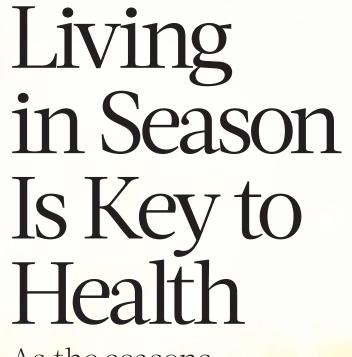
WEEK 48, 2021

THE EPOCH TIMES

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As the seasons change, so should our diet and habits

EMMA SUTTIE

glects his diet wastes the skills of his physician."
Hippocrates also said, "Let food be thy medicine," in the 5th century B.C. These two bits of wisdom from different parts of the globe tell us what was well-understood hundreds of years ago: What we eat is an important factor in maintaining health as well as recovering

n old Chinese proverb has it that "He that takes medicine and ne-

maintaining health as well as recovering from disease. And even today with our advances in medicine and technology, food is still the best medicine and the easiest and most impactful way to stay healthy

and disease-free.

Continued on Page 3

Attuning ourselves to the season helps us prevent illness and enjoy nature's variety.



Melatonin Affects Thrombosis, Sepsis, and COVID Mortality Rate

Melatonin can reduce the rate of severe COVID outcomes, help regulate sleep, promote genomic stability, and protect against neurodegeneration

JOSEPH MERCOLA

Two key studies have identified the role that melatonin plays in reducing the risk of a positive test for COVID-19 and lowering the incidence of severe symptoms.

That new finding adds to a list of benefits linked to melatonin since it was first discovered in 1958 by Dr. Aaron Lerner, a dermatologist who was able to isolate it from the pineal gland in a cow.

Scientists began studying melatonin in the 1980s and by the 1990s, it received more attention. Research data showed that melatonin influences a number of bodily processes, including calcium-dependent metabolism, immune modulation, and tumor growth—which it can restrain.

Although melatonin is produced in a variety of tissues, the major source is the pineal gland, a tiny endocrine gland found in the center of the brain. One of melatonin's initial functions is likely as a free radical scavenger. Interestingly, melatonin also functions in plants to reduce oxidative stress and promote seed germination and growth. The necessary precursor in plants and animals is tryptophan.

Continued on Page 4



COVID patients treated with melatonin had a 1.2 percent mortality rate compared to 17.1 percent in the control group.

THE EPOCH TIMES The Book You've Been Waiting for... Waiting for... NOW BIGGER SIZE, EASIER TO READ FORMAT FORMAT

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"The Truth, as horrifying as it is, shall set us free. This should be on this country's academia's list of required reading."

SPECTER OF COMMUNISM IS RULING OUR WORLD

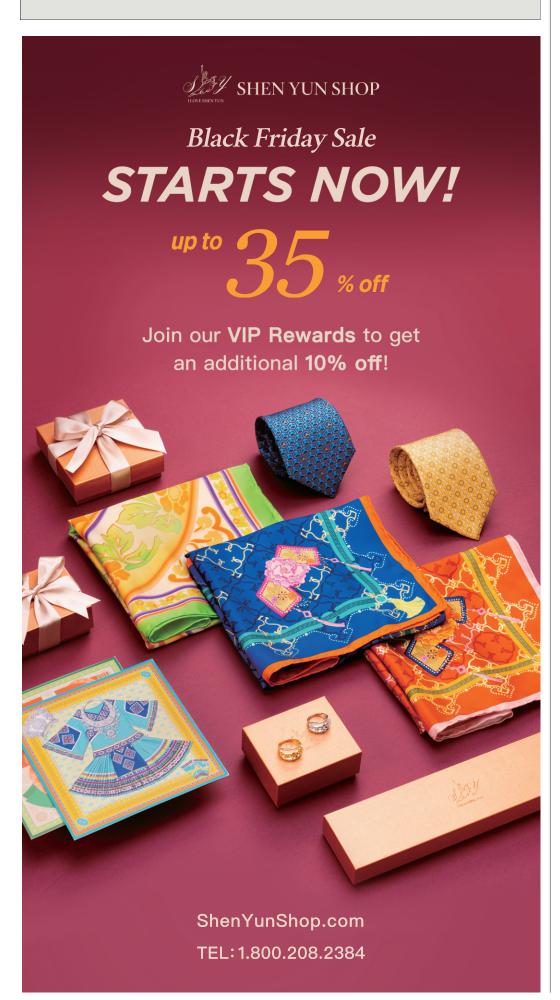
The specter of communism did not disappear with the disintegration of the Communist Party in Eastern Europe

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Staying Hydrated Is About More Than Drinking Water

How much you drink depends on several factors, including where you live

LISA ROTH COLLINS

The age-old advice about drinking eight 8-ounce glasses of water daily just doesn't hold water for everyone, although it can be a reasonable starting point. According to the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, men need about 15.5 cups of fluid daily while women need 11.5 cups.

But what if the man weighs 150 pounds and a woman weighs the same? In that case, their fluid needs should be about the same. Therefore, body weight can be a more helpful determining factor for the amount of water needed.

The weight-based recommendation is one-half to one ounce of water for every pound of body weight. For that 150-pound person, that would be 75 to 150 ounces a day, depending on the dryness of the climate they live in and level of physical activity.

Regardless of which approach you use, factors such as age, activity, health status, and fluids from foods should also be considered.

Body weight can be a helpful determining factor for the amount of water needed.

Why Does Your Body Need Water? Your body depends on water for many different processes and functions, some of which you probably don't even realize

until something goes wrong. Here are a

few examples.

- Saliva production. Water is a primary component of saliva, which is essential for oral health and breaking down food. Saliva is involved at the very beginning of your digestive process and helps your body know which digestive enzymes to send.
- Endurance. Being adequately hydrated has an impact on physical endurance and strength. This is especially important for anyone who is very physically active, such as athletes, construction workers, road crews, and other laborers.
- Body temperature. Your body is constantly losing water through urination, sweating, and respiration. When you sweat, the moisture cools your body, but you need to replenish that lost water to keep your body temperature stable. If you become dehydrated, you can overheat, resulting in a higher than normal body temperature.
- Lubrication. Your joints, tissues, and spinal cord need water to stay lubricated and provide protection against stress.
- against stress.

 Intestinal health. Water is necessary to keep your intestinal tract healthy
- and to avoid constipation.Kidney function. Drinking enough

water is necessary to help your kidneys perform their essential function of filtering toxins and other waste via urination.

- Electrolyte balance. Your body needs to keep fluid levels relatively stable in your blood, the space around your cells, and the space within your cells. Electrolytes help maintain water and acid-base balance in your blood and are also critical for muscle and nerve function. Thus, consuming enough water is essential for electrolyte balance and overall health. Drinking too much water can flush out electrolytes, so the right balance is key.
- Weight loss. Drinking more water while you exercise and choosing nutrientdense foods, especially those with high water content such as fruit and veggies, may help you lose extra pounds. Consuming water before a meal can reduce your calorie intake as well.
- Nutrient absorption. Vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients require water to help them dissolve and thus get them ready for use by your body.
- Better circulation. Water is the vehicle that carries oxygen and nutrients throughout your entire body. In one study, when participants drank 16 ounces of water, their metabolic rate increased by 30 percent, which can help with weight loss. This increase lasts for about 60 minutes.
- Better brain. If you skimp on water intake, it can have a negative impact on your ability to focus, remember, and stay alert, and may even give you a headache. Research indicates that being just 2 percent dehydrated can cause problems with cognitive functioning.
- Helps skin. Drinking enough water will help hydrate your skin and may even promote the production of collagen. Water is an important part of the recipe to keep your skin looking younger and being more elastic.

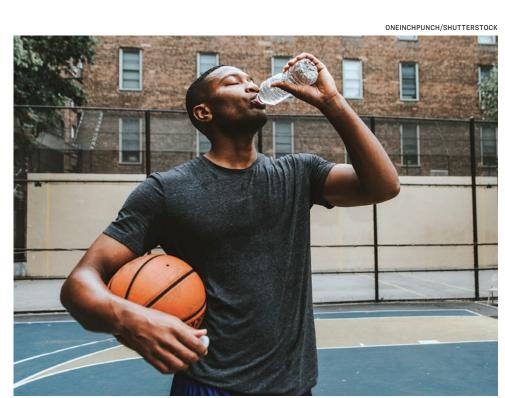
Can You Drink Too Much Water?

Yes, you can. Generally, if you consume 1 liter or more of water within a few hours for several hours, you can experience water intoxication (aka, water poisoning). This condition is characterized by muscle weakness, head pain, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, and cramping. The kidneys in healthy adults can eliminate only about 1 liter of water per hour. Among older adults and children, this elimination amount is lower.

Bottom Line

Staying hydrated is about more than drinking enough water. Because water and fluids play such a critical role in so many bodily functions and activities, you need to pay attention to your water intake as well as your physical activity, the heat in your environment, and your age.

Lisa Roth Collins is a registered holistic nutritionist and also the marketing manager at NaturallySavvy.com, which first published this article.



Your joints, tissues, and spinal cord need water to stay lubricated and provide protection against stress.

Living in Season Is Key to Health

As the seasons change, so should our diet and habits

Winter is the season for

healing and restoring, by

going to bed early and

sleeping in late.

Continued from Page 1

Food as Medicine

Nutrition is one of the foundational elements of Eastern medicine. The ancient Chinese understood very well that the best medicine isn't the herbal remedy given when you have a cold or the salve when you scrape your knee, but the food we ingest every day. It helps to build our immune systems, fortify us against disease, cool excess heat, drain dampness, move stagnation, and warm us when we are deficient.

Our ancestors were intrinsically connected to nature, and this connection was necessary for survival. They paid attention to the seasons, but more specifically, changes in the weather, the cycles of crops, migration of animals, and the changing positions of the sun and moon. They were attuned to the natural rhythms of the planet and were able to adjust their behaviors to maintain a sort of equilibrium with their surroundings.

This mindset led people to focus on prevention. Certain patterns and times of year were more associated with illness, and this insight was passed on. This type of wisdom is also found in the foundation of Eastern medicine as it was practiced then as well as today. One of the keys to living preventatively is to become attuned to our bodies and our surroundings. We must become still enough to hear what our bodies are telling us so we can give them what they need.

That awareness is something many of us have lost amid the pace of our modern world. But this listening, this attunement, is something that Eastern medicine teaches. Your body is always communicating with you, you only have to listen.

Thermal Nature of Foods, People

So how can we use food as medicine? Eastern medicine has a pretty elegant system for understanding how to use food as medicine and fortify ourselves against disease in every season. Foods have a thermal nature and so do people. It's a delicate balance of yin and yang energies: Some foods are cooling (yin) and some are heating (yang).

People also have a thermal nature, which occurs naturally when they are in a healthy state; knowing this is very helpful as you move forward. Some people are naturally more yin while others are more yang. There are other factors at play as well, the weather and surroundings have a thermal nature too, and this also has an effect on us. Health is seen as a dynamic balance of all these forces.

Granted, this can all get a little complex, and you can get pretty deep into it (especially if you're a nerd practitioner like me), but there are some basics that can help you get started.

Think about the seasons as a continuously fluctuating cycle of yin (cold) and yang (hot) energies. Summer is the height of yang or heat energies and winter is the peak of yin or cold energies. Summer gradually cools off and moves into fall, which cools further in transition into winter. Winter comes to an end, and the yin energies are gradually infused with yang in spring, which further heats up as it moves into summer.

So as a general rule, you want to balance the temperature of the season you're in with foods that are its opposite. Cooling foods in summer, and warming foods in winter, and gradually adding warming foods in fall and cooling foods in spring. You can also affect the thermal nature of the foods you eat through different cooking methods, which is why those also change according to the season.

This is very general, but it gives you an idea and a place to start. As you practice and become aware of the seasons and the thermal nature of the foods you're eating, it actually becomes this really beautifully nourishing and healing way to eat, and one your body will love.

The Seasons

Eastern medicine was developed over thousands of years from observations of nature. Humans and nature have always had a symbiotic relationship: The earth nourished us with its bounty, and we tended and nurtured the planet in a continuous cycle of loving interaction. Humans followed the natural cycles of the planet and lived in harmony with the changing seasons.



Summer is the season associated with the heart, the color red, and the emotion of joy. In the hot summer months, people rose early and went to bed later to capitalize on the yang energy represented by outward expression and activity. They ate foods that grew in abundance, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, eating salads and lighter fare, many of which are considered cooling to balance the external heat. People also took time to get together with family and friends, connecting and feeding their heart energy, as the heart is the organ associated with summer and, with it, the emotion of joy.

