

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND &

BODY

MANUEL ORTS/SHUTTERSTOCK

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Basic Skills for Being a Healthy Human

The world's oldest medical tradition highlights what we should know to sustain mind and body

EMMA SUTTIE

"Chinese medicine" is a bit of a misnomer. When I began my studies in acupuncture, I thought I was going to learn about medicine. Instead, we learned about health, at least as the foundation.

Although Chinese medicine has a robust understanding of disease pathology and the many avenues to its treatment and cure, it more importantly has a profound comprehension of what it means to be healthy—not just in body, but also in mind and spirit.

This focus on health seems to be sadly lacking in the Western approach. In Western medicine, the focus is on disease, and medical students spend many years in school studying the body in a diseased state and the diseases themselves.

This difference in focus also determines each one's approach. One treats the human being and the other treats the disease.

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A great doctor will empower you to take ownership of your own health.

Eastern medicine teaches us that health is achieved when the body, mind, and spirit are all in a state of harmony.

Causes and Treatments for Long-Haul COVID

Ask a Doctor: What is post-COVID-19 syndrome, also called long-haul COVID, and how is it treated?

ANN CORSON

Anywhere from 10 percent to 80 percent of people experience prolonged illness and symptoms after COVID-19 infection, which may last for months. This means that anywhere from 5 to 40 million people around the world may be suffering from post-COVID syndrome or long-haul COVID.

Persistent symptoms have appeared in patients of all ages, even children who only had minor COVID-19 infections, regardless of whether or not hospitalization was required. Additionally, there is no firm consensus re-

COVID-19 is not the first coronavirus to result in long-term symptoms.

garding which risk factors make patients more likely to acquire long-haul COVID, although a Mayo Clinic study found that three-quarters of those with long-haul COVID were women.

Symptoms of Long COVID

In a May 2021 review article in *Infectious Diseases*, author Shin J. Yong summarized the published literature to date on the symptomatology, pathophysiology, risk factors, and treatments for people experiencing persistent or unusual symptoms after being sick with COVID-19.

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COVID-19 can be a severe illness for some people but even worse can be long-term symptoms that follow afterwards.



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As spring enters its final push, we too can feel the pressure to get outside and move our bodies.

CHINESE WISDOM FOR SEASONAL LIVING

While Plants Enjoy Spring Rains, We Can Enjoy Spring Tea

Solar Term: 'Grain Rain' (April 20 to May 4)

MOREEN LIAO

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

Solar Term: 'Grain Rain'

2022 Dates: April 20 to May 4

As spring progresses, the rains and humidity also increase. This moisture supports life. "Grain Rain" means it's time for a lot of rain to nourish all grains. It puts pressure on grain stalks to produce, on flowers to bloom, and on humans to get outdoors and release uncomfortable feelings.

Heat and humidity are both high within our bodies during Grain Rain (April 20-May 4), which can lead to nerve pain, joint pain, and a sense of pressure, as well as feelings of anxiety and anger. People who are prone to water retention may feel lower body muscle tightness, sore joints, and swelling during this time.

It's important to pay attention to our physical and mental health and to manage any negative emotions. The change of season and allergies can be very hard on some people. There is a widespread misconception that rates of suicide spike around Christmas time, but historically the rates are actually higher around mid-April to early May—a stark reminder to take extra care of ourselves and others at this time.

Grain Rain is the last of the six solar terms of spring.

Take Time for Tea

Grain Rain isn't only the time when grains ripen; it's also when tea growers enjoy their first harvest—a healthy reward for their hard work. Enjoying freshly brewed tea from the tea gardens is a popular activity throughout Southeast Asia at this time.

However, a large amount of rainfall is not good for growing tea, as it can damage the plant's delicate leaves. Warm temperatures and excess rainfall make the plants grow too fast, which affects the taste of fine and premium teas—much like grapes for wine.

Tea harvested before Grain Rain is called yu qian cha, which means "tea before the heavy rain." Teas from this time are most beneficial for hydrating and preventing inflammation in the body, and are believed to enhance health and longevity.

The Peony Rebellion

Most flowering plants have shown their best blooms before this solar term, with the exception of the peony, which is the flower associated with Grain Rain.

According to Chinese legend, in the deep of winter, Empress Wu Zetian of the Tang Dynasty once ordered that all of the flowers in her royal garden in the ancient capital city of Chang'an were to bloom.

The flowers, afraid of the power of the empress, all bloomed, except for the peony. This enraged the empress, who ordered that the peony be moved to the city of Luoyang. Since then, the plant has flourished there.

Living in Harmony With 'Grain Rain' There are many things you can do to harmonize with this solar term:

- Visit open spaces with grand views to help relax the eyes and the mind.
- Get exercise and sweat a bit. This is good for improving blood circulation and reducing pressure.
- Avoid going out in the rain to protect yourself against catching a cold.
- Massage or stimulate the tips of the fingers to help yourself stay calm. Using the nail of one thumb, press hard on the fingertips of the opposite hand. These 10 points are called shi xuan xue, which means "10 relief valve points." This can bring immediate relief when one feels upset, angry, or depressed.

It is important to pay attention to our physical and mental health and to manage any negative emotions.

Seasonal Foods

Beneficial foods at this time include fish, Japanese natto beans, asparagus, white or black sesame seeds, pear, red beans, tofu, tempeh, wheat germ, and vegetables with white-colored roots, such as yam, or radishes.

Getting lots of vitamin B and zinc can relieve the uncomfortable feelings of this season and boost energy levels. To protect the liver, avoid sour-tasting foods. Avoid spicy and deep-fried foods as well.

Ginger, vanilla, and citrus peel are helpful herbs to consume. Green and floral teas—such as calendula, rose, jasmine, and chrysanthemum—are very beneficial at this time.

Epoch Times contributor Moreen Liao is a descendant of four generations of traditional Chinese medicine doctors. She's also a certified aromatherapist, former dean of an Institute in Sydney, and the founder of Heritage Formulations, a complete solution for TCM professionals. Visit RootsTCM.com for details.



Drinking tea and eating ginger are especially beneficial to you at this time of year.

Causes and Treatments for Long-Haul COVID

Ask a Doctor: What is post-COVID-19 syndrome, also called long-haul COVID, and how is it treated?

Continued from Page 1

"While the precise definition of long COVID may be lacking, the most common symptoms reported in many studies are fatigue and dyspnea [shortness of breath] that last for months after acute COVID-19," Yong said. Other less typical symptoms include problems with thinking and processing information, psychiatric symptoms, headache, muscle aches and pains, chest and joint pains, abnormalities of smell and taste, cough, hair loss, trouble sleeping, wheezing, runny nose, coughing up mucus from lungs, heart problems, and digestive issues.

Interestingly, COVID-19 isn't the first coronavirus to result in long-term symptoms. Survivors of the viruses MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) and SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) also reported experiencing symptoms of fatigue, muscle pain, and psychiatric impairments for several years.

Given the experience gained since Yong's paper was published, the FrontLine COVID-19 Critical Care Alliance (FLCCC Alliance) and OneDayMD.com have provided a more complete list of long-haul COVID symptoms, which include even more body systems.

Pathophysiology of Long-Haul COVID

Long-haul COVID may result from direct tissue damage, persistent inflammation from spike protein particles, immune system dysregulation, or the development of autoimmunity.

The FLCCC Alliance describes post-COVID-19 syndrome as similar to chronic inflammatory response syndrome (CIRS), found in 25 percent of the population who have prolonged exposure to indoor toxic molds; to chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), which has toxic and infectious etiologies; as well as to mast cell activation syndrome (MCAS), which often accompanies systemic inflammation from any number of causes.

Yong's paper reviewed studies showing that pulmonary fibrosis (scarring of the lungs) which can be seen in long COVID sufferers may be due to the fact that SARS-CoV-2 triggers inflammatory mast cell responses alongside other immune cells in COVID-19 patients. Mast cells are immune cells that are mostly associated with allergic symptoms.

Yong also describes how gut microbiome disruption (i.e. gut dysbiosis) seen in patients with COVID-19 has been shown to persist after infection. Abnormalities in the microbiome in the intestines have been implicated in numerous diseases related to chronic inflammation. The influence of gut bacteria on brain chemistry may account for some of long-haul COVID's neurological symptoms.

On pages 46-47 of the FLCCC Alliance's protocols overview, four possible pathophysiological mechanisms, summarizing the current scientific knowledge, are proposed to explain post-COVID-19 syndrome. These include:

1. Immune cells in the lungs called macrophages may remain active, fighting the enemy that is no longer there. This could account for the problems patients have with breathing, ongoing cough, inability to exercise due to feeling short of breath.
2. Other immune cells called monocytes and microglia may also remain in fight mode activation due to the persistence of pieces of dead virus or debris such as the spike protein inside these cells that keeps the flames of inflammation burning. This could account for the overall feeling of fatigue, achiness, brain fog, and joint pains.
3. Damage to both large and small blood vessels with the formation of blood clots and/or autoimmune attack by the immune system against brain proteins could cause the neurological symptoms that seem to be common in severe COVID-19 disease.
4. Mast cells, which are present all over the body, including the brain, may get activated and result in mast cell activation syndrome (MCAS). The brain fog, cognitive impairment, and general fatigue reported in long-haul COVID may be due to mast cell-related inflammation of the brain and its blood vessels.



Abnormalities in the microbiome are often a factor in diseases related to chronic inflammation.

Persistent symptoms have appeared in patients of all ages, even children who only had minor COVID-19 infections, regardless of whether or not hospitalization was required.

While the precise definition of long COVID may be lacking, the most common symptoms reported in many studies are fatigue and dyspnea [shortness of breath] that last for months after acute COVID-19.

Shin J. Yong

As early as June 2020, former Stanford researcher Bruce Patterson M.D., reported that he had identified the cause of the 'cytokine storm' seen in COVID-19, profound elevations of the inflammatory molecules, plasma IL-6, and CCL5 (RANTES). A June 2021 paper describing his findings was published in *Frontiers in Immunology*.

A second paper by Patterson et al., published July 2021, also in *Frontiers in Immunology*, demonstrated that the SARS-CoV-2 S1 protein (a portion of the spike protein) persisted in the immune cells called non-classical monocytes of patients with long-haul COVID for up to 15 months after initial infections. These monocytes, according to Patterson, are capable of causing inflammation throughout the entire body.

The article makes it clear that the S1 protein found in these patients appeared to be debris left over from initial infection with the virus and was not the result of ongoing, persistent viral growth and replication. Therefore, it is unlikely that long-haul COVID patients are infectious to others. Rather, the scientific evidence indicates that these patients' immune systems are stuck on overdrive, pouring out inflammatory molecules in response to the persistence of the S1 spike protein fragment.

An article in *Circulation Research* published in March 2021 showed that the spike protein itself, in the absence of the rest of the virus, can cause inflammation and damage to the endothelium or the cell lining of the vascular system. This damage leads to the development of blood clots, which can cause heart attack and stroke.

In a July 2021 interview with *News Voice*, Dr. Robert Malone, inventor of mRNA technology, said the spike protein "is active in manipulating the biology of the cells that coat the inside of your blood vessels—vascular endothelial cells, in part through its interaction with ACE-2 [angiotensin-2 receptor], which controls contraction in the blood vessels, blood pressure, and other things."

Dr. Peter McCullough, at the 78th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons on Oct. 2, 2021, described the spike protein as "a deadly protein."

It may be, therefore, that the spike protein portion of the SAR-CoV-2 virus or its fragments, such as the S1 portion, are responsible for much of the pathological findings in long-haul COVID. The spike protein or its fragments can circulate in the body after infection and cause inflammation and blood clotting in any part of the body where it accumulates.

Diagnosis of Chronic COVID-19 Syndrome

Yong's review article described how patients with post-COVID-19 syndrome had elevated levels of pro-inflammatory markers in the blood such as C-reactive protein; interleukin-6; ferritin; D-dimer as well as lowered levels of the white blood cells known as lymphocytes.

