

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND &

BODY

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Using Autophagy to Clear Spike Proteins From the Body

As vaccine injuries skyrocket, research offers another method to recover from spike protein injuries

DR. YUHONG DONG & HEALTH 1+1

At present, the adverse events brought about by the COVID-19 vaccines are getting more and more attention from the public. If vaccination causes injury or damage, how can the body heal itself?

Juliana Mastrantonio of New York is an 18-year-old full-time college student and part-time pharmacy technician. Prior to the vaccination, she was in good health and exercised daily. Juliana was infected with COVID-19 in December 2020 and recovered without long-COVID symptoms.

Juliana received her first dose of Pfizer vaccine on Dec. 10, 2021, and her second dose on Jan. 2, 2022. Within one week after the second dose, Juliana developed pelvic pain that gradually worsened, and she became hospitalized.

Four days after being discharged from the hospital, she developed other severe symptoms, headaches, and tremors. When she woke up the next morning, she found herself immobile from the waist down and was paralyzed. She is currently undergoing rehabilitation.

Juliana previously had no underlying medical condition. However, after the vaccination, she developed this set of symptoms in a short period of time without any other trigger, so it's entirely plausible that there is a link between the vaccination and Juliana's paralysis.

It may be that the antibodies produced by the body against the spike proteins attacked nerve cells, including the spinal cord, and caused inflammation of the spinal cord. The spinal cord connects and controls all parts of the body, so serious damage to the spinal cord can cause paralysis.

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Autophagy is a mechanism in our cells that removes unnecessary or dysfunctional components.

Is It Time for a Mental Health Makeover?

Gaining mastery over your own mind is key to a healthy and happy life

TATIANA DENNING

"As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we walk again and again. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives."—Henry David Thoreau

Let's face it, life isn't easy.

Although we would like to think we can "do it all" and "have it all"—especially us women—the fact is, it begins to take a toll on us, both mentally and physically.

The pressures of balancing work and family life, along with all that's going on in the world today, can be a real challenge. Some may find themselves in the situation of having to take care of children while also having to care for their elderly parents. It can be enough to make a person feel overwhelmed and exhausted.

But perhaps the key to holding it all together is more achievable than we think, and perhaps that key lies more within us than outside of us.

If we can focus on what lies within our control, that is, what's within us, we may find that our mental state improves, our

stress level decreases, and as a result, even our health may improve.

Let's take a look at a few simple things we can do to enhance our mental well-being, so that we're better equipped to handle what life throws our way.

Reframe Your Situation

Have you ever wondered why you and a friend can both experience the exact same event at the same time and come away with two different memories of what happened?

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The frame we look through can mean the difference between seeing the glass half-empty or half-full.



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The devastating effects of Alzheimer's can't be treated with drugs so it's important to consider lifestyle factors that can prevent or delay onset.

AGE WELL

Real Treatments for Alzheimer's?

Pharmaceuticals have failed so why don't we deal with the causes

JOE D. HAINES JR.

Alzheimer's remains one of the most feared diseases in the United States. Affecting approximately 6.2 million Americans, the incidence is expected to triple by 2050. After decades of research, no truly effective medical treatment exists.

The currently approved Alzheimer's medications are, unfortunately, ineffective in stopping or slowing this devastating disease, which robs victims of their lives long before they're gone.

It may be that scientists are looking in the wrong places for an effective treatment. Rather than a magic pill, it may be something as basic as a combination of anti-inflammatories, proper diet and supplements, and avoidance of toxins.

The first new treatment for Alzheimer's in 18 years, Aduhelm, was designed to remove amyloid plaques in the brain. These plaques are seen on autopsy and have long been thought to be associated with Alzheimer's. Even though Aduhelm targeted the plaques, it was ineffective in stopping or reversing cognitive decline.

The Food and Drug Administration gave conditional approval for Aduhelm in June 2021 over the objections of an advisory panel. It also wasn't recommended by European authorities. Most experts agree that Aduhelm has been disappointing at best.

Perhaps rather than focusing on pharmaceutical treatments for Alzheimer's, we should focus on addressing key factors linked to neurodegenerative disease.