Everything we do in summer should be an attempt to cultivate joy in our lives. Summer is the season to feed heart energy. In terms of foods, many red foods are good for the heart. Cooking methods should be lighter and of shorter duration to preserve all the freshness and nutrients the food has been soaking up from the summer sun. Eating should be lighter and in

sun. Eating should be lighter and in smaller portions and working to keep yin fluids plentiful to counteract the intense heat of the season.

The Fall Season

Fall is the season associated with the lungs, the color white, and the emotion of grief. As the summer season winds down and the weather begins to cool, our behaviors go from the outward expressions of summer to the more inward and reflective activities of fall, which will inevitably prepare us for winter.

We eat foods that grow in abundance in this season (which varies greatly depending on where you are on the planet), but in North America, we see many foods with beautiful fall colors: squashes, gourds, sweet potatoes, carrots, and pumpkins. Many of these foods grow in the ground and have more yang properties for nourishing our inner heat as we prepare our bodies and spirits for the coming cold.

Fall is a time to clear out the old and make space for the new. The energy of the lungs is "letting go," so that's the focus at this time of year. Cleaning, reorganizing, and donating are good practices in the fall and make space for all we will cultivate over the winter. Emotionally, making sure that we have let go of any emotional hurts that have lingered strengthens the lungs both physically and psychologically.

Many white foods are beneficial to the lungs and are good to add to the diet in the fall season. Organizing life and becoming more introspective before winter is what fall is all about; checking in to make sure we are emotionally healthy and not hanging on to things that no longer serve us.

The Winter Season

Winter is the season associated with the kidneys, the color black, and the emotion of fear. Winter is the height of yin energies, and even though it seems like a time of death, decay, and inactivity, it's a season that's very active—just deep, deep beneath the surface in preparation for the regenerative activities of spring.

Winter is a season of consolidation, gathering energies and pulling them inward. Winter is the time of year to go to bed early and sleep later, profiting from the healing, restorative energies sleep offers us. In winter, we eat fewer fresh

foods as they are no longer available and eat more preserved foods we have prepared during the summer and fall. Eating warming foods, especially hearty soups and stews, will help build our yang and counteract the cold.

Our energies should turn inward in winter. In Eastern medicine, the kidneys are the source of our fundamental energy. We should spend quiet time reading, writing, or meditating to strengthen our bodies and spirits. Keeping warm, especially our lower backs where our kidneys reside, is especially important, as they are the source of all our qi. Many black foods strengthen the kidneys and should be added to the diet in the winter months.

If we can become aware of our surroundings and make slight adjustments to our behaviors and diet depending on the season, we will see a huge benefit physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

The Spring Season

Spring is associated with the liver, the color green, and the emotion of anger. Spring represents the upward and outward energies of newly growing plants, flowers, and trees. The energy in spring is expansive, so it's a good time to shake off the sleepiness of the winter months and slowly start moving our bodies with gentle stretching, going for long walks outdoors, and taking in the revitalizing green of new plants through our eyes, which are the sense organs associated with the liver.

Spring is the best time to detox from ev-

erything we have accumulated over the winter. We can detox physically as well as emotionally. Acknowledging and processing any feelings of anger, resentment, or frustration will keep our liver energy moving freely. Many green foods benefit the liver, and cooking methods should be lighter and of shorter duration compared to the slow cooking of winter. As things begin to thaw, we are able to introduce more fresh foods into our diet. Awakening and cleansing our bodies and spirits are what we need in spring as well as gentle exercises such as tai chi or qigong, which, especially when done outside in nature, nourish the body, mind, and spirit.

If we can become aware of our surroundings and make slight adjustments to our behaviors and diet depending on the season, we will see a huge benefit physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Emma Suttie is an acupuncture physician and founder of Chinese Medicine Living—a website dedicated to sharing how to use traditional wisdom to live a healthy lifestyle in the modern world. She has lived and practiced in 4 countries and now works through her practice Thrive Consulting. She is a lover of the natural world, martial arts, and a good cup of tea.



Foods have different

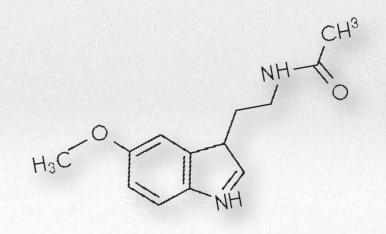
properties that will

either fuel or cool our

inner heat.

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Melatonin can reduce the rate of severe COVID outcomes, help regulate sleep, promote genomic stability, and protect against neurodegeneration





Continued from Page 1

Your body controls the release of melatoning through a master circadian clock, located in an area of the brain called the suprachiasmatic nuclei.

This area synchronizes the secretion of melatonin through a complex pathway in the nervous system affected by the light input through the eyes. Since melatonin helps control the sleep-wake cycles, it became popular to use it to help control jet lag or support sleep.

Now data demonstrates that melatonin may be beneficial in preventing complications in people with COVID-19.

Lower Incidence of Severe COVID-19 A study published in the International

Journal of Infectious Diseases in October was initiated to look at the effect melatonin may have on adult patients with severe COVID-19 infection. They engaged 158 patients with severe disease in a single tions that were similar and that had aptrial conducted in Mosul, Iraq, from Dec. 1, 2020, to June 1, 2021.

The patients were split into two groups. In the control group, there were 76 who were given standard therapeutic care only. There were 82 in the intervention group who received standard therapeutic care tions, specific antibodies and cardiovasday. Physicians then evaluated the incidence of sepsis, thrombosis, and mortality in patients on days 5, 11, and 17.

When the researchers compared the data in the control group to the interven- and B2-agonists. tion group, they found there was a significant reduction during the second week in thrombosis and sepsis in those that took melatonin. They also found that mortality was significantly higher in those that didn't take melatonin.

Men made up 72.2 percent of the patients and the mean age was 56.3 years with a range of 32 to 78 years. Researchers split the intervention and control group with no significant difference in relationship to comorbidities that increase the risk of COVID-19, such as high blood pressure, asthma, diabetes, and heart disease.

When measuring the individual endpoints, the researchers found that there was a significantly greater number of patients with thrombosis in the control group on day 17 than there were in the group taking melatonin. No patient developed sepsis in the first five days in either group. However, by day 11, two patients in the group taking melatonin developed sepsis and eight patients in the control group developed sepsis.

At the end of the study, the researchers found there was a significantly higher mortality rate in the control group of 17.1 percent than in the melatonin group of 1.2 percent. Melatonin was administered

The researchers declared that the results of their study signal a need to look closer.

"Improved thrombosis, sepsis, and mortality rates support the adjuvant melatonin's efficacy in mitigating this infectious disease," they wrote.

"Given melatonin's superior performance as a cheap, highly safe, and readily available medication, it is strongly recommended to be addressed in future studies."

Melatonin Found to Reduce Risk of Positive Test

Those new findings support earlier research

published in late 2020 that showed using melatonin was associated with a 28 percent reduction in the likelihood of a positive CO-VID-19 test. The researchers began the study to identify potential treatment modalities using network medicine methodology alongside clinical observations.

Network medicine evaluates cellular networks and the implications those have on disease and treatment. Network medicine seeks out potential drug treatments by looking at how diseases are linked at the molecular level. The researchers used artificial intelligence to compare genes and proteins of SARS-CoV-2 alongside 64 other diseases.

From this data, they identified condicenter, prospective, randomized clinical proved drugs for treatment. Using this information, the researchers identified 34 FDA-approved drugs used to treat similar conditions that may be considered for repurposing in the treatment of COVID-19.

The list of health conditions included autoimmune diseases, pulmonary condiplus 10 milligrams (mg) of melatonin per cular conditions. From these conditions the researchers identified medications, including melatonin, from a list of categories that included antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, hormones, beta-blockers,

After identifying these drugs, the researchers used the information alongside data from nearly 27,000 inpatients at Cleveland Clinic. They adjusted for confounding factors such as age, smoking history, race, and a variety of disease comorbidities when they found melatonin use reduced the likelihood of a positive COVID-19 test

by 28 percent. Interestingly, when these same adjustments were made to a population of black Americans in the registry, the reduction rose to 52 percent. The study's lead scientist, Feixiong Cheng, talked about the results in a statement from Cleveland

"It's important to note that this doesn't mean people

Melatonin's multiple actions as an antiinflammatory, antioxidant, and antiviral against other viruses) make it a reasonable choice for use.

Optimizing melatonin production begins with getting enough bright sunlight during the day, since

this helps

to set your

circadian

clock.

should start taking melatonin without first consulting with their health care provider. We're excited about these results and to study that connection more, but large-scale observational studies and randomized controlled trials are essential to confirm what we've found here."

Melatonin Is Integral **Part of Front Line Protocol**

Early in 2020, the Front Line COVID-19 Critical Care Alliance (FLCCC) developed preventive, outpatient treatment and inpatient protocols based on the insights of the founding critical care doctors. Dr. Paul Marik, critical care doctor at Eastern Virginia Medical School, also known for his work for improving the outcome of patients with sepsis, is one of those doctors.

Marik also used melatonin in the treatment of sepsis. He published a paper in the Journal of Thoracic Disease in February 2020 giving the scientific rationale for using melatonin to help regulate the oxidative imbalance and mitochondrial dysfunction that are commonly found in sepsis.

This was followed by a paper published in the Frontiers in Medicine in May 2020, in which he and a team of scientists published a therapeutic algorithm they used for melatonin in the treatment of COVID-19. They wrote, "Melatonin's multiple actions as an anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antiviral (against other viruses) make it a reasonable choice for use."

In June 2020, the FLCCC published a statement on the MATH+ protocol, stating it is "showing profound impacts on survival of COVID-19 patients." An integral part of the MATH+ hospital treatment protocol is the administration of 6 to 12 milligrams (mg) of melatonin at night.

The group also developed an iMASK protocol for early outpatient treatment, which includes 10 mg of melatonin at night, listed under the category of anticoagulants and immune fortifying drugs. In a review of the evidence demonstrating the efficacy of ivermectin, the scientists wrote:

"Although the adoption of MATH+ has been considerable, it largely occurred only after the treatment efficacy of the majority of the protocol components (corticosteroids, ascorbic acid, heparin, statins, Vitamin D, melatonin) were either validated in subsequent randomized controlled trials or more strongly supported with large observational data sets in COVID-19. ... Despite the plethora of supportive evidence,

the MATH+ protocol for hospitalized patients has not yet become widespread."

> When the review was subsequently published, the mention of melatonin and this quote was removed. Another challenge for patients with COVID-19 is the development of longhaul symptoms, which

CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

produced in

a variety of

is the pineal

one study from UC Davis showed affects at least 25 percent of individuals

Long haul symptoms can include body aches, muscle pain, brain fog, abdominal issues and loss of smell and taste. The FLCCC group also developed a management protocol for long-haul COVID-19 syndrome called I-RECOVER.

The team developed an algorithm to help physicians identify the type of treatment based on the patient's symptoms. However, all patients are advised to use vitamin C, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D3, and melatonin.

More Health Benefits of Melatonin

Your body uses melatonin to help protect your overall health in several ways. Melatonin is best known for the relationship it has with your circadian clock. Although scientists are still discovering some of the benefits of sleep, it's known that melatonin is an underlying regulating molecule for sleep.

There have been positive studies demonstrating the effect that melatonin has on disorders associated with dysfunctional melatonin rhythms, such as jet lag and shift work. Additionally, there is evidence of diminished production of melatonin in those with Alzheimer's disease in the early stages. Poor sleep quality increases the buildup of beta-amyloid plaques that are integral to the progression of Alzheimer's disease.

The discovery of the relationship between neurodegeneration and sleep offers a potential for using melatonin to promote healthy mental aging and in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease in the early stages. Melatonin also helps regulate inflammation in the body, which has a significant impact on pain associated with rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis.

One paper published in 2015 investigated the relationship between melatonin and multiple sclerosis relapses and found it meliorates periods of relapse. They discovered melatonin affects "T cell differentiation and ha[s] implications for autoimmune disorders such as multiple sclerosis."

Melatonin helps to promote genomic stability, which may help explain why disrupto promote the growth and metabolism of human breast cancer. The antioxidative and anti-inflammatory functions of melatonin have also demonstrated an ability to protect liver function and has an impact on fatty liver disease.

The range of effects that melatonin has on the human body is significant. A published research study in the Journal of Perinatology demonstrated that early administration of melatonin alongside hypothermia (whole body cooling) in infants who suffered asphyxiation during birth had a neuroprotective effect and ameliorated brain injury in the infants who received hypothermia and five daily enteral doses of melatonin.