Patterson et al. characterized a group of inflammatory markers they feel are diagnostic of long COVID syndrome after which the bio-analytical laboratory Innovative Bioanalysis, working with Patterson's company InCellDX, developed the Cytokine14 testing panel to help diagnose those with long-haul COVID. For information about this test, please email LH@InnovativeBioanalysis.com or call 1-949-922-3455.

Treatment

The overall goal of treatment should be to block the spike protein or its fragment from interacting with cells throughout the body, to reduce systemic inflammation and lower the thermostat (to turn down the heat so to speak), to balance the formation and degradation of clotting and remove excess fibrin or sludge-like debris in the blood vessels, and to eliminate symptoms.

German researchers have shown that dandelion and pomegranate peel (not the juice) inhibit the spike protein by preventing the S1 segment from binding to the ACE-2 receptors on cell surfaces.

Indian researchers have found that N-acetyl cysteine (NAC) is able to produce a "threefold weakening in the binding affinity of spike protein with ACE-2 receptor."

An article in *Circulation Research* described how the endothelium (cells lining blood vessels), if damaged by the spike protein, could be "rescued by treatment with N-acetyl-L-cysteine [NAC]."

The World Council for Health, an NGO made up of a "global coalition of health-focused organizations and civil society groups," has published a comprehensive guide that includes sourcing and dosing information, on how to detox from the spike protein, reduce inflammation, and buffer clotting issues. Choices include ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine, vitamin C, NAC, pine needles, neem, dandelion leaf extract, fennel tea, star anise tea, boswellia, black cumin, quercetin, nattokinase, and many others.

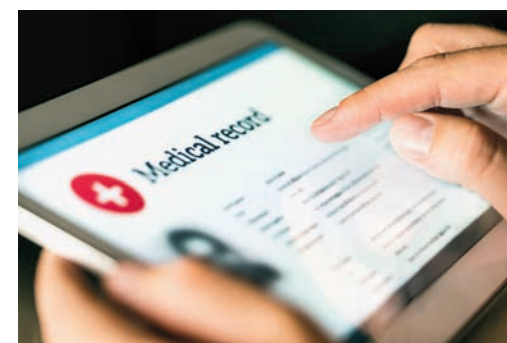
The FLCCC Alliance, in addition to its extensive COVID-19 treatment protocols, has a specific protocol for long-haul COVID patients. These therapies, which rely heavily on repurposed prescription medications, include ivermectin, prednisone, low dose naltrexone (LDN), omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, fluvastatin, curcumin, melatonin, among others.

Dr. Patterson treats long-haul COVID patients with a 4-6 week course of three drugs. The first is Maraviroc (one of the drugs used to treat HIV), which stops monocytes from moving around the body causing damage. Second are statin drugs (cholesterol-lowering), which stop the monocytes from attaching to endothelial cells (lining of blood vessels). Third is ivermectin, which kills parasites and viruses, and modulates the immune system in a positive way.

Treating physicians may prescribe non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or try pharmaceutical drugs (NSAIDs) repurposed from the treatment of chronic inflammatory response syndrome (CIRS), chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME), postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS), and mast cell activation syndrome (MCAS). Most agree that personalized graded light aerobic exercises, physical rehabilitation programs, and breathing exercises can help post-COVID-19 patients recover.

In my own medical practice, I have been successful in treating long-haul COVID patients with a combination of enzymes that break up blood clots and debris, nutritional and herbal anti-inflammatories, herbal antibiotics, nutritional supplements, and pharmaceutical medications. These are the same modalities that I use to treat my chronically ill patients suffering from problems with tick-borne diseases, mold-induced illness, environmental toxicities, microscopic blood clotting or hypercoagulability, and genetic detoxification problems.

Dr. Ann Corson holds an MD degree from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in 1982 and is board certified in family medicine and integrative holistic medicine. Her solo practice in Philadelphia is devoted full time to the treatment of patients suffering from all forms of chronic disease. In 2008, Corson joined Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH) to help raise awareness of China's live forced organ harvesting of innocent prisoners of conscience, primarily Falun Gong practitioners. Since 2016, she has been the editor-in-chief of DAFOH's newsletter.



Long-haul COVID may result from tissue damage, persistent inflammation from spike protein, immune system dysregulation, and autoimmunity.

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FOOD AS MEDICINE

Cooking for Healing The Medicinal Magic of Chicory

Every part of this plant is edible and offers healing effects

SINA MCCULLOUGH

Herbs and spices were used by ancient cultures to heal the body, mind, and spirit. Roughly 80 percent of people worldwide still use traditional or ancient medicine, and more than 80 percent of pharmaceuticals are derived or developed from natural products, including plants. In this series, we'll explore the healing power of herbs and spices while learning how to incorporate these ancient remedies into our daily diet.

Did you know that chicory was used by ancient cultures to treat malaria? Interestingly, scientists have recently confirmed that this herbaceous plant does, in fact, contain antimicrobial compounds.

Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*) is a flowering plant from the dandelion family that usually has bright blue flowers. The medicinal use of chicory dates back to prehistoric times. Evidence suggests that it was grown by the ancient Egyptians as a medicinal plant to boost metabolism and promote digestion. Egyptians also consumed it as a vegetable and coffee substitute, and occasionally used it as animal forage.

In addition to the Egyptians, chicory has been used by ancient cultures around the globe to treat various ailments ranging from digestive issues to diabetes and rheumatism. For instance, in Lithuania, the juice has been used as remedy for cancer of the uterus and tumors. In Turkey, ointment has been made from the roots and used for wound healing, and a decoction prepared from the roots has been used to relieve kidney stones and fight cancer. The whole plant has been used to treat kidney disorders and diabetes in Morocco. In South America, leaves, stems, and roots have been made into a tea and used to treat jaundice, and chicory syrup has been used as a tonic and purifying

medication for infants. Meanwhile, the seeds have been used in India to protect the liver from damage.

Science Catches Up to Ancient Wisdom

While the healing power of chicory has been harnessed among ancient cultures for thousands of years, modern medicine has been slow to recognize its benefits. However, the perception of chicory is changing, as scientists have begun validating the wisdom of the ancients through studies that demonstrate numerous healing abilities.

Promotes a Healthy Gut Microbiome

Chicory can boost microbial diversity and abundance in the gastrointestinal tract, which helps stave off chronic and acute diseases. For instance, a 2011 study published in the *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition* concluded that daily consumption of chicory for 28 days significantly increased the total fecal bacteria and bifidobacterial concentrations in its elderly subjects.

The researchers attributed these health improvements to the abundance of inulin in chicory root. Inulin is a prebiotic, which means it promotes the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gastrointestinal tract. That's why inulin or chicory root fiber are commonly added to probiotic supplements and yogurt. Because chicory root is a rich source of inulin, it can help balance the microbiome and thereby improve health and well-being.

Improves Constipation

Inulin in chicory can also relieve constipation, according to a 2017 study in the *International Journal of Food Science and Nutrition*. Consumption of chicory-derived inulin for four weeks resulted in a significant increase in stool frequency of constipated adults along

The perception of chicory is changing, as scientists have begun validating the wisdom of the ancients through studies that demonstrate numerous healing abilities.

To find the studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at TheEpochTimes.com

with softer stools. The 2011 study found the elderly also reported better digestion and less constipation.

Inulin isn't digestible by the human small intestine and therefore is fermented by bacteria in the colon resulting in the production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFA). SCFAs stimulate peristalsis, or contraction of the muscles in the gastrointestinal tract, which helps move feces out of the body. During the fermentation process, the water content in the colon is increased, which also stimulates peristalsis.

Kills Cancer Cells

Chicory has been reported to kill breast cancer cells in vitro. According to a study published in *Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology* in 2011, chicory extract not only stopped the growth of prostate, colorectal, and breast cancer cells in vitro, it induced cancer cell death. Chicory has also demonstrated a cytotoxic effect on leukemia and melanoma.

Prevents DNA Damage

Chicory was shown to suppress the oxidative degradation of DNA in calf thymus, according to a study published in the *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* in 1995.

Helps Prevent and Manage Diabetes

A study published in 2015 in the *Journal of Traditional and Complementary Medicine* concluded that "chicory root extract could delay or prevent the early onset of diabetes mellitus."

After consuming chicory root extract daily for four weeks, hemoglobin A1c significantly decreased, which indicated improved regulation of blood sugar levels.

In 2016, a second study concluded that supplementation with chicory for two months resulted in reduced levels of fasting blood glucose and hemoglobin A1c, as well as a reduction in systolic and diastolic blood pressure among women with Type 2 diabetes.

Furthermore, supplementation with chicory seed reportedly "ameliorates the disease progression" of Type 2 diabetes, according to a study published in *Phytotherapy Research* in 2020. Hemoglobin A1c, inflammation, oxidative stress, and hypertriglyceridemia were reduced following 12 weeks of supplementation.

Helps Manage Osteoarthritis (OA)

"Chicory root has a potential role in the management of OA," according to a study published in *BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders* in 2010. After consuming chicory root for one month, patients reported improvement in pain and stiffness.

Helps Prevent and Reverse Chronic and Autoimmune Diseases

A study published in 2014 demonstrated that chicory root possesses anti-inflammatory activity by inhibiting inflammatory cytokines, boosting antioxidant potential, and acting as a free radical scavenger. A possible mechanism for the anti-inflammatory property of chicory could be its rich source of polyphenols, which are compounds naturally found in plants that reduce inflammation. Since inflammation is associated with the development and progression of chronic and autoimmune diseases, the ability of chicory to reduce inflammation could play a role in the prevention and reversal of those conditions.

For instance, a study published in the *International Journal of Preventive Medicine* reported that chicory root protected mice against acute pancreatitis, an inflammatory condition of the pancreas.

Promotes Heart Health

A study published in *Phytotherapy Research* concluded that chicory had antithrombotic and anti-inflammatory effects after subjects consumed chicory coffee every day for one week. Additionally, significant improvements

were seen in red blood cell deformability, which is an indication of how well the body can respond to inflammation. The researchers concluded that the polyphenols contained in chicory were responsible for the heart health benefits. For instance, chicory is a rich source of caffeic acid, which is a polyphenol that inhibits platelet aggregation.

Promotes Liver Health

Chicory inulin supplementation can improve liver function. For instance, a study based on a randomized controlled trial was published in 2016 in *Primary Care Diabetes* that reported improvement in liver function tests, including aspartate aminotransferase (AST) and alkaline phosphatase (ALP), following two months of supplementation with chicory inulin among patients with Type 2 diabetes.

Promotes Wound Healing

Chicory has been reported to possess potent wound healing activity. A study published in the *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* concluded that chicory contains "potent wound healing activity" and attributed the finding to the methanolic extract of chicory's roots.

Fights Parasitic Infections

Chicory has "great potential" against parasites, according to a 2021 review article published in the *Journal of Molecular*. This is a traditional use of chicory. In Afghanistan, chicory root extract is used as an ancient plant remedy to fight malaria, which is caused by a parasite. Science has now confirmed the presence of antimalarial compounds in chicory root, including lactucin and lactucopicrin.

Fights Bacterial Infections

Chicory contains compounds with antibacterial activity, such as oxalic acid, shikimic acid, and quinic acid. These acids reportedly fight bacteria, including *Streptococcus* mutans, by decreasing biofilm formation and adhesion of the bacteria to the cells, according to an article published in the *Journal of Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. A study published in the *Arabian Journal of*

Chemistry concluded that chicory seed extracts contain antimicrobial activity against four "pathogenic" microorganisms: *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Candida albicans*.

Fights Fungal Infections

Meanwhile, a comparative study published in *Mycopathologia* showed chicory root contains antifungal properties against organisms that are responsible for most fungal skin infections, including *Trichophyton tonsurans*, *T. rubrum*, and *T. violaceum*.

Fights Viral Infections

Chicory also contains compounds, such as caffeic acid, that have antiviral properties. In fact, chicory has been identified in an article in *RSC Advances* as a potential therapeutic agent against COVID-19.

How to Add Chicory to Your Diet

Chicory can be foraged in most areas of North America, Asia, and Europe. Even though chicory in its whole form isn't commonly found in U.S. grocery stores, the whole plant is edible:

- The root is consumed as a coffee substitute, vegetable, and for inulin extraction on an industrial scale.
- Chicory leaves are consumed as a fresh or cooked vegetable.
- Chicory flowers can be consumed fresh or cooked.

