusing me of.

My husband and I have four children. The oldest is 22 and our youngest is 11. We've been living with a teenager (or two or three) nonstop for the past nine years. But that doesn't mean we understand them.

If you can't understand most of what your teens are saying, how they're acting, or what they're feeling, you're not alone.

Teenagers are fascinating, Seussian creatures. Their limbs are too big: oversized feet, hands that need new gloves before the winter's even halfway over, elbows that swing in a thousand directions. And their feelings are also big and awkward. They're pushing you away and pulling you back at the same time; so capable and yet often so helpless. They're kind, responsible, and obliging with other adults—but often the exact opposite with you.

## Spoken Language Is Half Someone Else's

What any given person does with any given word is a question that has long interested philosophers and linguists.

"Language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other," the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, writes in an essay first published in Moscow in 1975. "The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention."

In Bakhtin's assessment, in order for words to exist and have meaning, they can't just be spoken, they also have to be heard and understood. So that begs the question: If our teenagers speak in a way that we can't understand—which mine do all the time—are we even communicating?

## Emo = Emotional

It turns out my daughter (who's not technically a teenager for another year and a half but who has nonetheless adopted much of the slang and attitude of her 17-year-old brother) was asking me why I was being so emotional.

"Emo," is short for "emotional." It can describe a one-time feeling as well as a subculture. Young people who usually wear black clothing, dye their hair, and listen to emo music (which, from what I can gather, is punk rock with a melancholy edge) are "emo."

## Open Communication Matters

Open communication with teenagers is an essential part of what researchers from the Department of Psychology and Brain Sciences at the University of Delaware describe as "sensitively attuned parenting," in a 2017 study published in the journal Current Opinion in Psychology. This kind of parenting, these clinical psychologists argue, is the most optimal way to ensure a young person's safety and well-being during the teen years.

(The other two broad categories of sensitively attuned parenting, according to the Delaware study, are positive interactions with teens and monitoring and supervising their behavior.)

A few years ago, I interviewed Ray Lozano, a motivational speaker and expert



While it may take some effort to become engaged with your teen's interests, doing so can create a shared experience and build connection.

in drug and alcohol prevention. Lozano tours the country giving speeches to middle-schoolers, high-schoolers, law enforcement officers, and community groups about how to best support and enjoy the teen years. Lozano told me when we spoke that the mistake most parents make is wanting our teens to be interested in our world. What we get excited about, teens inevitably believe is passé, boring, or old-school. At the same time, Lozano said, teens have their own ever-changing, ever-surprising culture, their own interests, ideas, and activities. So, Lozano told me, parents or grandparents can be closer to teens and young adults by being open and interested in their culture, instead of trying to impose our culture on them.

In other words, in the spirit of both open communication and positive interactions (aka "sensitively attuned parenting"), we adults of a certain age need to put more effort into understanding our teens' world to bridge the parent-teen divide. That can include learning their language and appreciating their interests.

If you're a tired parent of a teen, especially if you have younger children at home, you're likely shrugging your shoulders right now. It's hard enough to get dinner on the table, keep the kids off screens for five minutes, and get them to do their chores, let alone show an interest in the bizarre way they speak. But try it. Asking a teenager to teach you some of their slang is actually more fun and eye-opening than you might expect.

One characteristic of teen slang is that the same word can mean one thing and its opposite. If you are sitting with more than one teen at the table, they will likely disagree on the meaning of the word and a lively and heated debate will ensue.

## Tuning In to Teen Lingo

I decide to take my own advice and ask the teen who fills my water glass when I'm having lunch with a friend what his favorite slang word is.

Ross Winters, age 19, is thoughtful for a moment and then his eyes light up. He tells me the word he likes the most is "lit." A student at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, Winters says when he can't make his shift and finds someone to cover for him, he says, "Lit." or "Great! Lit!" He likes it because it's a positive and versatile word, Winters says.

Winters lingers to talk to us about slang expressions popular among teens for so long I worry he'll get in trouble with his boss.

Ask the teen in your life what all the words on the list above mean. Maybe you won't understand a lot of what they answer, but you will have an interesting conversation. Guaranteed.