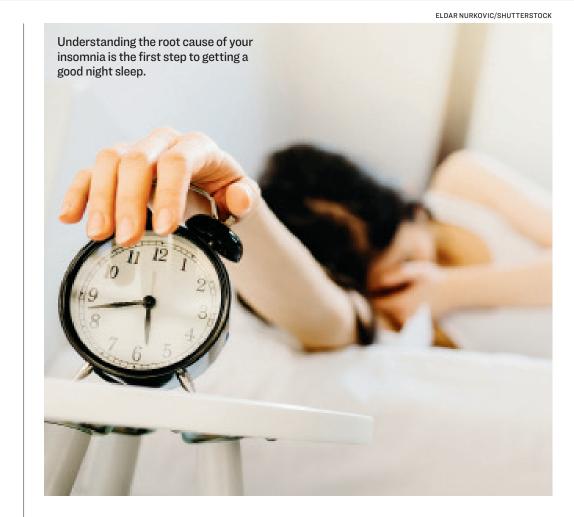
While there are likely benefits to supplementing with oral melatonin, it also helps to optimize your body's own production. It's relatively simple and inexpensive, and at the same time, you will help to optimize your vitamin D levels. Optimizing melatonin production begins with getting enough bright sunlight during the day, since this helps to set your circadian clock.

The range of effects that melatonin has on the human body are significant.

As the evening approaches and the sun sets, you'll want to avoid artificial lighting. Blue light Dr. Joseph Mercola is from electronic screens and LED lights is the founder of Mercoparticularly problematic and inhibits the la.com. An osteopathproduction of melatonin. If you do need lighting, use incandescent light bulbs, candles, or salt lamps. The blue light from *recipient of multiple* electronic screens can be counteracted by awards in the field of using blue-blocking software or wearing blue-blocking glasses.

My decision to personally use melatonin supplementation makes even more sense now that we understand that melatonin is not only produced in the pineal gland (which would benefit from circadian optimization), but also in our mitochondria. So, it appears that additional melatonin could serve as a useful adjunct in modulating your immune response.

ic physician, bestselling author, and natural health, his primary vision is to change the modern health paradigm by providing people with a valuable resource to help them take control of their health. This article was originally published on Mercola.com



MEDICALLY CORRECT

Interrupting Insomnia

Sleep problems are common and often easily cured

PETER WEISS

A good night's sleep is crucial for a healthy and productive day, not to mention a good and healthy life. A simple way to understand why we sleep is to think of what our bodies do when we exercise or even just go for a long walk.

After a time (shorter for some, longer for others), we get tired and have to rest our aching muscles. We may sit down, drink some water, or eat an apple. We feel rested and then resume our activities. We need to rest because we burn and use energy.

The brain works the same way. When we think, read, or speak, we use energy. There are biochemical waste products that build up even in our brains, and the brain needs to rest through sleeping. This allows the and recoup that energy.

Our brain needs rest (in the form of sleep) in a similar way to how our muscles need rest after exercising.

CJ was a 42-year-old mother of two boys, ages 7 and 5. She was also a single mom who worked as a nurse. She had a great deal of trouble sleeping through the night. Her internist was prescribing her sleeping pills, which at first helped, but she realized she was addicted to them. My only advice for her was to help her realize that her sleep issues were obviously related to her stress levels, that she needed to address the stress, up even in our brains, and and not just take pills to cover them up.

Long story short, her solution was getting help from her mom, and reducing her stress levels, allowing her to get a full night's sleep. Not every case of insomnia is so simple, most are not.

There are extreme cases of significant insomnia—so extreme that a person can die from lack of sleep. Fatal insomnia is very rare. These patients eventually lose basic brain and body function and will die 12 to 18 months after complete insomnia. There's no known cure. The first reported case was of an Italian man who died with it in Venice in 1765.

The amount of sleep we need each night adjusts as we age. A newborn baby can sleep 14 to 17 hours a day, although most new parents will tell you they never sleep when you want them to. Teenagers require about eight to 10 hours a day, and an adult seven to nine hours.

There are several categories of insomnia. There's sleep-onset insomnia, or difficulty falling asleep. There's sleep-maintenance insomnia, or difficulty staying asleep. There's also a mixed component of both problems.

It's interesting how so many of us find that we have no problems sleeping when we're on vacation. That tells us a great deal about the root of sleeplessness for many of us, though there are many risk factors and comorbidities for insomnia in adults.

Insomnia can be rooted in predisposing, precipitating, and perpetuating factors. The predisposing factors increase the risk for insomnia and can be from child-

hood trauma, chronic health conditions,

depression, or anxiety, to name a few. Er-

ratic sleep patterns are also predisposing factors, such as erratic work hours or going to night shifts. Chronic pain conditions can also obviously affect sleep.

Precipitating events leading to sleep disruption can be a severe accident, injury, divorce, death of a family member or close friend, stress, and more. Perpetuating factors are cognitive or be-

havioral actions that sustain poor sleep over a period of time. Examples are watching TV while trying to sleep, taking long naps during the day, and anxiety or worry. To complicate insomnia even more, there are primary and secondary causes. Pri-

mary causes are obvious ones such as jet lag, loud noises, and stress. Secondary causes can be obvious ones

TC was a 28-year-old woman with no kids. She was a hard worker who happened to see me for an annual checkup. She had been complaining of insomnia for about 2 weeks. She had a big project due at work and also had a bad cold. She was using a nasal decongestant at night brain to get rid of those biochemical wastes to keep her sinuses open as well as taking an over-the-counter decongestant before bed. She couldn't fall asleep. I told her both medications she was taking were stimulants and can keep you up at night. The simple change in her medications solved her insomnia, although I have no idea how her project went.

There are biochemical waste products that build the brain needs to rest through sleeping.

For those with insomnia, simple things usually work. Have a regular sleep schedule: go to bed and get up at the same times each day. The body likes routine. Try to avoid long naps during the day. Limit alcohol near bedtime. Alcohol may initially be sedating, but as it's metabolized, it negatively affects sleep patterns. Avoid caffeine after lunch. Caffeine can stay in your system for a long time and can affect sleep.

Exercising about four to six hours before bedtime can facilitate a good night's sleep, but avoid strenuous exercise just before bed. There are plenty of over-the-counter medications and herbal remedies that can be tried. Prescription medications should be a last resort and only for a short period of time.

Being proactive about any sleep issues will keep your brain working its best and help you face the challenges of the day. So if you can't sleep, take action.

After all, as F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "The worst thing in the world is to try to sleep

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

Insights Into Seasonal Affective Disorder Research reveals the neurochemistry involved in SAD affirms best treatments To improve your energy motivation this winter. spend more time outside.

LIZ SCHONDELMAYER

s the days continue to get shorter and colder, it's likely that you or someone you know has started to experience seasonal mood changes. Symptoms such as a loss of energy, a dip in mood, a lack of interest, or trouble focusing can often be attributed to the lack of daylight we take in. When these symptoms get too disruptive, they can

seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Over 10 million Americans have SAD, which is a type of depression that affects people during the fall and winter months when access to light is limited. But how does light play such a significant role in moderating mental and cognitive health?

be indicative of a mood disorder called

Lily Yan, an associate professor in the Michigan State University (MSU) psychology department and director of the Light, Emotion and Cognition lab, explains how light exposure affects our mood, memory,

Reporter: First of all, what is seasonal affective disorder, and what are some associated symptoms?

Lily Yan: SAD is a type of major depression that is characterized by a seasonal pattern of depressive symptoms for at least two years in a row. Though many of us may not meet the exact diagnostic criteria for major depression during the winter, we still may experience a lighter form of these symptoms, often referred to as the "winter blues."

Most people who experience this type of depression don't necessarily feel sad, but instead, deal with an energy crisis that leaves them feeling tired all of the time, withdrawn from social activities, unable to sleep well, and unable to concentrate or focus.

Reporter: When did you start studying this topic, and how do you conduct your

Yan: My previous research focused on understanding our circadian rhythm (which is our bodies' natural 24-hour sleep-wake cycle), and how circadian rhythms are influenced by environmental lighting conditions. Since I started working at MSU in 2008, I began to explore how light affects emotions and cognition, as these functions are known to be impacted by the circadian system. In 2012, I received a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to start the research program on light, emotion, and cognition.

The phenomena behind SAD has been known for decades, but I feel like there is still a gap in the literature around this topic: we don't know enough about how light affects our mental health. This research can be challenging, as it is difficult to use human subjects to study neurobiological mechanisms and most laboratory animals are nocturnal, which respond to light oppositely from humans. However, [...] we have a very unique resource: a diurnal rodent model (meaning that they are awake during the day, just like humans). Using

When we transition to a dark, cloudy season from a bright, sunny season, there are changes happening in the brain at an anatomical

Lily Yan, associate professor, Michigan State University psychology

level.

When we transition to a dark, cloudy season from a bright, sunny season, there are changes happening in the brain at an anatomical level. The results of one study, which included over 400 human subjects, demonstrate that the hippocampus—the part of our brains that controls many of our cognitive functions such as learning and remembering—is actually physically smaller during the winter and changes based on

this model, my research program aims

Reporter: How does light affect the me-

chanics of our brains underlying mood

Yan: The dominant theory in this

field is that light affects our circadian

rhythm by training our brain's inter-

our circadian rhythm is interrupted

by changes in the light cycle, that can

cause cognitive and emotional issues

In addition to regulating circadian

strated that seasonal lighting condition

rotransmitters (like serotonin and do-

that in summer months, your brain is

actually storing more of the chemicals

pamine) present in the brain—meaning

rhythms, prior research has demon-

can influence the amount of neu-

that make you feel happy, alert,

and motivated.

such as irregular sleep patterns and

nal clock and keeping it synchronized

with our environment. However, when

to understand how light interacts with

our brains at the molecular, cellular,

and circuit level.

and cognition?

Reporter: How does research with rodents inform larger questions about human emotion and cognitive functions? **Yan:** When working with diurnal rodents, we find that a lot of their behavioral and neurobiological responses to light conditions are consistent with those of humans. When conducting this research, we only change one factor at a time, which is the amount of light or light intensity the rodents receive during the day. We've found that when limiting their daytime light exposure, it results in many behavioral changes: for example, the rodents struggle to feel pleasure and/or remember things.

Rodents generally like sweet-tasting things, but after a few weeks in a winterlike dim light condition, they stop caring about eating things that are sweet and just go for whatever is most easily available. But in a regular condition with more light, they get excited about the sweet-tasting treats again and try to get them. Additionally, we see a lower sex drive in males housed in dim light conditions. The animals housed in dim light also have lower levels of serotonin and dopamine in their brain compared to those in bright light. These results help to establish diurnal rodents as a viable model to study the effects of light on the brain that are relevant to SAD in

We've also conducted research to test the impact of daytime light exposure on the rodents' spatial learning and memory. When navigating a maze, the rodents housed in a dim light condition struggle to remember the course, but the animals from a bright light condition are able to complete the maze. We also found that in dim lighting conditions, there are fewer dendritic spines (which allow neurons to receive information) connecting neurons together in the hippocampus. This may explain why it is harder to process and store information

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when we are exposed to less daylight. Further research has shown that a neuropeptide (a type of neurotransmitter) called orexin plays a role in regulating light-dependent changes in learning and memory. In a recent study, we gave rodents housed in a winter-like condition this neuropeptide every day in a row for five days, and found that their ability to learn and retain new information improved significantly. On the flip side, when we gave rodents in a summer-like condition a treatment that blocks their ability to receive orexin, the rodents were impaired in their cognitive abilities. These results point to orexin as an important neurotransmitter in mediating the effects of light conditions.

Our future work will aim to further elucidate the neural mechanisms underlying the impact of bright sunny days or dark gloomy days on the brain, from the level of gene expression to neural circuitry. The diurnal rodent model offers an opportunity to answer those questions, which can be translated to understand SAD and winter blues in humans.

Reporter: Given this understanding of SAD and the winter blues, what are some ways to lessen SAD-like symptoms during the wintertime? **Yan:** If you are looking to get a diagnosis or need help managing a case of SAD, my advice is to seek professional help

from a mental health care provider first.

However, if you're just looking to improve your energy or motivation level during the winter months, I definitely recommend spending more time outside. Even though the cold weather can make it difficult, outdoor lighting is still way brighter than indoor lighting, even on a cloudy or overcast day. You could also look into a light therapy box to make indoor lighting even brighter.

In the fuwture, I hope a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying the effects of light on mood and cognition will lead to the development of new strategies for treating SAD, as well as other types of depressive disorders and cognitive impairments. Until then, light will remain as one of the most effective treatments for SAD and winter blues.

For my undergraduate classes, I always share the following quote from Albus Dumbledore: "Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times, as long as one remembers to turn on the light."