All parts of the chicory plant are used in traditional medicines globally. Although phytochemicals and other healing nutrients are found throughout the plant, they are concentrated in the root.

Dr. Sina McCullough is the creator of the online program, "GO WILD: How I Reverse Chronic & Autoimmune Disease," and author of "Hands Off My Food," and "Beyond Labels." She holds a doctorate in nutrition from the University of California-Davis. She is a master herbalist, Gluten Free Society certified practitioner, and homeschool mom of three.

Simple Ways to Eat Chicory

ALL IMAGES BY GETTY IMAGES



Boil young chicory roots for a side dish: Boil young roots or cook in butter until tender and serve with an herbal sauce or drizzle with butter or avocado oil.



Add young chicory leaves and flowers to your salad: Young leaves can be added to salad, either alone or alongside other leafy greens, in addition to the flowers. The bitterness is well complemented by other salad ingredients, including: nuts, apples, blue cheese or balsamic vinegar.



Add young chicory roots to soup or stew: If using young roots, simply cut into cubes and toss into a soup or stew. If using mature roots and you dislike the bitter flavor, remove the bitter core and then add to a soup or stew.



Sauté chicory leaves: Sauté young leaves in butter or olive oil and serve as a side dish. If too bitter, soak the leaves in boiling water before serving.



Add young chicory leaves to a sandwich: Young leaves pair well in a sandwich alongside other greens.



Make a chicory decoction: Add cold water to the plant material, boil and allow to simmer for 5–10 min then strain and consume. Chicory decoctions are traditionally made from either the whole plant or individual plant parts.

CHICORY ROOT COFFEE

If you're looking for a coffee substitute, chicory root coffee may be your answer. Chicory root provides a smooth, creamy texture and flavor that mimics coffee but doesn't contain caffeine.

Caffeine can stimulate the fight or flight response, which can increase anxiety, blood pressure, and nervousness. Caffeine can also disrupt your sleep cycle, increase the chance of depression in adolescents, and alter estrogen levels.

By contrast, chicory root coffee provides numerous health benefits while still offering the feel and taste of a cup of coffee.

If you've visited New Orleans, you've likely encountered chicory coffee. During the American Civil War, Louisianans began adding chicory root to their coffee due to the Union naval blockades, which cut off shipments of coffee to their port. Chicory coffee with hot milk, known as café au lait, became an essential part of the history of New Orleans and is still a beloved tradition in Louisiana. Below is my modified version of café au lait.

Please do not try this recipe if you are allergic or sensitive to any of the ingredients.

MAKES 1 CUP

(Choose organic when possible)

1 tablespoon roasted chicory root granules

1/2 cup filtered water

1/2 cup milk from A2/A2, 100 percent grass-fed cows or dairy alternative

1 tablespoon coconut oil (optional)

1 teaspoon gelatin from grass-finished cows (optional)

1 teaspoon local honey (optional)

Sprinkle of cardamom or cinnamon for a warm, spicy flavor (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

Put chicory root granules in stainless steel tea ball and place in coffee mug.

Add boiling water to coffee mug; cover and steep for 5 minutes.

While steeping, warm milk in stainless steel pot or pan (do not boil).

Remove tea ball from mug and add warm milk directly to mug.

Add coconut oil, gelatin, honey, and spice, if desired.

Stir well; enjoy warm.

PRECAUTIONS AND POSSIBLE INTERACTIONS

Pregnant or breastfeeding women should consult their healthcare provider before consuming chicory. Chicory coffee is not recommended for pregnant women because it may trigger menstrual bleeding or miscarriage. If you are allergic to birch pollen, ragweed, marigolds, daisies, or related plants, you may experience an allergic reaction to chicory. Chicory is generally well tolerated; however, some people may experience symptoms such as flatulence, belching, abdominal pain, intestinal sounds, and bloating.



MADE TO MOVE

Fit As Ever at 73

This epic health regime has let me keep up with 16 grandchildren

JANET PFEIFFER

At 73 years old, I have absolutely no health or weight issues. I am a living testimony that aging isn't synonymous with aches and pains, reduced physical activity, or

lower quality of life.

My story of fitness began 40 years ago with inspiration from the 1979 Michael Douglas film "Running."

Even though I wasn't overweight, at 33, I felt like I wasn't in the best physical condition. I'd always been athletic, but as each of my four children was born, there was less time for me to take care of myself. On Jan. 20, 1982, after watching Douglas's character strive toward Olympic gold, I was inspired to begin my own journey toward better muscle tone and endurance.

On day one, I ran one mile. It took some effort, but I thoroughly enjoyed it and returned to the pavement the next morning. Every day thereafter, I strove to run farther.

Eventually I began competing in five- and 10-kilometer races and worked my way up to a half-marathon. When an undiagnosed medical condition nearly sidelined me, my



I can't stop myself from getting older but I can certainly prevent myself from ever getting old and I have every intention of doing precisely that.

doctor told me I'd have to give up running, so I switched to power walking.

I have zero health issues and am energetic and fit enough to keep up with my 16 grandchildren.

Power walking quickly became my passion. Eventually I found myself rising each morning at 3:30 a.m. and walking 12 to 15 miles. I was asked to join a team of competitive race walkers and in 1994 and 1995, I completed and won medals in two marathons, becoming one of the top female race walkers in my division in the country.

On Jan. 20, 2022, I celebrated my 40th

anniversary of power walking every single day—yes, every single day. I have not missed even one day in 40 years. I've walked with broken bones, after surgery, in snowstorms, and in temperatures below zero and above 100 degrees. I am proud to say I've collectively logged over 160,000 miles! That's the equivalent of traversing the circumference of the Earth six times. (Take that Forrest Gump!) I know of no other person in the world who can make this claim.

I turned 73 in February and have maintained my ideal body weight my entire adult life. I have zero health issues and am energetic and fit enough to keep up with my 16 grandchildren. I have also expanded my fitness routine to include push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, curls, squats, lunges, rowing, yoga, an inversion table, and more.

Although I walk fewer daily miles now,



Janet just turned 73 and has been able to maintain her ideal body weight her entire adult life.

I'll continue my routine for the remainder of my life. I can't stop myself from getting older, but I can certainly prevent myself from ever getting old, and I have every intention of doing precisely that.

I hope my story inspires people everywhere to get fit and stay fit—regardless of their age. That effort needn't be as extreme as mine, but here are a few tips to help you live a long, powerful life:

1. Find an activity(s) that you enjoy. If you don't enjoy it, you'll make excuses to quit.
2. Change things up if you'd like. It's OK to add or modify your routine; be creative with your workout.
3. Make certain you're getting a total body workout. Biking is great, but you have an upper body that also needs attention.
4. Set up and adhere to a workout schedule. Choose the days and times that work,

and be consistent.

5. Connect with others who share your passion. Support, but don't compare yourself to each other.
6. Remember, fitness isn't a fad, it is a lifetime commitment. Just as brushing your teeth or eating healthy are daily activities, so is fitness. Fads don't work; lifestyle changes do.

Here's to staying young as you age!

Janet Pfeiffer, president and CEO of Pfeiffer Power Seminars, is an international motivational and inspirational speaker, award-winning author, Fortune 500 trainer, globally syndicated radio host on iHeart Radio ("Anger 911" and "Between You and God"), TV personality, spiritual life coach, columnist, former contributor to Dr. Phil Show, and more.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Basic Skills for Being a Healthy Human

The world's oldest medical tradition highlights what we should know to sustain mind and body

Continued from Page 1

Doctors may be interested in disease, but patients are not. Patients are interested in how to be healthy so that disease never comes to visit. Eastern medicine has always taught people how to live a healthy life, first and foremost. To achieve this, there are some core practices that we must be aware of, understand, and ultimately live by if we are to succeed.

Right now, this wisdom seems to be needed more than ever. People want to be empowered to participate in their own health. Chinese medicine clearly defines a human being's essential needs and relationships (to nature, seasons, and food) that must be navigated properly in order to sustain health. And getting there is up to us. Sometimes we need guidance and support, but ultimately, we are responsible for our own health and well-being, and Chinese medicine can empower us on this journey.

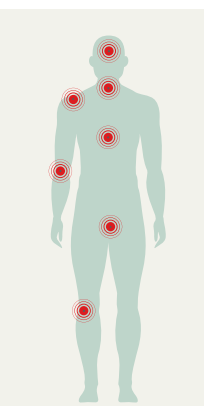
Attune to Emotions

In the Eastern view, we are more than our physical bodies. What we feel and how we process those emotions are essential to living a healthy life. Human emotions are complex, and our medicine, because of its emphasis on quantifiable, physical phenomena, doesn't always acknowledge the connection between our emotions and health. (Thankfully, that does seem to be changing as we unravel some of the consequences of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and stress.)

In Western culture, we have a tendency to avoid unpleasant feelings, and on the surface, that's understandable. I mean, who wants to wallow in grief, anxiety, or fear? Achieving emotional intelligence is the goal. That means developing an awareness that situations in your life will evoke emotional responses (which is normal),

Nature has become a place we 'go' and not something we are intrinsically a part of.

YUMEN PEARSON/ISTOCK



ALLOPATHIC MEDICINE

In Western medicine, the focus is on disease and medical students spend many years in school studying the body in a diseased state and the diseases themselves.



The clues our bodies send are an information delivery system we need to tune into.

then becoming aware of the emotion provoked, acknowledging it, and taking the time to work through it. This simple process is how to begin sorting through our emotions healthily. To help process what you're feeling, you could talk to a trusted friend, write about it in a journal, or simply take some time to sit with it. Taking this time is something we don't often consider, but it's an integral part of health maintenance.

Harmonize With Nature

Living in harmony with nature may seem like a strange concept in our era of indoor living. Nature has become a place we "go" and not something we are intrinsically part of. But not that long ago, our ancestors did live in harmony with the natural world, and life ebbed and flowed with the changing seasons. Eastern medicine grew out of this harmonious interplay between humans and the natural world. Many of our modern diseases are rooted in our constant exposure to unnatural substances and disconnect from the soothing beauty of the natural world.

It seems common sense to say it, but as outdoor temperatures, available foods, and

sunlight change—along with the activity of every plant and animal in the world—so time will human beings change.

Eastern medicine teaches that we should adapt our eating habits and behaviors to this flow of the seasons.

Spring signifies a new awakening, with young plants pushing up toward the sky. Spring's expansive energies make it the perfect time to take on new habits and goals. You'd even be wise to delay the start date for your New Year's resolutions until you have spring's assistance. Spring is associated with the liver and anger, making spring the best season to deal with any unresolved feelings of anger, resentment, or frustration. Spring is the best time to seek personal development and growth and make plans for the future. Cooking should be of shorter duration and at higher temperatures. The color associated with spring and the liver is green, so eating green foods is most beneficial at this time of year.

Summer, associated with the heart and joy, is when energies are at their pinnacle and is the best time of year to be outside and active, enjoying the sun. Rising earlier and going to bed later maximize the

benefit of the sun's nourishing rays. Eating lighter fare and more raw foods like salads allows us to benefit from their cooling effects, which are important in the year's hottest months.

Fall's changing leaves signal a turn inward and a slowing down, preparing us for winter. Fall is associated with the lungs, and its energy is "letting go." Fall is the best time to complete any unfinished projects to make room for new experiences. Cleaning, reorganizing, and donating are perfect fall activities and help us to let go of anything we no longer need.

Winter is associated with the kidneys and represents our deepest, most fundamental energies. This is the time to become less active and be more reflective. Winter is the season of rest, so going to bed earlier and rising later help to conserve energy in these cold months. Cooking foods longer on lower heat, as one does for soups and stews, imbues them with more warming properties, protecting us from the external chill.

Eat Your Medicine

Modern research has shown that many

diseases we attributed to genetics are now known to be largely preventable through diet and lifestyle. Coronary artery disease (CAD), ischemic stroke (a stroke caused by limited blood flow to a particular artery in the brain), Type 2 diabetes, and many types of cancer are some of the most prevalent—and preventable—causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide.