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Teens sometimes seem to have their own language. While adopting their slang is likely a bad idea, understanding it can be helpful and engaging.

## 11 SLANG WORDS TEENS SEEM TO LOVE



Your teen may scoff at this list. The definitions may strike them as wrong. But here are 13 words teens like to toss around.

**BRAH** —short for brother or bro. Example: "Check this out, brah." My 17-year-old son uses the word indiscriminately like a verbal exclamation point. "Brah," he'll say in response to my "Good morning!" (uttered at 1 p.m. to him because he's just woken up.)

**CAP** —a lie. "You're capping" means you're lying or stretching the truth. Example: "That's just cap," in response to a friend who says something you disagree with or believe to be wrong.

**CRINGE** —something embarrassing or cringeworthy. Example: "That's so cringe." Uttered many times by my 17-year-old when we were watching home videos from when he was 14.

**FIRE** —something really cool. Perhaps an abbreviation of "You're on fire"? Example: "Your new shoes are fire."

**LIT** —great, fun, cool. Example: "The party's lit."

**LOW KEY** —not urgent, no big deal. Example: "I low key failed that assignment. But that class isn't for my major."

**ON FLEEK** —looking good, nicely groomed. Originally used to refer to eyebrows, now used for anything stylish. Example: "My sister's new haircut is on fleek."

**PULL UP** —come by, come over. Example: "We're having a party tonight. Pull up."

**SALTY** —grumpy, bitter. Example: "Why're you acting so salty? Did I do something wrong?"

**SICK** —awesome. Example: One friend says to another: "Our family just got a puppy." The other friend, impressed, replies: "Sick."

**SLAPS** —excellent, good, impressive. Example: "The recipe I found for lemon bars slaps."



WISE HABITS

# A Guide to Mastering Your Fear

Beneath our retreat to comfort is often a fear of being inadequate

LEO BABAUTA

We normally think fear holds us back, that it's something to be avoided. But what if fear was a powerful tool? What if we could master it? We'd be unstoppable, able to push through rejection, failure, and ridicule.

Once upon a time, fear was a signal of danger, telling us to run from a lion or back away from a cliff. That was pretty useful. These days, we don't face much physical danger, but the same fear signals come up when we're trying to pursue our dreams or be vulnerable with other people.

The fears of today are more about our insecurities and the possibility of not measuring up. Here are the top fears reported in a survey of readers I did a while ago:

- 1. Fear of failure
- 2. Fear of being inadequate
- 3. Fear of rejection
- 4. Fear of not being prepared
- 5. Fear of being a fraud
- 6. Fear of ridicule