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Why It Pays to Reject Consumerism

When we give up money but gain time, we create true wealth

MIKE DONGHIA

The message of consumerism is fatally flawed, and it can't deliver the happiness

But you probably don't consider yourself a consumer—few people do. I never really did. But here in America, the message of consumerism is in the air we breathe.

If you have it, spend it. Why not? If there's a problem, money can solve it. Of course!

Most of this arrives to our eyes and ears via advertisements and influencers, but it's also reinforced by the movies and TV shows we watch and even by our friends and neighbors.

Beliefs Matter

Spending money isn't really the problem, but rather the beliefs that are driving you to spend. There are many ways to spend money that can add meaning and beauty to your life. The problem is a particular belief about money that is deceptively untrue

My wife and I still talk about our first year of marriage as the best of our pre-children years, even though we lived about as frugally as you could imagine within our context. No internet (we walked to the library), no gifts, no eating out, just simple meals in a small apartment.

But our simple life was rich with time and new friends and cheap adventures. And because we hadn't raised the bar of expectations so high, we could enjoy even the simplest of pleasures that others might overlook.

Unfortunately, I did carry a common belief with me through those years—that more money could make things even better. It would at least give us more options. And options are good, right?

Another decade of life and experiences have not lent a single ounce of support to that belief. I now know it was a defective view of the world, and one that could make things worse.

Doing the Math

It would seem to make sense that if you are happy already, adding more money into your life would be a net positive. Keep the happiness you have now, and add the positive optionality of money, right?

Of course, I knew the richest people in the world weren't the happiest, but I figured this was simply because they got carthat it's simply a more beautiful way to live. ried away or didn't know how to spend the money on the right things.

But what I failed to imagine was that adding more consumption comes with predict-

Consumerism raises the bar of expectations.

Once you've had the internet, TV, or smartphone, life without these luxuries seems hard to imagine. Once we have something, we get used to it and expect it. The initial pleasure it brought us doesn't last at the same level but simply becomes the new minimum.

The time we spend

enjoying our family

Spending

really the

rather the

beliefs that

are driving

As the old

adage goes,

everyone

you meet is

hard battle.'

fighting a

Be kind, for

you to spend.

money isn't

problem, but

penny.

and friends' company

reminds us that the best

things in life don't cost a

Consumerism displaces

the parts of life that really matter.

Consumerism doesn't just demand our money, it wants our time and attention, too. We don't just buy stuff, we daydream about the stuff we're going to buy next, we read reviews about that stuff, and then we have to maintain that stuff and fix it when it breaks. Sometimes we worry that our peers have better stuff than we do, and so we work harder and longer hours to buy more stuff.

All of this attention given to things we don't really need displaces time that could be spent on truly living and enjoying what you already have.

Why Choose Less

OK, so maybe more spending comes with a few downsides, but given the option to inherit a million dollars or to live with less than we have now, we'd nearly all choose the former, believing it to be the path to a happier life. Why?

Just as we fail to imagine and calculate the true costs of choosing more, we fail to imagine the benefits of choosing less. When I choose to consume less, I'm not

choosing a life that's boring or lacking in pleasure. Not at all. In fact, my main argument for a less consumerist way of living is

Rejecting consumerism

gives you time for what's important. With less stuff and fewer distractions in your life, the first thing you'll be gifted is a wealth of time. I use the word wealth strategically, because, at the end of your life, time is the only investment that will have mattered. How are you going to use it? For our family, this has meant prioritizing relationships.

It has also meant trying to align our whole lives with what we believe to be true and good and wise.

And then, finally, we fill up some of our life with the kinds of pleasures that money can't buy, because what they require is unrushed time. Enjoying these innocent pleasures, like reading a book, going on a walk, laughng with friends, cooking a favorite meal, or playing games, fills us with gratitude. We're reminded that we have everything we need already.

Rejecting consumerism gives you back your money.

It's perhaps ironic, that as you pull yourself away from the desire to consume more and more, you may find yourself with more money. The very thing which used to be the fuel for your consumption.

What to do with this excess money? Give it away! There is far more happiness to be found in giving than in securing more

and more for yourself. Use your money to make friends for yourself by living a life of generosity and true hospitality. Cultivate compassion by meeting the needs of those around you. Give

abroad who are doing amazing work. As you release your hold on money, you will find your life filling up with a richness you never anticipated.

it to organizations in your community or

Rejecting consumerism increases your capacity to enjoy.

Many of the pleasures money can't buy are like the pleasures of a healthy, delicious home-cooked meal. As a child, I could never have imagined that the subtle and acquired taste of roasted vegetables would ever win out over the immediate gratification of a Happy Meal.

But now, as an adult, I'll take the wholesome meal 99.9 percent of the time.

When we get ourselves off a diet of convenience, instant pleasures, and immediate consumption, we find that our ability to enjoy the nuances and complexity of life's simple pleasures has been enhanced.

Rejecting consumerism brings new pleasures that are durable and lasting and grow sweeter with time. And that is something money cannot buy.

Mike (and his wife, Mollie) blog at This Evergreen Home where thev share then experience with living simply, intentionally, and relationally in this modern world. You can follow along by subscribing to their twice-weekly newsletter. This article was originally published on This Evergreen Home.

Sometimes Life Requires Heavy Lifting

If we find ourselves with an easy path, consider those with a weightier load

JOSHUA BECKER

Two weeks ago, I went for a walk. While on that walk, I noticed a line of ants crossing the sidewalk in front of me. I stopped to watch.

There were hundreds of them, all in a single line walking from one side of the sidewalk to the other. I don't know where they were going or where they started, but they seemed to be walking with a purpose.

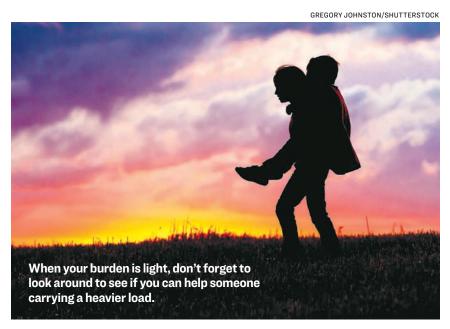
As I was watching, I noticed one ant carrying a leaf. And then I noticed another. And another.

The ants carrying the leaves were walking in the same direction and seemed to be keeping up. But the longer I watched, the more I noticed that they were walking a little slower than the others.

I don't know much about ants, and I have no idea how they decided which ants had to carry the leaves and which ones got to walk unencumbered. All I noticed was that some ants were walking peacefully, while others were carrying a heavy burden.

It reminded me a little bit about life. Sometimes we walk peacefully. But other times, life requires heavy lifting.

There are some seasons in life where the path is easy and the burdens are light—health is good, money is in the



bank, relationships are healthy, and our habits are serving us.

But there are other seasons where the burden is heavy—our kids are making unwise choices, employment is hard to find, our physical body is failing, our closest relationships are turning against us, and bad news continues to mount with no end in sight.

We look around and everyone else seems to be fine, unencumbered, enjoying their path through life, and celebrating successes. But we're stuck carrying this heavy leaf. We're trying our hardest to keep up, but the burden of this season is heavy, and we feel like we're falling

Meanwhile, nobody else seems to notice.

I wish I had the words to take it all away for you. But I don't. There are certainly helpful steps to take: talking to someone who has experienced what you're experiencing, relying on others, accepting help when offered, removing competing distractions, remembering that seasons change, and turning to your faith are such examples. But those words only do so much good.

Instead, I'd like to challenge everyone else—those of you rushing swiftly from one point to another unburdened, without a leaf.

Take the time to notice those with heavy burdens.

There's a temptation when our burden is light to not notice the heavy lifting being done by others or to assume that we've somehow accomplished something impressive on our own. But many times, those with the heaviest burdens are the ones serving society the most.

As the old adage goes, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard

Today, and even more as we enter the holiday season, look closer at your fellow travelers. Let's be quick to offer a kind word, a helping hand, or a meaningful gift. Some have been carrying that leaf for quite a distance.

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



Over 10 million Americans have SAD, which is a type of depression that affects people during the fall and winter months when access to light is limited. GASCHWALD/SHUTTERSTOCK



PUBLIC DOMAIN

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 48, 2021

Maybe Mindfulness Can Help Quell the Outrage

Our divided society needs a new capacity for awareness and acceptance

IGOR GROSSMANN & ELLEN CHOI

here is no shortage of divisive social issues today, all competing for our attention in an increasingly crowded outrage marketplace.

With algorithms curating increasingly hateful content under the guise of "everyday news," the ability to be curious and open to others' perspectives has never been more critical.

As famed philosopher Michel Foucault once argued, only through tolerating dissent and understanding resistance can society change and evolve. But if tolerance rather than outrage is the metric, it feels like we're growing weaker.

What Does Mindfulness Really Mean? Mindfulness has two components:

Present-moment oriented awareness of what's happening within and around us; and acceptance of what's happening in our awareness. Experts believe that mindfulness offers a solution to intolerance because it promotes acceptance and subverts our knee-jerk reactions to defend our ingrained beliefs.

The increasing popularity of mindfulness has been driven by expectations that it will reduce stress. Yet, beyond quelling nerves, mindfulness equips us with the ability to embrace the distress and resentment required to examine ideas we have become comfortable dismissing—a process that requires engaging with discomfort.

Over the course of the pandemic, many of us have dipped a toe into mindfulness practices, perhaps guided by apps, self-help books, or even brainwave-sensing vibrating pillows. But do most people understand that mindfulness is about engaging with uncomfortable experiences? Or is it seen as just another fad that once again puts the self at the center of self-discovery and self-help, as some critics have suggested?

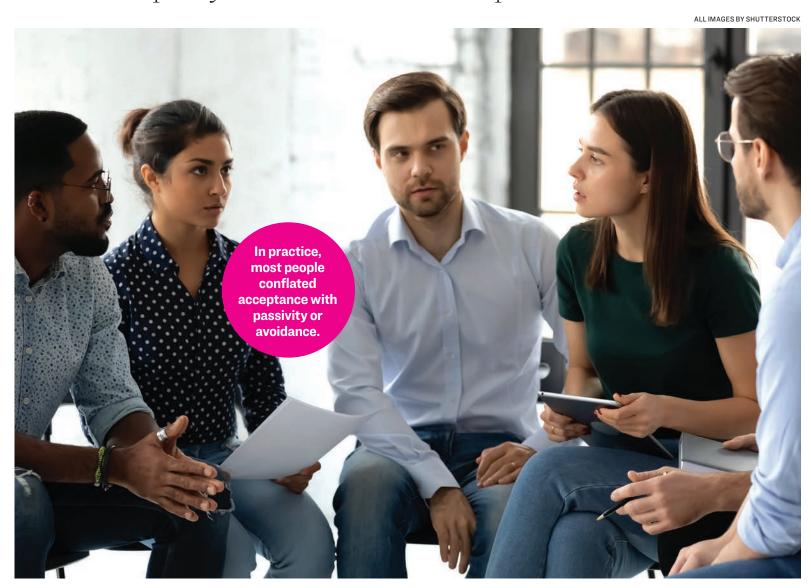
How Do People Understand and Practice Mindfulness?

As researchers of mindfulness and wisdom, we decided to look into this issue to examine whether the popular understanding of mindfulness may support the dismantling of intolerance.

In a new report published in Clinical

Psychology Review, we first determined common terms associated with mindfulness across some of the largest English language databases available today and found that public understanding of mindfulness in books, spoken and written text, and websites and blogs focuses on engagement and acceptance rather than mere stress relief. We found that most people appear to understand what mindfulness means. Next, we examined whether they apply these insights in practice.

To address this question, we performed a meta-analysis, combining results from 150 studies, including more than 40,000 subjects, that investigated how people report experiencing mindfulness. Additionally, we conducted novel



Beyond quelling nerves, mind-fulness equips us with the ability to embrace the distress and resent-ment required to examine ideas we have become comfortable dismissing.

empirical research to test how reported mindfulness is associated with markers of engaged thought.

In theory, both the awareness and acceptance elements of mindfulness would be used together to help a person work through his or her challenges and daily experiences by engaging with challenging experiences in their mind. Surprisingly, that's not what we found.

While experts claim we use both awareness and acceptance together, our meta-analysis showed that occasional mindfulness users treat awareness and acceptance as independent processes or even as opposites: people who reported greater awareness reported lower acceptance and vice versa.

And that's not all. In a series of empirical studies we conducted, participants reporting greater acceptance were in fact reporting less engagement with their difficult issues. Instead of engaging with challenging topics by wisely reflecting on them—considering limits of their knowledge, others' perspectives, and the

context of their experience—these people were either avoiding or suppressing difficult experiences.