Research finds that the Mediterranean diet is associated with a lower risk of cancer, Type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. One study from the New England Journal of Medicine shows that people eating the Mediterranean diet had a 30 percent lower incidence of cardiovascular events than the control group. The Mediterranean diet generally refers to one high in fruit, nuts, seeds, vegetables, legumes, and cereals, while limiting the amount of meat and dairy products.

Another well-documented example of lifestyle and dietary changes impacting disease rates comes from Finland. In 1972, Finland had the highest mortality rate from CVD (cardiovascular disease) in the world. Officials there examined environmental factors and made changes such as increas-

ing the availability of low-fat dairy products, enacting anti-smoking legislation, and improving meals served in schools. In five years, significant advancements were made, and by 1992, CVD mortality rates for men ages 35 to 64 had dropped by 57 percent. Recent data show a 75 percent decrease in mortality from CVD.

Using food as medicine is one of the pillars of Eastern medicine. As a consequence, the Chinese, over many millennia, documented the healing properties of foods, attributing a thermal nature to many as well. Chinese physicians knew well and taught their patients the healing properties of foods that grew in their communities, and how they could be used to heal illnesses and fortify the body against disease. In traditional Chinese culture, eating "superfoods" was a way of life.

Human emotions are complex, and our medicine, because of its emphasis on quantifiable, physical phenomena, doesn't always acknowledge the connection between our emotions and health.

Listen to Your Body

Our bodies speak a language we have gradually forgotten. We routinely confuse thirst for hunger, frustration for fatigue, and stress for malnutrition. The clues our bodies send are an information delivery system that can tell us what we need and if something is wrong. Hunger, fatigue, sore muscles, sweaty palms, or a racing heart-beat are all ways our bodies communicate with us.

Some of this communication happens beneath the level of our conscious awareness,

but some does not. Pangs in our stomach signal we need to eat, fatigue lets us know we need rest, and palpitations and sweaty palms may tell us that the boy we like is close by. If we feel energized by exercise and exhausted by candy, these are key lessons to navigating ourselves toward better living.

When it comes to health, the signals the body sends will be subtle at first—like a mild headache. If we don't pay attention, they may get louder and the pain may become intense until we pay attention. Our bodies are always speaking to us; it behooves us to listen.

Health Is A Daily Practice

In our society, many of us have stopped listening to our bodies and are told we should listen to doctors instead. This suggests we don't know what we need and should leave our health decisions to someone else. In the Eastern view, the physician works with the patient and trusts in the wisdom of the body to help it to heal when needed. But the emphasis is always on living a healthy lifestyle so that we can avoid illness whenever possible.

Eastern medicine teaches us that health is achieved when the body, mind, and spirit are all in a state of harmony. Maintaining this harmonious state is realized through being mindful, and tending to ourselves on a daily basis. With this constant attention to the details of our lives, we can make small adjustments and easily correct anything that might be askew. These tweaks make larger adjustments unnecessary and dramatically reduce the chance of a nasty surprise. The practice of incrementally improving our daily lifestyle is one of the most profound ways we can take care of ourselves and ensure we live long, healthy, happy lives.

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 is a lover of the natural world, martial arts, and a good cup of tea.

JIM CRAIG/MYLE/GETTY IMAGES



MINDSET MATTERS

A Better Way to Make Hard Choices

Don't seek the best imagined future, seek the best path to growth

NANCY COLIER

Making a difficult decision can be overwhelming and paralyzing for some people. Decisions are difficult because we want a certain outcome but don't know which choice will deliver it. And so we fret, ruminate, think and think and think some more, all in an effort to figure it out.

We get caught in thoughts about what could go wrong with each choice and talk ourselves around in circles. But all this thinking keeps us anxious, distracted, and stuck. In the end, our indecision guarantees that nothing happens—or that we have no active role in what happens.

Like many people, you may believe there's a right and wrong decision to be made. You may imagine a set of predetermined events written in the universe's playbook with vastly different realities waiting to unfold depending on your choices. Life in this frame is a game show in which you constantly have to choose between door No. 1 and door No. 2. You'll either end up with a new car or a can of baked beans.

The underlying belief is that it's up to you to figure out the right choice—the one that

will ultimately make you happy. If your choice doesn't make you happy, if you end up with the can of beans, then you messed up and picked the wrong door.

But what if trying to figure out which choice leads to the best future isn't the best way to make a difficult decision? And furthermore, what if the rightness of your choice doesn't rest on whether you get what you think you want?

In fact, when you're feeling unclear, ambivalent, or conflicted about a choice, there's a more useful gauge for choosing a course of action—one that has nothing to do with predicting which choice will lead to a desired outcome. After all, sometimes we desire the wrong things, and sometimes the things we want to avoid turn out to be the best things that ever happened to us.

The truth is, you can't know the results of the decisions you make because those results don't actually exist yet. There's no answer to know. What will be depends on an infinite number of other people, places, things, and other unknowns—elements that are not in your control. You can't figure out the future, because whatever future you imagine is just one among an infinite

number that could unfold. There's no set result waiting for you to choose or reject.

Don't ask yourself, "What's the right decision?" This question doesn't lead you to a useful answer. Trying to figure that out keeps you stuck and anxious. The question that will help you move forward when faced with a hard choice is "What are the growing opportunities that each choice offers?" Then ask yourself which of these growing opportunities most interests you.

Jenny was contacted by a recruiter who offered her a new job. While she enjoyed her current work, was well paid, and had built a solid career in her current position, the new position offered a chance to learn a different set of skills that she thought might be more marketable in the long term. The new opportunity also felt compelling as a potential step into a fresh and promising field. But it was also daunting, and she knew it would be demanding of her effort and time.

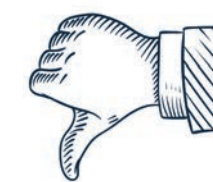
Jenny felt utterly confounded by the decision, unable to pick a path. She was obsessively making pro and con lists and playing out possible outcomes, the majority of which were fictional. But she was convinced that there was a right choice that would lead to all the cash and prizes life had to offer. And simultaneously, she believed a wrong choice would lead her on a path to disappointment and regret. From this view, the trajectory of her future was already set; she just had to pick which door to walk through.

In Jenny's mind, her future had little to do with the countless other choices she was

MICROPHONE/SHUTTERSTOCK



Like many people, you may believe that there's a right and wrong decision to be made.



going to make along the way, the people she was going to meet, and all the other elements life would present. What was going to happen for her wasn't a process or an unfolding. It wasn't interdependent with everything and everyone else. At that moment, her future seemed to rest on one thing: this decision. So, she kept going around and around, unable to decide.

Jenny was asking herself the wrong question, and so I asked her a different one. Namely, to describe the challenges and opportunities that each of her choices offered her.

Jenny started by explaining that she'd always driven herself to do whatever scared her the most. The harder a situation, the more she felt she had to do it. Her operating principle had always been to never let fear control her. Taking the new job felt like an opportunity to once again push herself past her comfort zone, which would force her to grow and get stronger.

This was a kind of growth Jenny had well in hand, but there was another way for her to develop that was less obvious.

Turning down the new position was an opportunity to give herself permission to actually land where she was, to enjoy the relationships, confidence, and expertise she'd built in her current position. Saying "no" felt like allowing herself, maybe for the first time ever, to stop pushing herself and relentlessly proving that she could do hard things. Saying "no" to the new job was a chance to be kind to herself and acknowledge that she was already strong; she'd already proven that and didn't have

to keep proving it. With this new frame, Jenny knew right away which choice she was going to make.

What is the growing edge that your choices offer you? In what ways will the various decisions allow you to grow and expand from the inside out? These are the questions that help us, questions based on what's true and real now and what we know about ourselves rather than what we imagine about the future.

Here's the thing; you can't possibly know what any decision will create in your future. That future hasn't been written yet and is inhabited by a person you haven't become yet. But you can know what that decision asks of you internally and what challenges or opportunities it would present for you—and whether those feel important to you. Ask who you are now and how you understand yourself. Then ask which decision provides you with an opportunity to evolve in ways that feel exciting and important in your journey.

Far from the land of right and wrong, this inquiry moves the dial forward and gets you unstuck. It sets you free from indecision and rumination, and launches you into clarity and action.

Nancy Colier is a psychotherapist, interfaith minister, public speaker, workshop leader, and author of "Can't Stop Thinking: How to Let Go of Anxiety and Free Yourself from Obsessive Rumination" and "The Power of Off: The Mindful Way to Stay Sane in a Virtual World." For more information, visit NancyColier.com



SRDJAN RANDJELOVIC/SHUTTERSTOCK

When making a hard decision, ask yourself "What are the growing opportunities each choice offers?"

ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

MEDICALLY CORRECT

The Health Benefits of a Vacation

Taking regular vacations is linked to a healthier brain and body

PETER WEISS

C.J. is 52 years old, happily married, has two teenagers, and is a big-time TV executive. It was her annual check-up, and she was in her usual rush to get in and out.

I've known C.J. for close to 25 years; she has been in menopause for three years and is on a low dose of hormone replacement therapy. Today, she was in a "mood": she wanted more estrogen, while complaining about her job, husband, and kids. She also complained about the waiting room.

I responded with, "It's always nice seeing you, but maybe there is another solution for what is ailing you." All her blood tests and her exam were normal. I made the offhand comment that maybe she had too much on her plate and needed a vacation. Then she complained about me.

I've known her since she was in college, so I suppose I'm fair game. She didn't leave as the happiest camper, but said she was going to Hawaii in two weeks. As I was walking out of the exam room, I suggested that she not take her work with her and just do nothing but relax for that time. No computers, conference calls, just downtime. I even suggested that she try meditating on the beach, or hiking.

A paper published in Psychosomatic Medicine in 2000, came to what many may think is an obvious conclusion that "Annual vacations by middle-aged men at high risk for CHD (cardiovascular heart disease) is associated with a reduced risk of all-cause mortality and, more specifically, mortality attributed to CHD. Vacationing may be good for your health."

The results of this study make sense, but why is a vacation so important? Also, do we need full vacations, or will a short break help as well?

A fascinating but long article published in Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights in 2021 concluded:

"This study has demonstrated that taking a short break (3–4 days away from home) or longer vacation (1–5 weeks away from home) is able to achieve measurable restorative benefits, using both objective (performance on cognitive tests) and subjective (self-report) measures."

One might ask, why do we need studies to prove what we intuitively know, and that's a fair question. Academicians have to work. There is probably even a study on that somewhere!

C.J. sent me a long email a few months after her visit. She begrudgingly admitted that I may have been right and that all

she needed was a vacation—a stress reducer with time to clear her head. The problem, she said, was she had been back at work for two weeks and was miserable again.

I responded that she needed a long talk with herself about how to reduce her stress levels. I know that's easier said than done, but quality of life is critical for a happy, fulfilling life.

A study published in the Wisconsin Medical Journal in 2005 compared stress levels and quality of life between women who took vacations and those who didn't. Their conclusion was definitive:

"Women who take vacations frequently are less likely to become tense, depressed, or tired, and are more satisfied with their marriage. These personal psychological benefits that lead to increased quality of life may also lead to improved work performance."

I think we've all been there, exhausted from work and the daily stress. It builds up. We all need a vacation—some more than others.

The truth is we all need a break from stress. Even five-minute breaks from a stressful situation can help.

Even a short five minute break from a stressful situation can help.

ful situation at work helps. A study published in the British Journal of Guidance & Counseling in 2005 looked at leisure as a stress survival strategy and concluded that leisure provides opportunities for promoting life balance. A lot of newer tech companies provide some leisure activities at work. The belief is that the mind needs a break from the pressure of trying to constantly be productive and that productive outcomes can emerge from 5-to-10-minute mental breaks at the office. Some companies will offer meditation, yoga, or exercise equipment, while others offer healthy snacks or even a ping pong table.

Not all of us have these kinds of luxuries and may have to find other ways to relieve the daily stress and take our 5-to-10-minute "vacations."