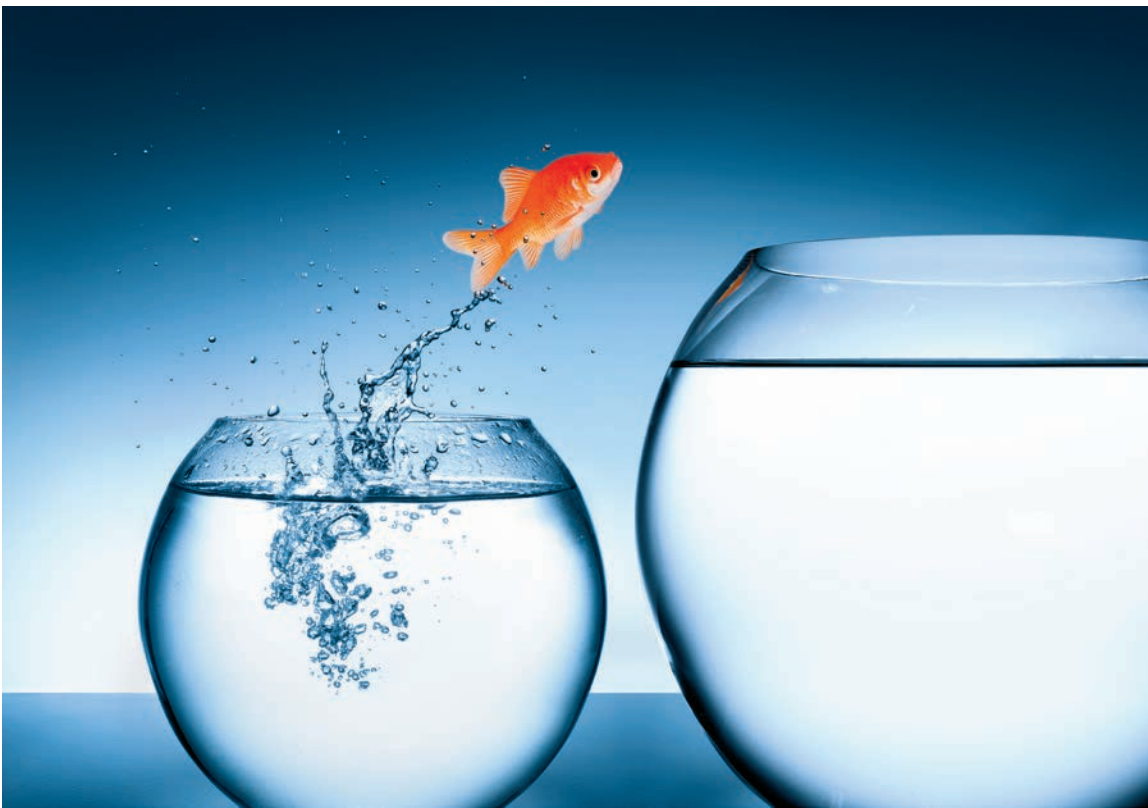
You might notice that they are all really the same fear: the fear of not being good enough. If we're not good enough, we might fail, get rejected, be ridiculed, or called a fraud. Our deepest and most common fear is that we're inadequate. This is not a physical danger; it's all internal.

So fear, then, is no longer a signal that we should run but rather that we should face and overcome something.

**Climbing Over the Wall of Fear**

Whenever we feel fear, it means we're coming up against a wall. On the other side of the wall is some new freedom.

This is a freedom we desire, and it's a healthy thing to want. But when we come up against the fear and discomfort, our normal response is to avoid it. By avoiding it, we remain on the same side of the wall—the comfortable side where we know what we're doing, and where things



ROMOLO TAVANI/SHUTTERSTOCK

And we can also courageously take action in the presence of fear.

**Acting in the Face of Fear**

We can practice acting mindfully even with fear in our bodies. The practice is to notice that there's fear, and notice our habitual reaction. Stay with the fear and notice how it feels as a physical sensation.

Notice that it's not so bad, that we can actually be OK in the middle of that sensation. It's just hormones in our bodies, just an

▲  
Opportunity and growth are waiting for us on the other side of fear.

—  
**What if fear was a powerful tool?**

are easy. We're trapped.

What would happen if we climbed over that wall? We'd have a new freedom: to connect with others in a meaningful way, to put ourselves out there and pursue the life we really want, to explore the world, to start a business, or to love with an open heart.

Freedom is on the other side of fear. So when we feel this internally created fear, it's actually a signal that we should go forward. It's an opportunity for growth.

Yes, it's difficult. But avoiding it doesn't work. We may feel comfortable, but it comes with the dull ache of dreams abandoned and a loss of self regard. A better option is to go inward—see the fear and turmoil that's in there, and process it. That means looking at how we think we're not good enough, learning to love ourselves, and learning how to be OK even if we fail or get rejected.

energy of excitement.

Being in the moment, we can take action: write a book, have a conversation, go to a social event, or get on stage. We can immerse ourselves fully in the moment, feeling the fear in our bodies but still taking action.

Fear is a worry about the future, which doesn't yet exist. Noticing that, we can turn back to the present moment and what's here in front of us. We can be grateful for it, smile at it, and take action.

This takes practice. Try it now. Practice it every day: Go toward whatever scares you, repeatedly. Lean into the fear. Be courageous; push through the wall of fear and break into the freedom of openness.

*Leo Babauta is the author of six books and the writer of Zen Habits, a blog with over 2 million subscribers. Visit ZenHabits.net*

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