Study after study, we saw that people scoring higher on established mindfulness measures reported lower engagement

We shouldn't avoid challenging situations.
They provide us with opportunities to develop our mindfulness skills by becoming more self-aware and accepting of others.

with their experiences. In practice, most people conflated acceptance with passivity or avoidance.

The Unfulfilled Promise of Mindfulness

This is a problem. When mindfulness is understood in word but not in practice, it ceases to pave a path to wise judgment, cooperation, or compassion.

Just as the ability to choose where we place our attention and how long we focus improves through awareness training, the ability to be accepting of dissenting opinions requires practice in order to create understanding instead of further marginalizing those we disagree with.

Acceptance doesn't mean that we have to passively accept whatever cards we are dealt. It means confronting our discomfort long enough to explore what needs to be changed and being malleable enough to consider vantage points we typically ignore. Reducing stress by avoiding difficult conversations is a short-term solution that only further polarizes perspectives.

Igor Grossmann is an associ-

The Purpose of Mindfulness

Mindfulness might not provide an easy answer to the divisiveness that surrounds us, but an accurate understanding that includes the practice of acceptance may help encourage sincere discussion, generous compassion, and authentic connection.

the University of Waterloo is Canada, and Ellen Choi is the assistant professor of Ellen Choi is the University of Waterloo is Canada, and Ellen Choi is the University of Waterloo is Canada, and Ellen Choi is the University of Waterloo is Canada, and Cana

To strengthen our ability to see the present moment through multiple interpretations and from many perspectives, we may have to discover how to practice mindfulness—by applying awareness and acceptance together.

management & organizational behavior at Ryerson University in Canada.

This article was

Are we willing to endure the pains of growing together, or will outrage remain the more desirable status quo?

is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Waterloo in Canada, and Ellen Choi is the assistant professor of HR management & organizational behavior at Ryerson University in Canada. This article was

first published

on The Conver-





Addictive and Unhealthy

Foods high in added fats and refined carbs have a lot in common with cigarettes

ASHLEY GEARHARDT

very year, millions of Americans try to cut down on ultra-processed foods—industrial formulations that are typically high in added fat, refined carbohydrates, or both. Think cookies, cakes, potato chips, and pizza.

For many, the desire to change what they eat is triggered by concerns about potentially life-threatening health conditions like diabetes and heart disease. The impact of diet on health is not a small problem, according to a study commissioned by the Lancet. The multidisciplinary commission of 37 leading scientists from around the globe identified unhealthy diets as a greater risk to human health than unsafe sex, alcohol, drug, and tobacco use combined.

Many people know that most ultra-processed foods are not healthy. But the goal of

The addictive nature of these ultraprocessed foods undermines consumers' free will and health in the service of profits.

Addicted to Ultra-Processed Foods

I'm a clinical psychologist who studies addiction science, obesity, and disordered eating. During my training at Yale University, it became clear to me that many people were showing classic signs of addiction in their relationship with ultra-processed foods—symptoms such as loss of control over consumption, intense cravings, and an inability to cut down in the face of negative

cutting down on them can be so challenging

that the majority of these attempts fail. Why?

In the Food and Addiction Science and

Treatment Lab at the University of Michi-

gan, my colleagues and I are investigating

one largely overlooked factor: These ultra-

processed foods may be addictive, sharing

more in common with tobacco products

than with whole foods like apples or beans.

So my colleagues and I created the Yale

Food Addiction Scale. It's a measure that applies the American Psychiatric Association criteria used to diagnose other addictive disorders to identify people who may be addicted to ultra-processed foods.

Continued on Page 14





MIND & BODY 9

15 percent of Americans meet the threshold for food addiction, which is associated with diet-related disease, obesity, and poorer quality of life.

Treating Long-Haul Syndrome

COVID-19 can leave a lasting effect that's best avoided by acting early

JOSEPH MERCOLA

Long COVID, also known as long-haul COVID, chronic COVID, or long-haul syndrome, refers to symptoms that persist for four or more weeks after an initial CO-VID-19 infection. Board-certified internist and cardiologist Dr. Peter McCullough discusses potential treatments for long-haul COVID in an interview with Dr. Al Johnson posted on YouTube, including which tests may be necessary and when to seek

emergency medical care.

Many of the symptoms can also mirror those caused by COVID-19 vaccinations, and McCullough details the four categories of COVID-19 vaccine-injury syndromes that he has seen in his practice. While anyone can experience long COVID, those who are sick enough to be hospitalized in the intensive

care unit are more likely to be affected.
According to McCullough, 50 percent of this group will have manifestations of long COVID syndrome.

"So the sicker someone is and the longer the duration of COVID, the more likely they are to have long COVID syndrome," he said. "That's the reason why we like early treatment. We shorten the duration of symptoms and there's

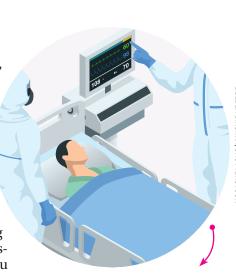
 $less \, of \, a \, chance \, for \, long \, COVID \, syndrome."$

Common Symptoms of Long COVID Signs and symptoms of long COVID, which persist for four weeks or more after you've been diagnosed with COVID-19, include fatigue, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, coughing, joint pain, chest pain, memory or

VID-19, include fatigue, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, coughing, joint pain, chest pain, memory or concentration problems, sleep problems, muscle pain or headache, a fast or pounding heartbeat, the loss of smell or taste, depression or anxiety, fever, dizziness when you stand, or worsened symptoms after physical

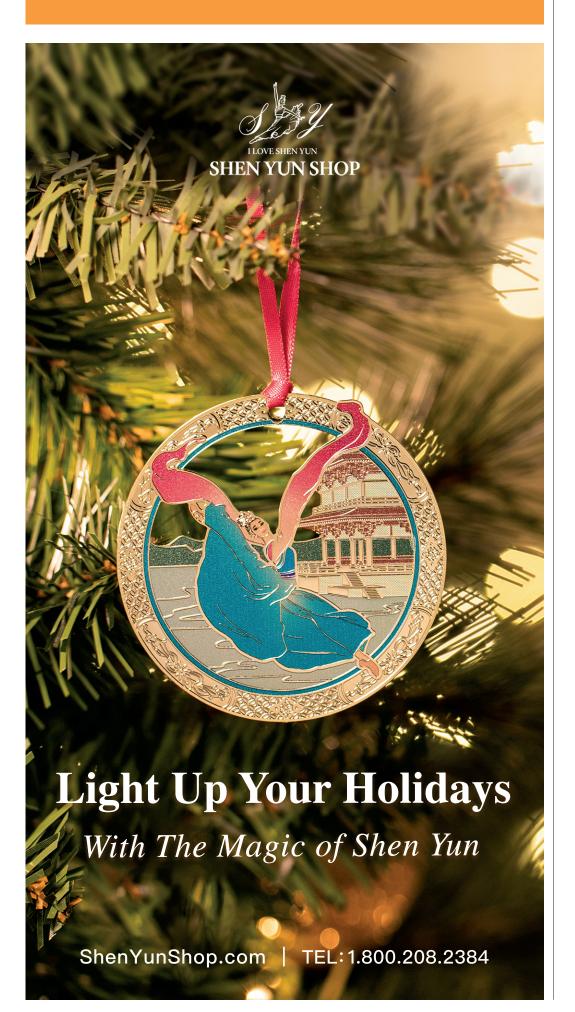
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or mental activities.



While anyone can experience long COVID, those who are sick enough to be hospitalized in the ICU are more likely to be affected.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK





Apples are moistening, especially to your lungs, which is perfect as the air dries out during the fall and winter months.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Fall Foods for Good Health

Chinese medicine holds that these 9 foods will help prepare you for winter

LYNN JAFFEE

I grew up on a bluff overlooking the Connecticut River. Looking out our front window gave us a view over the entire river valley, which on a clear day allowed us to see all the way to the Berkshires of Massachusetts. Behind our house was a large orchard that rose even higher on our hill. It was planted mostly in apple trees, but also had peach and pear trees, and even pumpkins in the fall. For us kids, the orchard was a place to hike and hide; and in the winter, we skied by being pulled behind my sister's good-natured quarter horse.

Your seasonal task is to build up your energy reserves to survive and thrive during the coming winter.

The orchard was also a place for us to mark the seasons. The scented apple blossoms of spring always gave way to ripening fruit in the fall. Many of the apples ended up a half-mile down the road at the local cider mill, where they were quickly converted into fresh, tart cider. As an adult, when summer starts to wind down and fall is in the air, my mind always goes back to apples and cider and the uphill walk to the top of the orchard.

Fall also takes on another meaning for me as a practitioner of Chinese medicine, which is what we should be eating now and why. The foods that are part of the fall harvest are heartier than the vegetables of summer, because our seasonal task is to build up our energy for the coming winter. So what should we eat? Here's a heartiness is good for building up qi list of some of the best choices from the and nourishing yin. fall harvest:



1) Apples! From the Macintosh of my childhood to the Honey Crisps of my adopted home, apples are considered to be sweet and cooling in Chinese medicine. In addition, they are moistening, especially to your lungs, which is perfect as the air dries out during the fall and winter months.



2) Pumpkins and winter squash are sweet, warm in nature, and build up your qi. They lend a heartiness to fall and winter meals that you don't get from summer squashes such as cucumber and zucchini. If you have a hard time dis-

cerning which is which, remember that winter squash varieties tend to have a very thick outer rind, while it's easy to peel a summer squash.

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3) Carrots are sweet and slightly warm. They boost your spleen qi and are good for your digestion.



4) Grapes, like pears, are sweet and sour. They build qi, nourish the blood, and strengthen ligaments, tendons,



5) Pears. Considered to be sweet and sour and energetically cooling, pears moisten dryness like apples. They also clear heat and transform phlegm—so think about adding some pears to your dietifyou have



6) Onions are considered to be pungent (kind of like spicy) and warm. Iney warm your core, move qi, and are good for com-



7) Garlic is hot and pungent. Its concentrated flavor makes it a delicious and warming addition to stews, soups, and stir-fried dishes.



8) Potatoes, sweet potatoes, and vams are all considered to be neutral in temperature and sweet. Their



9) Swiss chard is a green leafy vegetable that is sweet and grows throughout the fall until the first hard frost. Like most greens, Swiss chard is considered to be good for nourishing your blood. Use it in salads, soups, and sautéed dishes.

Remember that your seasonal task is to build up your energy reserves to survive and thrive during the coming winter. Check out your local farmer's market or farm stand. The hearty foods that are part of the fall harvest are Mother Nature's way of helping you do that.

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

The Urgent Need to Address Ageism

'COVID hit us over the head with a two-by-four,' advocate on aging says

JUDITH GRAHAM

arlier this year, the World Health Organization announced a global campaign to combat ageism discrimination against older adults that's pervasive and harmful but often unrecognized.

"We must change the narrative around age and aging" ... "adopt strategies to counter" [ageist attitudes and behaviors], WHO concluded in a major report accompanying the campaign.

Several strategies the WHO endorsed educating people about ageism, fostering intergenerational contacts, and changing policies and laws to promote age equity are being tried in the United States. But a greater sense of urgency is needed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's shocking death toll, including more than 500,000 older Americans, experts suggest.

"COVID hit us over the head with a twoby-four, [showing that] you can't keep doing the same thing over and over again and expect different results" for seniors, Jess Maurer, executive director of the Maine Council on Aging, said in an October webinar on ageism in health care sponsored by KHN and the John A. Hartford Foundation. "You have to address the root cause—and the root cause here is ageism."

Some experts believe there's a unique opportunity to confront this concern because of what the country has been through. Here are some examples of what's being done, particularly in health care settings.

Distinguishing Old Age From Disease In October, a group of experts from the

United States, Canada, India, Portugal, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom called for old age to be removed as one of the causes and symptoms of disease in the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases, a global resource used to standardize health data worldwide.

Aging is a normal process, and equating old age with disease "is potentially detrimental," the experts wrote in The Lancet. Doing so could result in inadequate clinical evaluation and care and an increase in "societal marginalization and discrimination' against older adults, they warn.

Identifying Ageist Beliefs and Language

Groundbreaking research published in $2015\,by\,the\,Frame Works\,Institute, an\,orga$ nization that studies social issues, showed that many people associate aging with deterioration, dependency, and decline—a stereotype that almost surely contributed to policies that harmed older adults during the pandemic. By contrast, experts understand that older adults vary widely in their abilities and that a significant number are healthy, independent, and capable of contributing to society.