It could be as simple as getting up from the desk and walking outside for an iced tea. Fresh air is an amazing stress reducer. Once or twice a year, we should all try to take a real vacation, this can simply be a three-to-five-day trip down the road to a local campsite or a two-week cruise down the Danube in Europe. It could also be taking a day off and going to the beach, the park, or taking a hike.

Outdoor vacations may be more therapeutic for stress reduction than staying indoors, but any break can help.

And if we get to travel, all the better. Travel gives us an opportunity for stress



Fresh air, exercise and relaxing company are a great way to reduce your stress so that you can keep going.

reduction as well as healthy stimulation.

I've been told that I've been complaining a lot at work these past few months, and I am sure my wife has been complaining about me. That's probably because it's time for our vacation.

My wife, Pam, and I love to travel. These trips are our revitalizer, stress reducer, and what gives us new energy when we get back. We're thinking of taking a Viking river cruise down the Mississippi. At my age, I don't like stress, but I like the idea of being pampered on a river cruise. It will definitely be good for our health.

Travel gives us an opportunity for stress reduction as well as healthy stimulation.

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.



Sometimes the only way to be productive and healthy is to make sure you do nothing at all.

Groundhog Day

How Our Thoughts Can Change Our World

If you are getting caught in a repeating pattern, it might be time to stop running from your shadow

TATIANA DENNING

"All that we are arises with our thoughts."
—Buddha

It's been hailed by business gurus, professors, psychologists, marriage counselors, and even scientists for the lessons it contains.

While, at first glance, it may appear to be just another Bill Murray comedy, the movie "Groundhog Day" is filled with some surprisingly deep messages—so much so that it has inspired philosophical discussions, and even college courses, on the meaning of life. Written by Danny Rubin and directed by Harold Ramis, this 1993 movie also sparked the interest of religious circles with its universal themes.

According to Ramis, "At first, I would get mail saying, 'Oh, you must be a Christian, because the movie so beautifully expresses Christian belief.' Then rabbis started calling from all over, saying they were preaching the film as their next sermon. And the Buddhists! Well, I knew they loved it, because my mother-in-law has lived in a Buddhist meditation center for 30 years and my wife lived there for 5 years."

So just what is it about "Groundhog Day" that has resonated with so many? Maybe it's that we get a glimpse of another human being uncovering the true meaning of life, while, at the same time, showing us that the path to true salvation lies in letting go of our selfishness and truly thinking of others, something we instinctively know to be true.

The Surface Story

Imagine living the same day over—and over—and over, again. (After COVID lockdowns, it may not be such a stretch!)

That's exactly the predicament Phil Connors, an egotistical, self-centered weatherman, with a desire to get ahead at any cost, finds himself in.

Continued on Page 15

Phil discovers that he's trapped, reliving the same despised day endlessly, in a sort of supernatural time loop.



All too often, we become trapped by patterns that feel like a prison.

Facing Up to the Problem of Childhood Mouth Breathing

Why your child's oral breathing could lead to abnormal growth, a lifetime of health issues

PATRICK MCKEOWN

We see it all the time on social media—pictures of small children, soundly asleep, with their mouths wide open. Some parents think it's sweet when their little one snores. But there's a serious side to mouth breathing and snoring in children.

A growing body of scientific evidence confirms these children are heading for poor health, less attractive looks, and expensive dental problems.

Nose breathing draws air deeper into the lungs and has several physiological distinctions from the shallow, often quicker breaths taken through the mouth. The consequences of these differences are significant.

Mouth breathing during childhood has been proven to cause abnormal facial growth. When the mouth hangs open, gravity pulls the face down, displacing the tongue from its proper resting position. This results in narrow jaws and overcrowded teeth that become set back in the face, pushing the head forward and reducing the size of the upper airway. A narrow airway predicts a lifetime of sleep-disordered breathing, behavioral issues, poor academic performance, and a less attractive face. And the dry mouth that accompanies open-mouth breathing contributes to dental decay, early tooth loss, and halitosis.

Continued on Page 13



Mouth breathing is considered a pathological condition.

You can check on your children during their sleep and throughout the day to see if they are breathing through their mouths or noses.

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Glaring Problems

Dollar for public dollar, the US may have the worst health care system in the world

JENNIFER MARGULIS

The number of COVID deaths in the United States dwarfs that of any other country. According to Statista.com, as of April 11, well over 1 million Americans have died. The United States is a large country, so a high number of deaths might be expected.

But the U.S. also ignominiously ranks in the top 10 in the number of deaths per capita, along with much poorer countries such as Chile and the Philippines, according to Johns Hopkins's Coronavirus Resource Center.

There are many reasons for America's failure to help its citizens enjoy good health and avoid succumbing to COVID, but one thing is clear: Glaring systemic problems in the way we deliver health care in the United States are a big part of the problem.

America spends an enormous amount of money on health care. According to the Commonwealth Fund, health care in the United States is more expensive than anywhere else in the world, by a lot, with nearly 17 percent of the GDP spent on it. And that spending includes a huge amount of government funding, with the third-highest per-capita public health care expenditures in the world. That means that per person, the U.S. government spends more on health care than every country in the world except Germany and Norway.

And yet, despite that huge public investment, and then a significant private investment from employers and households, the United States has abysmal health statistics. A lack of health insurance, problems accessing care even when you do have insurance, and over-treatment plague our system.

Lack of Insurance Leads to Unnecessary Deaths

In 2002, the Institute of Medicine found that an average of 18,314 people between the ages of 25 and 64 die every year because they didn't have health insurance.

In 2008, researchers from the Urban Institute used the same method that the IOM had used and found that the number has risen to 22,000. Using another method these researchers thought was more accurate, they uncovered that the number of adults in America who died unnecessarily was closer to 27,000.

A 2009 study from Harvard Medical School, which analyzed data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveys, put the number closer to 45,000 annual deaths, with the uninsured being 40 percent more likely to die than those who were privately insured.

So how is it that while the United States is putting more tax dollars toward health care per-capita than Canada, Finland, or Sweden, it has thousands of deaths each year due to people being unable to afford health care? And that happens despite employers and individuals also paying huge sums on health care.

No Insurance, and a System Even Insured Can't Afford

At least 31 million people still don't have insurance. That's partly because of the families that fall through the cracks, households that don't make enough money to pay out of pocket for

health insurance but make too much money to qualify for state-funded care.

The median income for a family of four in 2008 was \$67,019, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Wages since then have only risen about 26 percent (to \$84,443). Between monthly premiums of about \$1,403 and deductibles of about \$8,000 annually, the average family of four could expect to pay about \$17,000 in 2019 for unsubsidized health insurance coverage, and up to \$25,000 before they saw any real benefit from it. That's hard enough for a median family to pay for. For the 50 percent of families that fall below the median, it's all but impossible.

High health care costs are also frequently cited as the most common reason for personal bankruptcy filings. It's hard to get accurate data on that because people are not required to list a reason when they file for bankruptcy, but a 2015 study from the Kaiser Family Foundation found that about one-fifth of people with medical bill problems (about one-quarter of Americans aged 18-64) declared bankruptcy at some point. According to a 2011 estimate from Debt.org, the average 65-year-old couple faces \$275,000 in medical bills throughout retirement, despite Medicare coverage.

Aiden Ekanayake's family has health insurance. But after the 14-year-old received the second dose of the Pfizer COVID vaccine, he began having chest pains. He was hospitalized with myocarditis (swelling of the heart muscle).

Since Aiden was discharged from the hospital, his mom has had to take him to endless rounds of doctor visits. Now, his family is facing thousands of dollars in hospital and doctor bills, despite having insurance, as reported by National Geographic.

Insured But Denied Coverage Anyway

Even if everyone were adequately insured, it wouldn't solve many of the problems inherent in the American medical system. Even when Americans have insurance, we face barriers to accessing care, several recent studies have found.

Insurance plans vary widely and generally contain lots of clauses, exceptions, and confusing language regarding procedures, medications, doctors, and hospitals that the plans will cover.

Many insurers make it a point to avoid paying claims as often as they can. This has been shown to be the case even with state-funded insurers that are purportedly not driven by profits, as a 2016 investigation I did for Jefferson Public Radio revealed about low-income pregnant women in Oregon being denied health care.

Doubtless, you've also experienced having your valid insurance claim unethically denied firsthand. I know I have.

After my mother had a stroke, we brought her back from the hospital in an ambulance to fulfill her explicit wish to die at home in Amherst, Massachusetts. But her insurance company refused to pay for the ambulance ride.

I had not only cleared it with her insurance beforehand by telephone, but I knew the exact page number in the written policy manual that indicated that the ambulance would be covered.



in Our Health Care System



Per capita, the U.S. spends more taxpayer dollars on health care than all but two other countries.

I fought the denial and won. But doing so caused a huge amount of stress during an already incredibly difficult time. And many people, especially those who are not health literate, don't know how to advocate for themselves or their loved ones in this way.

Insurance companies are also notorious for denying any treatment they can claim is "experimental," even if the doctors recommending it consider it the standard of care. They will also often deny certain procedures outright with the justification that the procedure is "elective," even when the procedure is medically indicated or even life-saving.

That's what happened to Erika Giduturi. She was diagnosed with a rare cancer that affects the duct between the liver and small intestine. While the hospital cleared her for a life-saving liver transplant, her insurance provider refused to cover the operation, citing a bureaucratic technicality. Inside Edition reported in January.

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that one in every seven insurance claims made under employer insurance plans is initially denied.

Insurance companies count on people either not knowing how to appeal these denials or not bothering to do the paperwork necessary to do so. The more hurdles placed in front of the claimants, the fewer who will try to clear them.

At the same time, a study from the Government Accountability Office found that when the denials are challenged, almost 50 percent are reversed.

Even when claimants are careful to choose a covered hospital and get pre-approval for a procedure, the doctor who performs the procedure may not be covered. A 2016 study in the New England Journal of Medicine found that 22 percent of patients who went to hospitals covered by their insurance company received bills from doctors who weren't in their network.

The highest bill in the study was more than \$19,000, but Michael Trost of Dingman's Ferry, Pennsylvania, received a surprise bill for \$32,325 from the cardiologist who had repaired his mitral valve.

According to the Commonwealth Fund, health care in the United States is more expensive than anywhere else in the world, by a lot.

1 IN EVERY 7

insurance claims made under employer insurance plans is initially denied.

50% of those denials are reversed.

U.S. taxpayers are paying a fortune for health care that they aren't actually receiving—even when they make additional investments in health insurance.

Unnecessary Interventions

Just as troubling as necessary surgical and other procedures being unfairly denied, people with private insurance are often subjected to unnecessary surgery and other unneeded overly aggressive treatments.

That may be in part due to the culture in any given hospital, as well as the long lag time between new information and clinical changes (on average it takes 17 years for doctors to integrate research into a better standard of care). But it's also true that the more surgeries are performed, the greater the income for a particular doctor, the doctor's practice, and the hospital where the surgery is performed.

In his 2019 book, "The Price We Pay: What Broke American Health Care and How to Fix It," Marty Makary explores how this provides a powerful incentive to perform surgery even when it isn't necessary or there are good, less invasive, alternatives.

Importantly, Makary doesn't think more public health care dollars will fix the problem. The real solution is transparency. Even after President Donald Trump's regulatory changes to ensure health care providers and insurers tell patients how much a service will cost before they get it, many patients still find it all but impossible to know beforehand what a procedure will cost. That makes it impossible to shop around and put the free market to use.

The result is that the United States, despite being a leader in medical advances and medical education in many health fields, is often providing taxpayers with the worst possible combination of a free market and government-funded health care plan.

That can lead to some disturbing phenomena in the delivery of medical care, including overtreatment.