Using this and subsequent research, the Reframing Aging Initiative, an effort to advance cultural change, has been working to shift how people think and talk about aging, training organizations across the country. Instead of expressing fatalism about aging ("a silver tsunami that will swamp society"), it emphasizes ingenuity, as in "we can solve any problem if we resolve to do so," said Patricia D'Antonio, project director and vice president of policy and professional affairs at the Gerontological

Also, the initiative promotes justice as a value, as in "we should treat older adults as equals.' Since it began, the Amer-

Society of America.

ican Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and The Associated Press have adopted bias-free language around aging, and communities in Colorado, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and Texas have signed on as partners.

Tackling Ageism at Grassroots Level

In the past three years in Colorado, Changing the Narrative, a strategic aware-



If there's a silver lining to the pandemic, it's that medical professionals observed firsthand the problems that ensued and realized that older adults



'We must change the narrative around age and aging' ... 'adopt strategies to counter' ageist attitudes and behaviors].

World Health Organization

Seniors are often

stereotyped as

infirm, but many

are sharp and full o

vitality.

ness campaign, has hosted more than 300 workshops educating the public about ageist language, beliefs, and practices. Now, it's launching a campaign calling attention to ageism in health care.

"Our goal is to teach people about the connections between ageism and poor health outcomes and to mobilize both older people and [health] professionals to advocate for better medical care," said Janine Vanderburg, director of Changing the Narrative. Faced with the pandemic's horrific impact,

the Maine Council on Aging earlier this year launched the Power in Aging Project, which is sponsoring a series of community conversations around ageism and asking organizations to take an "anti-ageism pledge." The goal is to educate people about their

own "age bias"—largely unconscious assumptions about aging—and help them understand "how age bias impacts everything around them," said Maurer. For those interested in assessing their own age bias, a test from Harvard University's Project Implicit is often recommended. (Sign in and choose the "age IAT" on the next page.)

Changing Education for Health Professionals

Two years ago, Harvard Medical School began integrating education in geriatrics and palliative care throughout its curriculum, recognizing that it hadn't been doing enough to prepare future physicians to care for seniors. Despite the rapid growth of the older population, only 55 percent of U.S. medical schools required education in geriatrics in 2020, according to the latest data from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Dr. Andrea Schwartz, an assistant professor of medicine, directs Harvard's effort, which teaches students about everything from the sites where older adults receive care (nursing homes, assisted living, homebased programs, community-based settings) to how to manage common geriatric syndromes such as falls and delirium. Also, students learn how to talk with older patients about what's most important to them and what they most want from their care.

Schwartz also chaired a committee of the academic programs in geriatrics that recently published updated minimum competencies in geriatrics that any medical school graduate should have.

Altering Professional Requirements

Dr. Sharon Inouye, also a professor of medicine at Harvard, suggests additional approaches that could push better care for older adults forward. When a physician seeks board certification in a specialty or doctors, nurses, or pharmacists renew their licenses, they should be required to demonstrate training or competency in "the basics of geriatrics," she said. And far more clinical trials should include a representative range of older adults to build a better evidence base for their care.

Inouye, a geriatrician, was particularly horrified during the pandemic when doctors and nurses fvailed to recognize that seniors with COVID-19 were presenting in hospital

emergency rooms with "atypical" symptoms such as loss of appetite and delirium. Such "atypical" presentations are common in older adults, but instead of receiving COVID tests or treatment, these older adults were sent back to nursing homes or community settings where they helped spread infections,

Bringing in Geriatrics Expertise

If there's a silver lining to the pandemic, it's that medical professionals and health system leaders observed firsthand the problems that ensued and realized that older adults needed special consideration.

"Everything that we as geriatricians have been trying to tell our colleagues suddenly came into sharp focus," said Dr. Rosanne Leipzig, a professor of geriatrics at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City.

Now, more Mount Sinai surgeons are asking geriatricians to help them manage older surgical patients, and orthopedic specialists are discussing establishing a similar program.

"I think the value of geriatrics has gone up as institutions see how we care for complicated older adults and how that care improves outcomes," Leipzig said.

Building Age-Friendly Health Systems "I believe we are at an inflection point," said

Terry Fulmer, president of the John A. Hartford Foundation, which is supporting the development of age-friendly health systems with the American Hospital Association, the Catholic Health Association of the United States, and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. (The John A. Hartford Foundation is a funder of KHN.)

More than 2,500 health systems, hospitals, medical clinics, and other health care providers have joined this movement, which sets four priorities ("the 4Ms") in caring for older adults: attending to their mobility, medications, mentation (cognition and mental health), and what matters most to them—the foundation for person-centered care.

Creating a standardized framework for improving care for seniors has helped health care providers and systems know how to proceed, even amid the enormous uncertainty of the past couple of years. "We thought [the pandemic] would slow us down, but what we found in most cases was the oppositepeople could cling to the 4Ms to have a sense of mastery and accomplishment during a time of such chaos," Fulmer said.

We're eager to hear from readers about questions you'd like answered, problems you've been having with your care, and advice you need in dealing with the health care system. Visit khn.org/ columnists to submit your requests or tips.

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

Keep your microbiome strong

by eating a healthy

organic diet and

drinking lots of

COVID-19 can leave a lasting effect that's best avoided by acting early

Continued from Page 9

These symptoms are a result of damage to the following body systems: pulmonary/ lungs, immune/allergy, mitochondria/energy system, heart, or central/peripheral nervous system.

According to McCullough, a paper that was presented by Dr. Bruce Patterson at the International COVID Summit in Rome, Sept. 12 to Sept. 14, shows that in "individuals who've had significant COVID illness, 15 months later the s1 segment of the spike protein is recoverable from human monocytes."

"That means the body literally has been sprayed with the virus and it spends 15 months, in a sense, trying to clean out the spike protein from our tissues. No wonder people have long COVID syndrome,"

Be on the Lookout for Blood Clots for 90 Days

casion," McCullough said.

If you've had COVID-19, especially if it was a severe case, be aware that blood clots and heart problems, including heart attack, can occur for 90 days or more after recovery. It's believed that remnants of the virus remain in the nervous system, the

lungs, the heart, and other organs. If the symptoms include major shortness of breath, a cough with blood in it, or pain on one side when you take a deep breath. it could be due to a late pulmonary embolism or a blood clot going to the lungs. "We've seen this on more than one oc-

In this case, he recommends a chest CT with contrast and, if a blood clot is found the use of oral blood thinners for three to six months. He also uses full-dose aspirin—325 milligrams per day—in almost everyone with long COVID syndrome who doesn't have a major blood clot, in addition to other medications.

However, a safer and likely equally effective alternative to aspirin is digestive fibrinolytic enzymes such as lumbrokinase and serrapeptase. You can alternate between the two enzymes—one day take lumbrokinase and the next take serrapeptase—because vou'll need to be on them for about three months, and you can develop a sensitivity to them over time.

Anyone who has had COVID-19, especially with significant symptoms, should consider taking digestive fibrinolytic enzymes to be sure you don't have clotting. An alternative to determine if clotting is occurring is a test known as D-dimer, although it can be pricey. D-dimer is a protein fragment produced by the body when a blood clot dissolves.

D-dimer is typically undetectable or present only at very low levels, but its level may significantly rise when your body is forming and breaking down blood clots. If your d-dimer test is low, then you don't need to take the enzymes. Likewise, if you had a very mild, cold-like case of COV-ID-19, you probably don't need them.

Aside from a CT scan to rule out a pulmonary embolism if you're having symptoms, and possibly a D-dimer test, McCullough suggests a high-sensitivity C-reactive pro-



Anyone who has had COVID-19, especially with significant symptoms, should consider taking digestive fibrinolytic enzymes to be sure you don't

tein (CRP) test, which provides a general index of inflammation.

"This pursuit of a blood clot is very important. I've seen multiple cases now where blood clots have been missed. ...

Heart Problems

and Neurological Issues Are Common Inflammation around the lining of the heart (pericarditis) and the lining of the lungs (pleuritis) may also occur in long COVID patients.

"The virus can set up inflammation," Mc-Cullough said. "The spike protein is in the body, it's triggered inflammation."

He prescribes steroids and colchicine, an anti-inflammatory drug commonly used for gout to reduce high uric acid, in such

There's a real risk for heart attack or stroke to occur without warning in long COVID, so McCullough warns those recovering to "be on your guard," especially if you have a heart stent or carotid stenosis. Neurologic syndromes also occur in

long COVID, although they aren't well described. Symptoms include joint and This is now almost a daily occurrence, muscle pain, headaches, brain fog, and particularly within the first 90 days after tinnitus (ringing in the ears). Some people also have changes in the autonomic nervous system, such as an elevated heart rate and sensory neuropathies, including numbness and weakness in the legs.

> McCullough's host in the video, Dr. Al Johnson, recommends using a foam roller on your back three to five times per day to relax your nervous system, as well as to relieve rib pain from all the coughing. McCullough has had some success treating neurologic symptoms with an older

Supplements That Play a Role in Long COVID Syndrome

Johnson recommends several supplements to support healing from long CO-VID, including vitamin C, because it helps calm inflammation; vitamin D, for both prevention and long-haulers; glutathione, because it helps calm inflammatory processes; and N-acetylcysteine (NAC), a precursor to glutathione.

McCullough, an enlightened allopathic physician, recognizes the role that dietary and integrative therapies play in helping people recover from long COVID.

"As an allopathic doctor, I'm not skilled in understanding how to use vitamins and supplements like our integrative, holistic, and naturopathic colleagues, but they've played a big role in COVID-19. I'll just make the observation that COVID-19 is an enormous catabolic strain. ... The weight loss is tremendous," he said.

"It is such a strain on the body. ... We want to avoid sugary foods. When someone has acute COVID-19 and moves into the long COVID, post-COVID syndrome, we want to stay away from sugary foods. ... The sugar seems to feed the virus. It seems to feed inflammatory processes."

McCullough has also referred some patients to chiropractors in his area, noting that "long COVID syndrome, out of all the illnesses we face, is one for collaborative care, for integrative care. There's a lot of elements to it."

Likewise, Johnson suggests a combination of physical therapy and exercise—but not over-exercising—to get back normal function of your musculoskeletal system.

Support a Healthy Microbiome

Research by Dr. Sabine Hazan has shown that your microbiome plays an incredible role in COVID-19. According to Mc-Cullough, Hazan has figured out that one reason certain people within the same household don't develop COVID-19 while others do comes down to the gut. A healthy microbiome score is protective against developing COVID-19. Bifidobacterium is among the leading bacteria that appear to fight off COVID-19, according to McCullough.

"COVID-19 is clearly a GI syndrome,"

SARS-CoV-2 collects in your nose and mouth, and as you swallow, it's introduced to your GI tract. According to Forbes, Li Tongzeng, deputy director of the respiratory and infectious diseases department at Beijing You An Hospital, cited research that SARS-CoV-2 survives longer in the anus and feces than in the respiratory

Due to this, an anal swab may be able to more accurately detect mild or asymptomatic cases than a nose or throat test.

Staying away from irritants to the GI tract is important, and Johnson recommends eating a clean diet with organic food and glass-bottled spring water, if possible. Eating fermented foods or taking a highuality probiotic is also essential for gut health, as is avoiding unnecessary antibiotics usage and processed foods.

Chronic Fatigue and Sleep Disturbances

Chronic fatigue is a major problem for many with long-haul COVID, and for this, Johnson recommends hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT). One of the reasons I'm fascinated by HBOT, in particular, is its ability to improve mitochondrial function. "Toxins affect the mitochondria ... the

which is our energy system," Johnson said.

little engines in our body that create ATP,

HBOT protects against mitochondrial dysfunction, speeding up the mitochondria and ATP production, which helps increase

body tissues such as your lungs, heart, and muscles while decreasing inflammation syndrome, If sleep disturbances are an issue—and they often are for long-haulers—Mc-Cullough recommends avoiding alcohol illnesses we for at least a month, as "just one drink in 28 days will destroy sleep architecture." The Front Line COVID-19 Critical Care Working Group (FLCCC) has a management protocol—I-RECOVER18—for long-haul COVID care, for syndrome that includes melatonin, which

COVID's Effects Versus Vaccine Effects McCullough detailed the non-fatal syn-

dromes that are occurring after COVID-19 vaccinations, which cause symptoms similar to that of long COVID in many cases. The vaccine-induced syndromes fall into four areas: cardiac, neurological, immunologic, and hematologic.

can also help with sleep disturbances.

energy while decreasing brain fog and fa-

tigue. Johnson also noted that it helps heal

and lessening symptoms.

Myocarditis is a recognized effect of both COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines, but they're completely different, according to McCullough.

"A child is more likely to be hospitalized with myocarditis after a Pfizer or Moderna [vaccination] than actually being hospitalized with COVID-19," he said. "The myocarditis in COVID-19 is mild.

It's inconsequential. I don't want anyone to think that the myocarditis we're seeing with the natural infection is anything like what we're seeing with the [vaccines]. ... There are studies suggesting the lipid nanoparticles actually go right into the heart, the heart expresses the spike protein, the body attacks the heart.

"There are dramatic EKG changes. The troponin, the blood test for heart injury with the vaccine myocarditis, is 10 to 100 volts higher than the troponin we see with the natural infection. It's a totally different syndrome. When the kids get myocarditis after the vaccine, 90 percent have to be hospitalized. ... So vaccine-induced myocarditis is a big deal, and in children, it's way more serious and more prominent than a post-COVID myocarditis."

Long COVID out of all the face, is one for collaborative integrative care. There's

elements to it. Dr. Peter McCullough

a lot of



If you've had COVID-19, especially if it was a severe case, be aware that blood clots and heart problems, including heart attack, can occur for 90 days or more after recovery.

In addition to myocarditis, atrial fibrillation in young people and pericarditis can also occur post-COVID-19 vaccine.

Besides vaccine-induced cardiac syndromes, there are also neurologic syndromes, which cause neurological symptoms similar to those among COVID-19 long-haulers. These syndromes can also have additional, more serious, effects, including Guillain-Barré syndrome, which can be fatal; bell's palsy; seizures; persistent headaches; and blood clots in the brain.

The third category is immunologic, which includes suppression of lymphocyte count and reactivation of other viral syndromes, including Epstein-Barr virus and shingles.

The fourth category—hematologic occurs about two weeks after receiving a vaccine and describes vaccine-induced thrombocytopenic purpura.

Signs include bruising all over the body, bleeding from the gums and nose, and dark urine. If you notice these signs in the weeks after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, get to a hospital immediately.

"What happens is the [vaccine] tricks the body and gives excessive antigenic presentation of platelets to the spleen, the spleen produces an antibody that actually pins platelets against blood vessel walls ... and that's what drives vaccine-induced thrombocytopenic purpura," McCullough said.

For those suffering from these vaccine-induced syndromes, FLCCC's I-RECOVER20 protocol for long-haul COVID syndrome has been used to treat vaccine-induced symptoms with similar success. The protocol can be downloaded in full, giving you step-by-step instructions on how to treat long-haul COVID syndrome or reactions from COVID-19

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

Gross Things Happen When You Don't Wash Your Sheets

have clotting.

LISA ROTH COLLINS

How often do you wash your sheets and put fresh ones on your bed? That's OK, you don't need to let anyone else know; you can keep the answer to yourself. However, the best answer is no longer than two weeks, and less in some cases.

If you and your family are sleeping on sheets that have been on your bed longer than that, then there are some gross and unhealthy things that may be happening in your bedrooms. So be prepared: What follows may not be for the faint of heart

What's Happening to Your Sheets The human (and pet) body is constantly

shedding skin cells. How many is a matter of some debate, but it is significant, like millions of cells a day. Since you spend about one-third of your life in bed, plenty of cells are accumulating in your sheets.

Skin cells aren't the only things that

Some tests have found that pillowcases unwashed for one week had **17,000 more** bacterial colonies than a toilet seat.

are gathering in your bed. Some of those other "things" have legs. Moisture from sweating can accumulate during the night, making your sheets a breeding ground. Therefore, according to hygiene physician Dr. Lisa Ackerley, failing to wash your sheets often could be putting you and your family at risk for significant health problems. Let's explore what those problems might be.

Health Hazards When You Don't Wash Your Sheets

Here are a few of the health issues that can arise when you keep your sheets on the bed too long.

Mighty Mites: The dead skin cells that accumulate in your bed linens in between clean sheet replacements are dinner for dust mites that enjoy this delicacy. Mites and their droppings may trigger asthma and allergies and contribute to eczema.

Pet Issues: Cat and dog hair and dander are dinner for dust mites as well. In addition, if your canine friend sleeps in your bed and has mange, the mites can irritate your skin. Pet sleep buddies may also transmit ringworm. If you want to allow your pets to sleep with you, be sure to routinely check their health and change your sheets weekly.

Germ Garden: Dead skin cells, sweat, saliva, yeast, fecal matter, and other bodily deposits in your bed are a fertile garden for germs to thrive. Some tests, for example, have found that pillowcases unwashed for one week had 17,000 more bacterial colonies than a toilet seat.

One bacterium that can linger in your sheets is Staphylococcus aureus, which is found on both healthy skin and on cuts and other skin conditions. Yeast is another threat, as it can accumulate in folds of skin where there is moisture and result in skin infections.

Acne Problems: If you suffer from acne, you should be changing your pillowcase every two to three days. That's because bacteria, dead skin cells, and dirt in the pillowcase can contribute to outbreaks and clog your pores.

Lingering Germs. Whenever you or and using detergent strips. These strips family members are ill, bacteria and viruses can linger in your sheets for up to several hours, depending on the microorganism. Therefore, it's a good idea to wash your linens more often to kill germs.

How to Wash Your Sheets

According to a 2017 survey, only 44 percent of Americans wash their sheets once or twice a month. Eleven percent wash them once a season, and 5 percent do it only once or twice a year. However, the optimal sheet washing schedule is once every two weeks, but once a week if you sweat a lot or if you are allergic to dust mites. In the latter case, the water should be at least 130 degrees Fahrenheit so you will kill the mites.

If you or a family member is sick, then sheets and other bedding should be changed as soon as you or the family member feels better to reduce the risk of reinfection. Use hot water to kill the germs and a hot dry cycle.

Use an all-natural laundry detergent to keep your sheets and your skin free of exposure to potentially harmful chemicals. You can also help reduce waste by reducing laundry packaging waste

are plastic-free, dissolve in both hot and cold water, and are free of harmful chemicals.

Other Tips

• Don't make your bed right away in the morning. Allow any moisture that may have accumulated in your sheets to dry, this makes them less attractive to bacteria and mites.

- Use a mattress protector and pillow protectors, which are easy to wash.
- Shower or bathe before going to bed. This helps reduce dirt and other contaminants in your bed.
- Provide a separate blanket for your dog or cat to lie on in your bed and wash it once a week.

Bottom Line

Do your part for yourself and your family. Wash your sheets more often and help protect your family's health. If you do, you might really get the beauty rest you've been looking for.

Lisa Roth Collins is a registered holistic nutritionist and also the marketing manager at NaturallySavvy.com, which first published this article.



Ideally you should wash your sheets every two weeks, unless you sweat a lot or are allergic to dust mites, then weekly is best.

Foods high in added fats and refined carbs have a lot in common with cigarettes

Continued from Page 9

Based on our current estimates, 15 percent of Americans meet the threshold for food addiction, which is associated with diet-related disease, obesity, and poorer quality of life.

This prevalence is remarkably in line with that of addictions to other legal and accessible substances. For instance, 14 percent of people in the U.S. meet the criteria to be diagnosed with alcohol use disorders.

It's clear from our research that people don't experience this addictive pull from all foods. Ultra-processed foods that have artificially high levels of fat and refined carbohydrates like sugar and white flour are the ones that people eat addictively. For example, chocolate, ice cream, French fries, pizza, and cookies are some of the foods that people find most addictive. Not surprisingly, people report that they're very unlikely to lose control consuming broccoli, beans, or cucumbers.

But can these ultra-processed foods really be considered addictive? Or are people just overindulging in something they like? To help us answer those questions, my colleagues and I have turned to one of the last big debates in addiction science—whether tobacco is addictive.

The Case That You Can Be Addicted to Tobacco

The idea that tobacco was addictive was hotly contested for decades.

In contrast to drugs like alcohol and opioids, tobacco products are not intoxicating and allow people to go about their daily lives while using them. Tobacco products also don't cause life-threatening withdrawal symptoms, unlike alcohol and opioids, and there's no need to break the law to access or use tobacco.

The largest global tobacco industry companies—colloquially grouped together as Big Tobacco—often highlighted the difference between tobacco and "classic" addictive drugs. Increasing doubt about whether tobacco was truly addictive could help them avoid culpability for their industry practices and place the blame on consumers for their choice to continue to smoke.

However, in 1988, the Surgeon General officially identified tobacco products as addictive. This report directly contradicted Big Tobacco's stance that tobacco intake is a matter of consumer choice driven by the taste and sensory effect of the products.

The Surgeon General based much of the classification of tobacco products as addictive on their ability to trigger strong, often irresistible urges to use, despite a desire to quit and in the face of life-threatening health consequences.



Ultra-processed foods have artificially high levels of fat and refined carbohydrates, like sugar and white flour. These are the foods people eat addictively.

The idea that tobacco was addictive was hotly contested for decades.

Tobacco and ultra foods alter mood in a similar way by increasing pleasurable feelings and reducing negative ones. of evidence was the ability of tobacco products to rapidly deliver high doses of nicotine, which made them highly reinforcing—users want to repeat the behavior that gets them more of the drug. The final addiction criterion tobacco met was its ability to alter mood—increasing pleasure, reducing negative emotions because nicotine affects the brain.

It's a common misconception that the designation was based on the identification of a specific brain response to tobacco. In the 1980s, researchers knew that nicotine had some impact on the brain. But little was known at that time about exactly how addictive drugs affect the brain. In fact, an objective biological marker of addiction—that is, a specific, measurable brain response that confirms someone is addicted to a substance—still doesn't exist.

The Surgeon General designating tobacco as an addictive product raised the percentage of the public who viewed smoking as an addiction from 37 percent in 1980 to 74 percent in 2002. The scientific case that cigarettes were addictive also made it harder for Big Tobacco to deiena its practices.

In 1998, tobacco companies lost a legal battle that resulted in them paying billions of dollars to states to cover smoking-related health costs. The court ordered them to release secret documents that demonstrated they covered up the unhealthy and addictive nature of their products. Additionally, the decision placed major restrictions on their ability to market their products, especially to youth.

Since 1980, the use of tobacco products in the U.S. has drastically declined—a huge public health accomplishment.

cally ask people how they're doing and

assume they can recall properly and

give meaningful answers," says Brian

Ogolsky, lead author of the study. "But

as couples age and have been together

mitted they are. When they have been

for a long time, they laugh when we

ask them how satisfied or how com-

Ultra-Processed Foods Check the Same Boxes

Ultra-processed foods meet all the same criteria that were used to designate tobacco as addictive.

Week48, 2021 THE EPOCH TIMES

ter mood in a similar way by increasing pleasurable feelings and reducing negative ones. The high levels of refined carbohydrates and fat in ultra-processed foods powerfully activate reward

> systems in the brain. Ultra-processed foods are highly reinforcing—they can shape your behavior to keep you coming back for more. For example, teachers and parents use ultra-processed foods to reward good behavior in children to increase the likelihood that kids will continue to behave. In rats, researchers have repeatedly found that sweet tastes are more reinforcing than even highly addictive drugs like cocaine.

> > The high failure rates of

diets make it painfully clear that ultra-processed foods can trigger strong, often irresistible urges to use despite a desire to quit. By contrast, nutritious, minimally processed foods such as fruits, vegetables, and legumes don't meet these criteria

Beginning in the 1980s, the amount of unhealthy, ultra-processed foods in the United States exploded. At the same time, the tobacco companies Philip Morris and RJ Reynolds were buying up ultra-processed food and beverages companies, including General Foods, Kraft, Nabisco, and Kool-Aid. Philip Morris and RJ Reynolds took their scientific, marketing, and industry knowledge in designing and selling addictive, highly profitable tobacco products and applied it to their ultra-processed food portfolios. Although these tobacco companies eventually sold their food brands to international food and beverage conglomerates in the 2000s, they had already left their stamp on the modern food

The current societal narrative around the ultra-processed foods that dominate today's food environment is that people who struggle to eat them in moderation the majority of Americans—are just weakwilled. It's the same story used to explain why people couldn't quit smoking. It ignores the fact that the industry that created cigarettes also developed and marketed many of these foods, deliberately working to enhance craveability and create heavy users.

The addictive nature of these ultra-processed foods undermines consumers' free will and health in the service of profits. Yet, there's an important difference between tobacco and ultra-processed foods. We all have to eat. No one can opt out.

Just as in the case of tobacco products, it will likely take industry regulation to chip away at the popularity of ultra-processed foods and the health problems that come

Ashley Gearhardt is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Michigan. This article was first published on The Conversation.

The people of Ikaria can teach us a profound lesson about taking the time to enjoy each other's company.

Becoming Unhurried

Learning to live longer, happier lives from people who do it exceptionally well

MOLLIE DONGHIA

It's 5:15 p.m. on a weekday and my husband has just finished his day of work (from the little corner in our bedroom that he's claimed as his permanent office). I'm juggling the tasks of prepping dinner while keeping an eye on our older two kids playing in the backyard as I bounce our toddler son on my hip.