Many surgeries popular with doctors and hospitals are for issues that can be often easily treated less invasively. Maybe you've even had one. These include:

- **Abdominal surgery for childbirth:** at least 600,000 unnecessary C-sections are performed every year
- **Arthroscopic surgery for knee pain:** According to a 2020 article by Harvard University's Robert H. Shmerling, 750,000 knee operations are done each year "at a cost of \$4 billion" but this surgery doesn't help most people who undergo it, and involves many risks
- **Gall bladder surgery:** a 2017 study published in the American Journal of Gastroenterology found that 70 percent of people who keep their gall bladders despite having acute pancreatitis had no future problems

Jennifer Margulis is an award-winning science and health journalist and a frequent contributor to *The Epoch Times*. She is the author of "Your Baby, Your Way" and co-author, with Paul Thomas, M.D., of "The Vaccine-Friendly Plan." You can read more about her on her website, www.JenniferMargulis.net, and also subscribe to her Substack.

How to Get Better Care

While individual consumers can't fix the broken system, there are things you can do to advocate for yourself and your loved ones to insure you get better, safer, and more necessary health care when you need it.

1 Interview Prospective Docs

When you're looking for a new doctor, don't just make an appointment for care. Most doctors offer free initial visits to prospective patients. This face-to-face meet-and-greet is your chance to interview your potential care provider and get a sense of whether your values are in alignment. Ideally, you will be able to find a doctor in your network who is on Team Health, not Team Money.

2 Always Get a 2nd Opinion

You're in pain and you want to solve the problem quickly. But there may be better, safer, and less invasive options than what your doctor recommends and what your insurance is willing to cover. A 1982 study published in the journal *Medical Care* found that mandatory second opinions led to a 20 percent drop in the surgeries that are most likely to be performed unnecessarily, such as hysterectomies.

3 Arm Yourself With Information

Even if you've never picked up a book in your life, a health crisis is the perfect time to start reading and educating yourself. Books, especially those written by integrative medical doctors who combine the best of western medicine with insights from other modalities, can help you learn about your specific condition and how to treat it.

So, for example, if you're suffering from an autoimmune condition, get a copy of Amy Myers's 2015 "The Autoimmune Solution" out of the library. The late Robert Mendelsohn's "How to Raise a Healthy Child in Spite of Your Doctor" is as relevant today as when it was first published in 1984 and will help you keep your children healthy without going to the doctor. And Jerome Groopman's 2007 "How Doctors Think" will provide you with invaluable insight into what's going through your doctor's head and how best to talk about your health conditions with clinicians.

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THE EPOCH TIMES

Why You Might Want to Quit Flossing Your Teeth

There is a right way to floss, but few people do it, and an even healthier alternative exists

JENNIFER MARGULIS

When she was in her mid-50s, my mother had a dentist who told her that if she didn't floss her teeth, they would fall out of her mouth and she would have to get dentures. After his warning, flossing became something of an obsession.

"Don't forget to floss" is a reminder you've heard a thousand times.

It sounds like very good advice indeed. After all, flossing helps remove bits of food from between your teeth. In addition, it removes dental plaque. We all know that plaque is bad. That soft sticky film that makes you feel like your teeth are wearing socks is actually the acidic waste product of the bacteria that live in your mouth. The problem is that plaque can build up, harden, and lead to tooth decay and other oral health problems.

So you should floss your teeth every day, once or twice a day, or even after every meal. That's what health-conscious people do, right?

Not so fast. It turns out that the conventional wisdom to floss daily may not be the best choice.

Flossing Can Hurt Your Gums

There are delicate connections between your gums and the teeth that you're separating when you floss. Aggressive flossing disconnects the gums from the teeth, which can actually cause gum recession.

Flossing too roughly or too often can also cause excess gum irritation. Technique matters.

"A lot of patients don't know the proper way of flossing," Karla Solis, a holistic-minded biological dentist based in Los Angeles, California, wrote in a 2016 article in *MindBodyGreen*. "Even when I try to teach them in the chair, they tend to just insert the floss up and down instead of hugging the tooth with it."

When you hug the tooth with the floss and floss gently, you cause less damage to your gums. In contrast, inserting the floss straight between each tooth—which is the way I learned to floss as a child—can cause gum irritation, gum recession, and even micro tears in your gums.

Conventional Floss Contains Toxins

Another problem with flossing is the floss itself. Even if you use only natural beauty products, avoid synthetic perfumes, and eat a healthy diet of whole foods and colorful, organically grown vegetables, you may not realize that conventional dental floss is full of toxins.

Some floss is made with non-stick chemicals. This non-stick surface helps the floss glide smoothly between your teeth. While non-stick floss makes flossing easier, Teflon dental flosses contain polytetrafluoroethylene. Polytetrafluoroethylene is a synthetic polymer. This common consumer plastic has been associated with a host of health problems, including endocrine disruption and obesity.

A 2019 study published in the *Journal of Exposure Science & Environmental Epidemiology*, found that women who flossed with Oral-B Glide had higher levels of problematic chemicals in their blood than women who didn't use that brand of floss.

Other brands that tested positive for fluorine, which indicates that they contain PFAS compounds, included CVS Health EaseBetween SuperSlip Dental Floss Waxed, Oral-B Glide Pro-Health Mint, Glide Pro-Health Original, Crest Glide Deep Clean Cool Mint Floss, Safeway Signature Care Mint Waxed Comfort Floss, and Colgate Total Dental Floss Mint.

Using dental floss that contains these chemicals puts you at higher risk of health problems, including liver and kidney damage and immune disruption, according to



data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

But what about other forms of dental floss? These may be problematic as well. Most nylon and silk flosses are coated with petroleum-derived so-called food-grade wax.

While many conventional consumer products contain petroleum-derived ingredients, petroleum-based products have been found to be contaminated with benzene, a dangerous carcinogen which can cause leukemia, central nervous system defects, and damage to reproductive organs, even at very low levels.

According to the CDC, both short- and long-term benzene exposure can compromise your health.

Some conventional dental floss is made with artificial colorants and either artificial or "natural" flavoring. The exact chemicals in these flavorings are considered proprietary and aren't disclosed to consumers, so it's impossible to be sure what they're made of. That said, they likely include parabens and other potentially toxic ingredients.

You can look for non-toxic, eco-friendly, biodegradable dental floss that is unwaxed or is made with a non-petroleum-derived wax, or you can skip flossing altogether and care for your teeth in a different way.

Oral Irrigation

One of the best alternatives to flossing is to orally irrigate your teeth. Oral irrigation is a fancy way of describing using pressurized water to clean in between your teeth. You can buy a standing unit for the sink or a hand-held water pick that you use like a toothbrush over the sink or in the shower. These cost more upfront than a roll of floss, but they save you money in the long run.

While conventional dental wisdom scowls at the idea that oral irrigation is as effective as flossing—and I'm sure the blood pressure is rising in a dentist reading this article right now—consider this: A study published in 2005 by a team of dentists in Nebraska concluded that both methods were equally effective for removing plaque and reducing gum inflammation and gum disease.

Another study, published in *The Journal of Clinical Dentistry* in 2013, found that water flossing was more effective at removing plaque than string flossing after just one session.

Neem and Licorice Sticks

I lived and worked in Niger in West Africa in the early 1990s and again from 2006 to 2007. Even though Niger is one of the poor-

Aggressive flossing disconnects the gums from the teeth, which can actually cause gum recession.



One of the best alternatives to flossing is to orally irrigate your teeth.

est countries in the world and dentists are few and far between, the people there have remarkably healthy teeth. Most Nigeriens use sticks of a plant called "neem" to clean their teeth. Neem is a tree in the mahogany family, native to India and West Africa.

You chew the stick until it shreds into bristles, and then rub it over your teeth, essentially using a natural toothbrush without toothpaste. I found the sticks to have a clean pine resin flavor that took a little getting used to. It's my understanding that neem twigs are used in many countries in Africa, as well as in India and other countries in Southeast Asia.

There's some interesting science that shows that the neem plant is helpful with oral hygiene. A 2017 study published in the *Journal of Natural Products*, and *Clinical Practice* found that neem sticks are anti-bacterial. Chewing a stick for just 10 minutes per day greatly reduced harmful bacteria in the oral microbiome.

A 2020 double-blind placebo-controlled study, also conducted by Indian scientists, found that neem also had a positive effect on the insulin levels and systemic inflammation of the diabetics who took it.

You can also use licorice root sticks in a similar way. Cleaning your teeth with a dried licorice root stick is another way to dislodge food and keep your gums healthy.

And using licorice root may do even more than that. In a 2012 study published in the *Journal of Natural Products*, scientists found that licorice root, a staple in traditional Chinese medicine, helped inhibit the overgrowth of harmful mouth bacteria, which may in turn help prevent and treat gum disease and tooth decay.

Chewing on licorice root sticks can also help you quit smoking. Licorice root sticks can be purchased online or at a local health food store. People with high blood pressure, heart disease, or kidney disorders shouldn't use licorice, however. If you're pregnant or taking medication to treat hypertension, licorice isn't recommended.

Jennifer Margulis is an award-winning journalist and author of "Your Baby, Your Way: Taking Charge of Your Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Parenting Decisions for a Happier, Healthier Family." A Fulbright awardee and mother of four, she has worked on a child survival campaign in West Africa, advocated for an end to child slavery in Pakistan on primetime TV in Paris, and taught post-colonial literature to nontraditional students in inner-city Atlanta. Learn more about her at JenniferMargulis.net

Facing Up to the Problem of Childhood Mouth Breathing

Why your child's oral breathing could lead to abnormal growth, a lifetime of health issues

Continued from Page 9

Equally, snoring is a sign that breathing isn't functioning as it should. The sound is caused by the fact something is blocking the airway. It's a warning sign and may predict obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), a serious condition in which breathing temporarily stops multiple times a night, reducing oxygen saturation in the body and brain. OSA creates tired children who can't think straight.

What's more, there's an 80 percent chance that a child left with untreated snoring at the age of just 8 will experience an irreversible 20 percent reduction in their mental capacity, according to a research review published in *Current Trends in Otolaryngology and Rhinology*. OSA is traditionally associated with obesity, but research shows it is the result of a long face, swollen adenoids or tonsils, a narrow palate, and crooked teeth—all symptoms of habitual mouth breathing. These anatomical traits are also known risk factors for sudden infant death syndrome.

I remember discovering the symptoms of mouth breathing described in an article in *The Dental Cosmos* that was published more than a century ago. In 1909, the article's author, G.F. DeLong, wrote:

"The face is usually elongated, the bones of the face are underdeveloped, as the air spaces do not have the proper circulation, the nostrils are small."

Long goes on to list other detrimental effects of mouth breathing. A recessed chin, crooked teeth, and a high narrow palate. These children look "dull" and tired and may be accused of inattentiveness in class.

When I first found this description, I felt a wave of disappointment that the impact of mouth breathing is still relatively unknown among parents. Even among pediatric health care professionals, the risk factors for mouth breathing aren't always identified, and there is often inadequate attention to restoring nasal breathing.

Studies show that around 50 percent of children breathe through an open mouth. It's more common for boys than girls (60 percent to 40 percent). It normally begins because the tonsils and/or adenoids are swollen, though other anatomical, environmental, lifestyle, and dietary factors also play a role.

Early Intervention Is Key

Most facial growth occurs in the first five years of life. By 11 or 12 years old, the face is 90 percent developed. This means if mouth breathing isn't corrected early, it can cause permanent deformities. It's never too late to restore nasal breathing, but correction of misaligned jaws is much more complex later in life.

I have direct experience of the consequences of mouth breathing. Throughout my childhood, I breathed through an open mouth. I struggled at school. Just as Long described in 1909, my teachers regularly misinterpreted my exhaustion and brain fog as lack of application. No matter how hard I worked, I never achieved more than average grades. Moreover, my asthma was so bad, I sometimes ended up in the hospital. It wasn't until my 20s, when I discovered some simple breathing exercises that helped me restore nasal breathing, that my life changed for the better.

I feel lucky to have made this change. Better late than never. Because the fact is, no matter how many "Mozart for Babies" tracks you stream, if your child breathes through an open

Consequences of Mouth Breathing

Mouth breathing has far-reaching consequences. It contributes to problems including:

- Abnormal development of the face, teeth, and airways
- Dental decay
- Postural issues
- Decreased cognitive function
- Poor speech and language development
- Behavioral disorders, including ADHD
- Compromised immunity
- Asthma and upper respiratory infections
- Sleep disorders

It's no exaggeration to say mouth breathing can lead to a lifetime of ill health.



ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

mouth, part or all of the time, they will always struggle to reach their potential.

Nasal Breathing Influences a Healthy Life

In a 2018 review article, the renowned airway orthodontist Dr. John Walker, and his colleague, the ENT specialist Dr. Peter Catalano state: "Nasal breathing is a basic and critical function that we rarely think much about, and most would be quite surprised to learn how important and influential it is in growth and development, and a healthy productive life."

When nasal breathing is disrupted, Drs. Catalano and Walker explain, a child is "forced to live with a host of acquired health issues as a consequence of chronic or intermittent mouth breathing."

Nose breathing enhances circulation and oxygen absorption to the tissues, and to organs—including the brain.

Another recent review in the *European Journal of Paediatric Dentistry* explains that nasal breathing during early development and throughout childhood promotes proper development of the face, teeth, and breathing apparatus. It's also vital for "neurobehavioral development and the brain... correct dental occlusion, proper and restful sleep, and to improve performance and life overall."

With the restoration of nasal breathing, along with therapies including myofunctional therapy, the review concludes: "Quality of life will improve with more energy, better mood, and enhanced performance. If that's not enough, smiles and facial esthetics are also greatly improved."

Why Is Nasal Breathing So Important?

Mouth breathing is considered a pathological condition. It is related to disease states. On the other hand, a healthy, full-term baby will naturally breathe through the nose from birth.

The nose performs around 30 functions on behalf of the body. It warms and humidifies air, filtering it of impurities and pathogens in the process. Mouth breathing involves taking cold, unfiltered air directly into the lungs. This leaves your child more vulnerable to airway irritation, inflammation, asthma, and upper respiratory tract infections. Nose breathing harnesses the gas nitric oxide (NO), which is produced in the sinuses around the nasal cavity. NO has proven antiviral, antibacterial, anti-allergenic, and antifungal qualities. It is known to prevent viral replication in upper airway diseases including COVID-19.

It further supports immunity by adding greater resistance to airflow. This slows the breathing rate, which helps keep the stress response in balance. Stress

Our body is meant to draw its breath through the nose. Doing so provides better filtration, different biochemistry, and better oxygenation.



ment in breastfeeding outcomes," reducing the need for bottle feeding. This is critical, because artificial teats make it easy for the baby to extract milk, and do not help the face and jaw muscles develop in the same way as breastfeeding. Once the baby is weaned, a diet overly focused on soft food also affects the forward growth of the face. Chewing is important for the development of the jaws and teeth too.

Why Mouth Breathing Persists

The problem with mouth breathing is that, while it acts as a backup, in situations where the child struggles to breathe enough air through the nose, it can quickly become habitual. Once the habit is formed, even if the root cause is addressed, mouth breathing persists. For instance, most children aren't taught to restore nasal breathing after surgery to remove their tonsils or adenoids. Where the adenotonsillectomy is undertaken to fix sleep-disordered breathing, the problem tends to recur within three years of surgery.

In fact, sleep-disordered breathing is only completely resolved by adenotonsillectomy in 27 percent of cases. This is largely because the child continues to breathe through an open mouth.

How to Identify, Correct Your Child's Mouth Breathing

The best thing you can do is to monitor the way your child breathes. Notice how they breathe when they are concentrating, doing homework, watching TV, and sleeping. Note how much time your child spends with his or her mouth open. If it's 40 percent or more of the time, you must act.

Apart from looking out for your child's open mouth, there are several signs indicative of mouth breathing that may not be obvious. If the answer to any of the questions below is "yes," your child may have sleep-disordered breathing including OSA.

- Is sleep disrupted?
- Does your child twist and turn during sleep, waking up with the bedclothes tangled?
- Can you hear their breathing during sleep?
- Do they snore or hold their breath at night?
- Do they wake up needing the bathroom, wet the bed, or have nightmares?
- Do they often feel tired in the morning?
- Do they ever complain about having a stuffy nose and a dry mouth when they wake up?

Breathing Exercises for Children

With the information above, you should begin to have a fair idea of whether your child persistently breathes through an open mouth. If they do, it is essential to encourage nasal breathing, both day and night. Children younger than 5 will find it difficult to practice breathing exercises, so if you have young children, you can start by preventing factors that lead to mouth breathing. Avoid overpressing your child, and keep the home cool, dust-free, and well ventilated.

You can get further advice from your healthcare professional, or a myofunctional therapist. There are pediatricians who can work with your child to gently widen the palate in a non-invasive way, even with very young children. I would advise looking for a myofunctional therapist or specialist pediatric airway-centric dentist. Contact AOMTinfo.org to find a practitioner.

Slightly older children will benefit from my free program of children's breathing exercises, which can be found at buteykoclinic.com/buteykochildren. These include a magic nose unblocking exercise that is invaluable if your child has nasal congestion.

You can help your child restore the habit of nasal breathing using mouth tape designed to encourage nose breathing. There are many variations available, including my own design, MYOTAPE, which goes around the mouth rather than over it and allows your child to communicate and hydrate while wearing it. If your child is aged 4 years or older, they can wear the tape for 30 minutes or more every day, and during sleep.

You will find lots more information about children's breathing, and some tips on taping and teaching breathing exercises to your child in my books, "The Breathing Cure" and "Buteyko Meets Dr. Mew," which explains healthy breathing through full-color comic book storytelling.

And if you have problems with dysfunctional breathing, or knock-on health conditions because you breathed through your mouth as a child, remember, it's never too late to make the switch to nose breathing, and experience a better, healthier life.

Patrick McKeown is an internationally renowned breathing coach, author, and speaker. He's the creator of Oxygen Advantage, founder of Buteyko Clinic International, and a fellow of the Royal Society of Biology in the UK. His published works include research in the Journal of Clinical Medicine and books including "The Oxygen Advantage," "The Breathing Cure," and "Atomic Focus."

What Your Face Says About You

The ancient art of Chinese face reading may give insight that goes more than skin deep

EMMA SUTTIE

Mien shiang is an ancient Taoist art that literally means face (mien) reading (shiang) and has been practiced for more than 3,000 years. This ancient art aims to give us a wealth of information about a person—from personality traits to possible health problems—by simply looking at their face. Many ancient Taoists believed that the face “records the past, reflects the present, and forecasts the future.”

The belief is that our faces are a chronological record of our passage through life, so maybe learning a little mien shiang can teach us about ourselves and help us understand others.

Our faces are a chronological record of our passage through life.



What Does the Face Reveal?

Mien shiang is exceedingly complex and can take years or even decades to master. Observing different aspects of the face can purportedly tell us about everything from someone's personality to their talents or if they're on their intended life's path. Using mien shiang, some experts say they can also see emotional upsets and traumas people may have suffered and even when they might have experienced them. The more we learn about mien shiang, the more we should be able to see. Using different “facial maps,” we can try to figure out various aspects of someone's character, from the superficial to the profound.

Some of the things we look for when reading the face are:

- Shape of the face
- Size of the face
- Colors of the face
- Shape, size, and placement of each feature
- Markings, moles, shadings, lines, and wrinkles

Historically Speaking

In a time before everything we could ever want to know was available at our fingertips, mien shiang was considered an invaluable tool of both self-discovery and knowing those around you. Mien shiang was originally a practice reserved only for royalty, and it was used as both a diagnostic tool to determine existing illness and its onset or to deduce a person's character.

The latter is important when there are constantly people coming and going from your court and not all of them might be there with your best interests in mind. Emperors and court officials relied on the opinions of their mien shiang advisers to tell them if a stranger's intentions were honorable or if they might be misrepresenting themselves in an attempt to deceive them.

In the modern world, face reading could still be very useful. Besides feeding our deep desire to know and understand ourselves, it could serve an important function. Knowing some of the basics of mien shiang could help us make important decisions such as which accountant to hire to manage our life savings. We want to hire people who are honest, kind, and trustworthy and not those that might betray us. Mien shiang might help us tell the difference.

Knowing a little mien shiang may help us figure out who we are and discover our talents and passions. This can sound far-fetched, but these are some of the more esoteric intended purposes of face reading. It's meant to help us discover who we really are and to realize our purpose in life.

Learning the Basics

12 Facial Features

Let's start with some of the basics. First, let's look at what facial features to look at and what they can tell us. There are several different “facial maps” or ways that we can break down the face to give us specific information. One of these “maps” tells us about different facial features and what they represent. In mien shiang, there are 12 main facial features that reveal aspects of corresponding character traits.

The 12 principle facial features are:

- Ears: risk-taking ability, longevity
- Hairline: socialization
- Forehead: parents' influence
- Brow bones: control
- Eyebrows: passion, temper, pride
- Eyes: intelligence, receptivity
- Cheeks: confidence
- Cheekbones: authority
- Nose: ego, power, leadership, wealth
- Lips and mouth: personality, emotions, sensuality, sexuality
- Chin: character, will
- Jaw: determination

Each of these features tells us something specific about the person. Take a look in the mirror. Do you have a strong, prominent nose; high, defined cheekbones; or a wide mouth with full lips? What do your features say about you?

Size Matters

Another thing to consider is that in mien shiang, size matters. Large features mean that their associated characteristic is more pronounced, and smaller ones mean that the same characteristics are less prominent. For example, large ears mean more risk-taking ability; a small, narrow jaw means less determination; and the more prominent the brow bones, the more controlling a person is by nature.

Age Map

Another map is the “age map,” which breaks the face down into different “zones” that are affected at different ages. It begins on the left ear, moving to the right ear, to the hairline, and downward in horizontal strips until it reaches the chin.

Below are the areas and their corresponding ages:

- Left ear rim: conception to early childhood
- Right ear rim: mid-childhood to adolescence
- Hairline to eyebrows: adolescence through the 20s
- Eyebrow area: early 30s
- Eye area: mid to late 30s

Mien shiang is exceedingly complex and can take years or even decades to master.

- Nose: 40s
- Mouth area: 50s
- Chin: 60s
- Jaw: 70s and beyond

Facial lines and markings generally appear first on the forehead and work their way down to the bottom of the chin over the years. Markings in certain areas signify events that happened at specific times in our lives, either physical, emotional, or spiritual. If you suffered a traumatic event in your teens or early 20s, you may have lines or markings on your forehead that represent the trauma that you went through.

Some of the lines and markings on our faces are inherited from our parents or ancestors and others are acquired by our life experiences. They're all significant in mien shiang; we just have to know what to look for.

2 Sides of the Face

Each side of your face also reveals something unique about you. The right side of your face represents your outer self, the persona that you show to the world, or the way you want to be seen by others. This side represents your mother's influence. The left side of your face represents your true self, the private person that you really are, or your inner self. This side represents your father's influence.

Most people's faces aren't symmetrical, and this has meaning in mien shiang as well. Let's say you have a friend whose left cheekbone is more prominent, sits higher, and is more defined than the right one. Looking back at our list, we know that the cheekbones represent authority. So you might deduce that this person has a strong inner sense of authority (the left side is our true nature), but has a hard time acting on it or is shy about showing it (the right side is your public persona).

It's fascinating to think that these small details can tell us something.

Face Reading in Chinese Medicine

Face reading can be used as a diagnostic tool in Chinese medicine. There are facial maps that represent the internal organs and other physical structures that can tell practitioners the relative health of the patient and inform them of the presence and severity of disease. Facial diagnosis is just another tool that practitioners of Chinese medicine can use to gather information, and more accurately diagnose and treat illnesses.

Again, it has multiple layers and is highly complex, but with years of practice, mien shiang can be an immensely helpful and invaluable tool for both practitioner and patient.

Final Thoughts

Now that you know a little about mien shiang, take a close look in the mirror. What do you see?

Your face is a record of all that you've experienced and gone through in life. The lessons, struggles, and laughter remain there for all to see. Frown lines and smile lines are more than nicknames for wrinkles, they're a testimony to how you have lived and who you are.

Our faces record experiences and share a record that should be celebrated.

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's a lover of the natural world, martial arts, and a good cup of tea.

Mien shiang is an ancient art based on something most of us practice every day. It is reading facial features to understand the person behind them.