Mike enters the kitchen, gives me a gentle hug, and I proceed to ask him the same question that typically ensues.

"How was your day today?" Oftentimes, he'll answer with a response such as this: "Pretty good, I had a few meetings, worked on a couple lingering projects, and checked most things off my to-do list."

Typically, our answer to this question is weighted with regard to how much we accomplished, while often neglecting to highlight the simple joys, moments of rest, or relational endeavors.

It's almost as if we see our days as one giant to-do list, checking off items at a rigorous speed, moving on quickly so as to not waste much time in between.

Of course, working hard isn't in the least bit wrong. After all, we were created to work, to support ourselves and our families, to love, to design, to take care of our Earth, and to experience the goodness that life bringsall of which takes great effort to do well.

However, when our busyness keeps us from engaging with those around us, from



Ever since we got married, we've kept the tradition of Sunday dinner at my parent's house as well as a weekly dinner with some good friends from college.

or celebrating healthy leisure, that's when it robs us of a priceless gift.

cherishing the simple pleasures of each day,

Making Time for What Matters I recently came across a 2012 New York Times article that was eye-opening for me, and became the motivation for writing this article. The premise of the piece was a look into the lives of a group of people who view life in a different light.

Their days were measured not just by productivity in a business sense, but by drastically different standards than sitting at a desk, checking items off their list, or working 50-hour weeks.

What they valued most in their days was making time for relationships with loved ones, enjoying time outside, taking moments to breathe in the fresh air, pursuing work that gave them meaning, connecting with their faith, and living life with gratitude for the time they've been given.

And the most interesting part about this group from the Greek island of Ikaria, is that they're among some of the longest-living humans on earth, exceeding the longevity of Americans by about a decade.

So what's their secret to living long, boun-

Their wake-time is natural, rising whentown comes to a stop to honor this practice. They strive to earn just enough to keep going. If they make more, they give it away.

Dinners are typically enjoyed in the company of friends or family, followed by dancing afterward, gathering at homes for many hours.

Their diets consist of the common Mediterranean foods. Meals are typically high in olive oil, beans, and greens and low in meats, dairy, and processed sugars—and always enjoyed with conversation.

Each Sunday, they attend the local church service with extended family and place a high priority on making it a meaningful experience.

And one of the biggest differences is that they're never in a hurry.

"We may not have money for luxuries, but we will have food on the table and still have fun with family and friends. We may not be in a hurry to get work done during the day, so we work into the night. At the end of the day, we don't go home to sit on the couch."

Even a week after reading this article, I still find myself evaluating how I spend my days. Am I more focused on productivity or connections? Did I measure my time by

how much I accomplished or by the amount of time I invested in my children's lives? Did I make room for rest, the pursuit of my hobbies, and work that's life-giving?

Choosing to Be Unhurried

I have to teach myself habits and routines that allow me to focus on what truly matters—such as quality time with my husband and kids, instilling good values and virtues into their lives, doing activities that support my mental health and well-being, and serving others around me well.

As my friend Julia Ubbenga emphasizes in her blog, live your life so that you're "rich in what matters" and make time for what's most meaningful

Although I make a 3-item to-do list most days, I've also learned to create new routines that allow me to enjoy each day at an unhurried pace. Here are a few ways that I strive to live in such a way.

Ask myself the 'magic question.' I learned this from "The Lazy Genius Way," by Kendra Adachi. What can I do now to make my life easier later? Each evening, I do simple tasks that allow me to create a more peaceful environment to wake up to, such as having a clean sink, clearing off the countertops, prepping my coffee, having the table ready for breakfast, and laying out our clothes. Doing these easy tasks allows me to be more present when my kids wake up and helps to create a more relaxing start to our day.

Get outside every day. Our afternoons consist of quiet time for the kids and work time for me. Before I sit down to do some blogging, I take time to get outside to exercise. While doing this, I breathe in the fresh air, pray, and reflect on what I'm most grateful for. This routine allows me to move my body and prepare myself for a more enjoyable afternoon where my mind is refreshed.

Own less stuff. My husband Mike and I believe that owning less and living a minimalist lifestyle is a mindset where you remove the excess in your life to create more freedom to live intentionally. This mindset has given us back more time for what matters, more money for greater causes, and more gratitude for what we already have.

Be present in conversations. Meaningful conversations with those we care about create feelings of love and warmth. I always admire my husband's ability to be present in conversations and ask good questions. This shows the person he's speaking with that he cares about them and is curious to hear what they have to say.

Enjoy a good book. This past year, I've carved out intentional times of the day when I sit and read. I've probably read more books this past year than in the previous decade And afternoon nap-time is universal, as the It's become one of the most enjoyable parts of my day and a way to keep my mind learning

> **Spend time with family and friends**. Ever since we got married, we've kept the tradition of Sunday dinner at my parent's house as well as a weekly dinner with some good friends from college. For the past 10 years, these dinners have served as a chance to keep meaningful relationships alive and thriving and add joy to our week.

> Socializing, as the people of Ikaria know, is one of the key factors toward living a healthy, cherished life. Whether it's through a regular dinner with family, an occasional meet-up with friends, or an impromptu adventure, look for ways that you can create meaningful connections that encourage laughter and delight.

Mollie (and her husband, Mike) blog at This Evergreen Home, where they share their experience with living simply, intentionally, and relationally in this modern world. You can follow along by subscribing to their twice-weekly newsletter. This article was originally published on This

Heart Rate of Older Couples Synchronizes When They Are Close Together

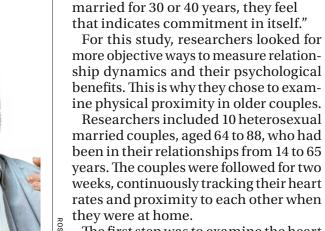
SARAH COWNLEY

New research from the University of Illinois has shown that the heart rates in older couples synchronize when they are close together. This new heart health study examined the dynamics of long-term relationships through spatial proximity. When couples grow older together,

their interdependence heightens. They

often become each other's primary source of emotional and physical support. As previous studies have shown, long-term marriages profoundly affect health and well-being, but those benefits also depend on relationship quality. "Relationship researchers typi-

Sometimes, the husband's heart rate would lead the change, and other times the wife's heart rate would begin, and the husband's heart rate would follow.



The first step was to examine the heart rate and proximity correlations over time. Researchers looked at the husband's heart rate with proximity, the wife's heart rate with proximity, and the two heart rates with each other.

A Lag in Synchronization

The findings indicated a lag in heart rate synchronization, when one partner would lead and the other's heart rate would follow. Sometimes, the husband's heart rate would lead the change, and other times the wife's heart rate would begin, and the husband's heart rate would follow. These findings suggest a delicate balance, a unique couple-level dance that affects the physiology and their partners throughout the day.

This study helps researchers to understand the unique patterns of interaction that happen within couples. For senior health, it is essential to understand the unique micro-process that can occur when couples stay together for long periods. This information can help health care providers with the successful aging of their patients.

Sarah Cownley earned a diploma in nutritional therapy from Health Sciences Academy in London. She enjoys helping others by teaching healthy lifestyle changes through her personal consultations and with her regular contributions to the Doctors Health Press. This article was originally published on Bel Marra Health.

Poor Sleep in the over 50s Is Linked to More Negative Perceptions of Aging were discussing the difficulty in sleeping as

SARAH COWNLEY

For people over 50, poor sleep has been linked to more negative perceptions of aging, which can impact mental, physical, and cognitive health. A new study led by the University of Exeter found that middle-aged people who rated their sleep the worst also felt older and had a lower image of their own physical and mental aging.

Researchers analyzed 4,482 people aged 50 and over who were part of the PROTECT study. This innovative online study includes participants who take regular cognitive tests and complete lifestyle questionnaires. The study found that many participants

After seeing these comments, the research

which impacts my life quite a lot."

ticipant commented, "How I feel fluctuates widely depending on my sleep. I feel great if I get six hours, so about half the time I feel younger, and half the time I feel older!" Another comment read, "I have chronic pain problems and get very little sleep

part of standard questionnaires. One par-

Small habits and rou-

tines centered around

connecting with loved

ones, faith, gratitude,

and nature can help to

meaning and warmth.

fill a life with unhurried

2nd Questionnaire

team decided to conduct a secondary questionnaire looking specifically at sleep. All participants were asked whether they had experienced a list of negative age-related changes, such as less energy, poor memory, decreased motivation, and dependence on the help of others. All participants completed both questionnaires twice, one year apart.

The lead author of the study, professor Clive Ballard said, "This research is an important part of the growing body of evidence about the crucial role of sleep in healthy aging. We now need more people to sign up to PROTECT, to help us understand further. We've got some exciting trials ahead on how to optimize sleep in some particularly vulnerable groups, such as

people with dementia in care homes." This study helps to show that as we age,

everyone may experience both positive and negative changes in many areas of their life, including poor sleep. However, some people perceive more negative changes than others, which can be detrimental to future physical health, mental health, and cognitive health.

Sarah Cownley earned a diploma in nutritional therapy from Health Sciences Academy in London. She enjoys helping others by teaching healthy lifestyle changes through her personal consultations and with her regular contributions to the Doctors Health Press. This article was originally published on Bel Marra Health.

Give Experiences for Christmas

If there was ever a year to gift differently, this is it

We're all

hungry for a

greater connection

with each other

after 18 months

of sacrificing

just that.

JOSHUA BECKER

nflation. Supply chain issues. Delayed mail.

If there was ever a year to start giving experiences for Christmas rather than physical possessions, this is the year.

A few years ago, my friend and his family of six started a new holiday tradition.

"Rather than spending money on a bunch of stuff we don't need, we started a new Christmas tradition. Every day of the week after Christmas until New Year's, we did something fun as a family," he said. "Sometimes, it was simple: pizza and a movie. Other days, it was more extravagant: horseback riding. But

we took the money that would have been spent on physical gifts and spread it out over the week making sure everyone got to do something they'd really love."

After the holiday season, I asked him how it went.

"Best decision we ever made. A new family tradition has been born. We're already looking forward to next year," he said with a smile on his face.

When we found minimalism 12 years ago, we also decided to change how we celebrated the holiday season by limiting our children's gifts to three: one thing they need, one thing they want, and one experience to share with the family.

To celebrate holidays differently, you need to make the decision to do so. And if there was ever a year to try out a change, this is the one.

News reports are already surfacing that this holiday season may be filled with increased challenges and frustrations with it being more difficult than ever to find specific items. Meanwhile, what you do find is going to be more expensive, with inflation reaching levels we haven't seen in decades.

Those challenges are even greater for the millions of people who have just lost pandemic-era unemployment benefits.

And amid all of that, COVID-19 cases continue to increase in many places around the world.

An important phenomenon took place in 2020. People began spending more on goods and less on services. As a percentage of personal spending, non-consumable goods increased by 6 percent in 2020, while services fell by 7 percent, with some sectors, such as recreation, food, and travel, falling by 20 to 30 percent.

In 2020, most Americans spent the year purchasing more and more physical possessions and fewer and fewer ser-

vices. If our homes weren't full enough in 2019, they're even more full in 2021. Again, if

there was ever a year to start giving experiences for Christmas rather than physical possessions, this is the year.

Most of your family and friends desire that anyway.

Every year, I post a list of 52 clutterfree gift ideas on Facebook. This year, I decided to post it a bit earlier than normal. As of today, the list has been viewed and shared by more than 12 million people! Anecdotal evidence, I know, but when a clutter-free gift list is more than twice as popular this year than any previous year, something unique is happening.

Try it out. You'll be surprised by how much more you'll enjoy the holiday season.

In your own family, set expectations early (now). Get buy-in from your spouse, tell your kids that you're trying something new this year, and set healthy expectations. Focusing more on experiences doesn't mean you have to cut out all physical gifts—just shift some of your focus. As I mentioned earlier, my kids still receive one thing that



In 2020, most **Americans** spent the year purchasing more and more physical possessions and fewer and fewer services. they need (usually a clothing item) and one thing that they want.

For your extended family, bring up the conversation now. Get on the phone with your parents or siblings, and see if they think trying something new would be fun this year. In many cases, people will be relieved that they don't have to shop for yet another Christmas gift. Formulate a plan and try it out.

Honestly, I don't think I've ever talked to someone who has moved toward an experience-based holiday season and regretted the decision.

Experiences last longer than physical possessions. And we're all hungry for a greater connection with each other after 18 months of sacrificing just that.

Maybe you'll hate it and change back next year, but I doubt it.

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

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- Mike Lindell