Groundhog Day

How Our Thoughts Can Change Our World

If you are getting caught in a repeating pattern, it might be time to stop running from your shadow

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Phil begrudgingly heads to the small town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, where, along with his producer Rita and cameraman Larry, he goes to cover the Feb. 2 event of Groundhog Day. Phil believes the people of Punxsutawney to be simple-minded and pathetic, and the event to be ridiculous and beneath him. After half-heartedly covering the event, he's eager to escape the small town, but finds himself trapped by a snowstorm.

The next morning, Phil awakens to the sound of his clock radio playing the same program, and to the same people walking to Gobbler's Knob. Confused, Phil heads down the stairs of his bed-and-breakfast only to discover that everyone he encounters is saying and doing the exact same thing as yesterday.

As the day, and, ultimately, days, wear on, Phil discovers that he's trapped, reliving the same despised day endlessly, in a sort of supernatural time loop.

Phil goes through a range of emotions, attitudes, and understandings. It's as if he's going through mini reincarnations of himself, only he can remember each one clearly.

Initially, he's rude, cynical, and arrogant. He thinks only of himself, and takes advantage of others without giving it a second thought. Then, as he realizes there are no consequences for his actions, he happily indulges himself. From stealing money, to seducing women, to gorging on junk food, he attempts to satisfy his every desire.

But these desires eventually lose their appeal. Phil grows bored, and begins to fear that he may never escape his fate.

With no hope in sight, he becomes angry, depressed, and frustrated. Despondent, he then tries to kill himself—in every way he can think of. But no matter what he does, Phil awakens to the same radio host saying the same thing every morning. “OK, campers, rise and shine, and don't forget your booties 'cause it's cold out there.” For Phil, it's cold every single day. Phil has been trapped for years, possibly decades.

Through it all, he tries to win over his producer Rita, a sweet, kind, and generous person. She is everything Phil is not. At first, Phil uses manipulation and deceit to try to seduce her, but she sees his true intentions, and he never succeeds.

Finally, in desperation, he confesses his plight to her. After spending the day with him, Rita has her own take on things, “Sometimes I wish I had a thousand lifetimes. I don't know, Phil. Maybe it's not a curse. Just depends on how you look at it.” And suddenly, a lightbulb goes off.

Phil begins to see his situation as an opportunity. He becomes sincere as a reporter, an accomplished pianist, learns to speak fluent French, and even becomes a master ice sculptor. He starts thinking of others and his daily routine is laid out by a series of people he saves from tragedy: an elderly homeless man freezing in the cold, a boy falling from a tree, and the town's mayor choking at a restaurant. And as Phil changes, he begins to genuinely care for Rita.

It's fascinating to think that these small details can tell us something.

Face Reading in Chinese Medicine

Face reading can be used as a diagnostic tool in Chinese medicine. There are facial maps that represent the internal organs and other physical structures that can tell practitioners the relative health of the patient and inform them of the presence and severity of disease. Facial diagnosis is just another tool that practitioners of Chinese medicine can use to gather information, and more accurately diagnose and treat illnesses.

Again, it has multiple layers and is highly complex, but with years of practice, mien shiang can be an immensely helpful and invaluable tool for both practitioner and patient.

Final Thoughts

Now that you know a little about mien shiang, take a close look in the mirror. What do you see?

Your face is a record of all that you've experienced and gone through in life. The lessons, struggles, and laughter remain there for all to see. Frown lines and smile lines are more than nicknames for wrinkles, they're a testimony to how you have lived and who you are.

Our faces record experiences and share a record that should be celebrated.

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's a lover of the natural world, martial arts, and a good cup of tea.

Mien shiang is an ancient art based on something most of us practice every day. It is reading facial features to understand the person behind them.

comfortable for ourselves.

These things can be hard to distinguish, because while, on the surface, we appear to be doing something good, we may be full of underlying intentions that are meant to serve ourselves. Self-deceit is often the hardest deceit to recognize.

To Change Your World, Change Yourself

As Phil begins to see that his external reality cannot be changed, he comes to realize that the only thing he can change is himself. But this realization only happens after a very long and rather painful process of surrendering to what is. As he comes to understand that his pursuits are meaningless, Phil finally lets go of his own self-interest, and begins to genuinely think of others.

While we all have the ability to make some changes in our lives, our external realities are also fixed in many ways. Though the details vary, most of us have a job or school we must go to, a family to tend to, we must sleep, and we must eat, among other things.

How we choose to conduct ourselves, and respond to what's around us, is often the only thing we really have control over. And our thinking and our actions can have a powerful impact.

Once I had a job where a co-worker and I sometimes butted heads. We both wanted to control certain aspects of things, and we would vie and compete to have things go our way. Eventually, I began to dislike going to work. I felt stuck and powerless as the same issues happened over and over again. Then, one day I thought, “I have to go to work either way, so I can go to work and be happy, or I can go to work and be miserable. It's all up to me.”

With that thought, the situation changed. As I let go of my competitiveness and combativeness with her, and my concern for how others saw me in the office, and replaced it with a cooperative and pleasant demeanor, I was amazed at how quickly my surroundings changed.

Just like Phil, when I continually looked outward, blamed, and tried to change others, I was stuck in a loop of negative results. In an act of mindful intention, when I decided to focus on the good and let go of the bad, I experienced a moment of enlightenment, and began to look at life differently.

It's All About Perspective

I've always found it interesting that two people can witness the same exact event, and walk away with two totally different stories about what had happened. Perhaps it's because how we view the world has more to do with our perspectives and perceptions, and less to do with what goes on around us.

It's a matter of where we place our attention, something known as mindfulness.

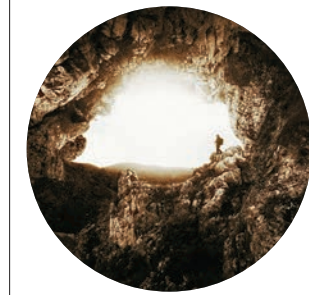
As Rubin points out, “Every person who Phil encountered contained within them an infinity of negative characteristics (bor-

How we choose to conduct ourselves, and respond to what's around us, is often the only thing we really have control over.



The groundhog is a mindless creature, fleeing from its shadow and leaving us to suffer longer in the cold. Turns out, we all have a little groundhog in us.

AP PHOTO/BARRY REEGER



The idea that a shadow is enough to scare someone into hiding underground has deep symbolism.

ANDREIUCSB / SHUTTERSTOCK

Usually, changing our world is really a matter of changing ourselves and how we relate to external circumstances.



LJUPCO SMOKOVSKI/SHUTTERSTOCK



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



“Groundhog Day” has become a cult hit, in large part because its central premise is a meaningful take on an age-old spiritual insight.

ing, stupid, smelly, poor speller, etc.) and an infinity of positive ones (funny, wise, loyal, pretty, etc.). These are all within the same person. So, which characteristics does Phil pay attention to? Again, we shape our own experience of the world far more often than we realize.”

What we choose to focus on says a lot about who we are. In dealing with my co-worker, I realized that the things that annoyed me about her were actually reflections of things within myself—the shadow things that I didn't like to look at, and that I really wasn't aware of on the surface. It was an opportunity for me to examine and improve myself. Had I kept focusing on the need for her to change, rather than myself, I would have missed this opportunity for improvement.

By default, we usually take the perspective of wanting to have our difficulties end as soon as possible. We view them as bad things, in which case, we might ignore them, run away from them, respond unkindly toward others, harbor resentment, feel angry, or a host of other unhelpful responses.

When we come to understand that our greatest lessons come through our greatest hardships, we start to see our difficulties differently. When we stop pushing them away, in an attempt to avoid pain and feeling uncomfortable, and instead search our hearts to see where we need to improve, we discover the lesson we are meant to learn.

Redemption

Phil's is a story of selflessness through hardship, good deeds bringing reward, and ultimately, a spiritual journey toward enlightenment.

As Phil comes to realize that he cannot do anything to help himself, he becomes interested in seeing if he can help others. His thoughts, values, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors all shift. With this pivotal change in his thinking, he chooses a path of redemption, and ultimately, frees himself from his own prison.

As Rubin says, “The absolute worst day of Phil's life took place under the exact same conditions as the absolute best day of Phil's life.” It's not the town that changed, not the people, circumstances, or events. The only thing that changed is Phil, himself.

But to arrive there wasn't easy. Phil had to learn that life is not something to be fought against or controlled, but yielded to, like a willow tree in a storm. Phil's story is a process of change, but it took a certain type of change—the change of becoming a person who helps others without selfish pursuit.

The brilliance of the time loop is it proves that when all external factors are accounted for, and made null by remaining the same, the only factor that can truly bring about change is to change ourselves.

I read that when Harold Ramis was making the film, he originally imagined that it would take Phil 10,000 years of reliving the same day to get it right. Ultimately, Ramis settled on somewhere around 40 years.

None of us knows how many years we have to work on getting right. Perhaps there's a theme or difficulty in your own life that keeps repeating, in its own never-ending time loop. And maybe, just maybe, it's trying to get your attention, to give you an opportunity to look at yourself so you can get past what limits you today so you can become someone better tomorrow.

Don't let it go to waste.

Powerful Training for the Mind

Overcome disempowering thought patterns with this 3-part practice

Every one of us has thought patterns that keep us stuck.

We all have thought patterns that undermine our upward trajectory. Recognizing these patterns is step one in a process toward more helpful thinking.

LEO BABAUTA

Every one of us has thought patterns that keep us stuck. In fact, these thought patterns are usually the real barriers—rather than money or time—that keep us from pursuing the meaningful things that we want to do with our lives. The patterns come in a few fairly familiar varieties.

Discouragement: What's the point? I'm going to fail anyway. Why even try? It's too hard.

Rationalizing: It's OK to skip this. I can do it later. One time won't hurt.

Defensiveness: It's not my fault. I didn't mean to. Why do they have to attack me?

Avoidance: It's overwhelming. Let me just check one message first. I don't know if I can do this.

Blaming others: Why do they have to be that way. They're always treating me badly. I can't have a good life because of them.

Anticipating judgment: People won't like this. They won't value my contributions. They'll think I'm a failure or stupid. I shouldn't even try.

Harshness towards self: I suck. I need to do better. I'm always screwing up. I should be better than this by now.

The exact categorization of the thought pattern isn't important—what matters is whether the thought pattern is helpful. What effect does it have on you when you think it? Is it moving you toward the life that you want or getting you stuck?

Most of us aren't aware of it when these thought patterns happen, so we're beholden to their power without realizing it.

To be clear, these aren't "bad" thoughts—they're natural and normal, but they aren't always helpful.

If they're unhelpful, then what would be more helpful?

We can train our minds to use a more powerful thought pattern.

For example, you might try one of these:

- I don't know if this will work out, but I'll

always put in my best effort and get the best result that I can.

- Life is short and precious, and I want to make the most of it. I use my time consciously and powerfully.
- I'm strong enough to turn toward things that make me feel uncertain, afraid, and overwhelmed and use them as a teacher.
- I don't know if I'll be good at this, but I'm going to act as if I will be and have unreasonable confidence.
- I don't know what others will think, but I won't know if this was worthwhile until I try. I'm going to have an incredible learning journey no matter what the outcome. They might be frustrating, but I won't be at their mercy.
- I value myself and acknowledge my light.

To better deal with these thought patterns, you can practice this three-part training.

Catch yourself when you're using the old pattern. You'll usually know because you feel discouraged, you're reaching for

distraction, you're avoiding something or putting it off, or you're feeling mad at someone or victimized.

Pause and acknowledge your fear. Underneath the old thought pattern is simply a bodily sensation of uncertainty and fear. Acknowledge that it's there and that it's OK to feel fear and give it reassurance and calm it down.

Try the new thought pattern. Say it to yourself and try really believing in it. Fully empower it. See what effect it has.

You have to do this over and over. Set visual reminders wherever you can. Write notes on your phone, on a mirror, or on your desk. Practice over and over. When you get discouraged from practicing, notice what thought pattern is discouraging you, and try a new one.

What powerful new thought pattern do you want to train yourself in today?

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



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