With the dismal results of pharmaceuticals, internationally recognized neuroscientist and neurologist Dr. Dale Bredeson has proposed a program to help the brain protect itself from metabolic and toxic threats. According to Bredeson, these threats include inflammation and a shortage of supportive nutrients, hormones, and other brain-supporting molecules.

It's also well-known that many toxins that affect the nervous system may be responsible for Alzheimer's and other neurological disorders. Eliminating or reducing these threats will reduce the chances of developing Alzheimer's, according to Bredeson. "The End of Alzheimer's" is Bredeson's recent book (2021), which discusses his experimental program to prevent and reverse Alzheimer's disease and cognitive decline.

Bredeson's claims for reversing cognitive decline is a program called ReCODE. ReCODE stands for reversal of cognitive decline. The program not only reverses cognitive decline, but it also allows the patient to sustain that improvement.

A significant factor in the program is nutritional supplements. There is no doubt that the American diet is sadly lacking in nutrients, especially when compared to diets from 100 years ago. A lifetime of nutritional deficits cannot be repaired overnight, but there is no time like the present to make potentially life-enhancing alterations.

Another important factor is the eradication of toxin exposure from our foods and our environment. The work of MIT professor Stephanie Seneff stands out among the growing body of scientific evidence that ubiquitous toxins, such as glyphosate and aluminum, may be major factors in several

neurological diseases, such as Alzheimer's and autism. Seneff's book, "Toxic Legacy," explores in great detail the links between glyphosate and our growing number of chronic diseases.

The gut-brain connection may also provide clues in preventing and possibly treating Alzheimer's. Dr. Emeran Mayer has researched and written extensively about the mind-gut connection.

Mayer shows how the brain, gut, and microbiome (the community of microorganisms that lives inside the digestive tract) communicate. When this communication system is out of balance, major health problems can develop, including neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinsonism, as well as depression, anxiety, and even autism.

Mayer advocates simple changes to diet and lifestyle to achieve the mind-gut balance that's the key to good health. His book, "The Mind-Gut Connection" is recommended reading.

Therefore, a good diet, as recommended by Mayer, as well as the supplements recommended by Bredeson and avoidance of toxins as recommended by Seneff, will likely outperform any current prescription medication until a breakthrough is achieved.

Joe D. Haines Jr., MD, MPH, FAAFP is a board-certified family practitioner. In addition to family medicine, he also completed an aerospace medicine residency and received an MPH while serving in the US Navy. Dr. Haines has practiced medicine for 40 years and remains active with medical expert witness work and writing. He's a veteran of the Afghanistan War, serving as the wing surgeon for the Marine Corps in 2011. He has more than 200 publications in a wide variety of journals.

ReCODE Supplement List

Dr. Dale Bredeson recommends an extensive list of supplements:

1. MCT oil
2. Curcumin
3. Ashwagandha
4. Bacopa
5. Gotu Kola
6. Magnesium threonate
7. Ubiquinol
8. PQQ
9. Resveratrol
10. Omega-3s (DHA/EPA)
11. Glutathione
12. Probiotics and prebiotics
13. Vitamin D/Vitamin K
14. Vitamin E
15. Bioidentical HRT
16. Methylfolate
17. Alpha-lipoic acid
18. Zinc
19. Vitamin C
20. Folate

Beyond supplements, a diet that balances the microbiome can help prevent Alzheimer's.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

Using Autophagy to Clear Spike Proteins From the Body

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The European Medicines Agency has also updated the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine's product information to include rare spinal disorders as a side effect of the vaccine.

In addition, the COVID-19 vaccine can cause mitochondrial damage and induce cytokine storms that further impair the body's immune function and lead to autoimmune diseases.

As studies, physician observations, and patient experiences have revealed many times previously, the COVID-19 vaccines, regardless of the technologies used to produce them, may cause autoimmune diseases in several organs of the body if they contain the spike proteins or other components of the virus.

Alarming Data in VAERS

Recently, controversy regarding the COVID-19 vaccines has been gradually growing.

Under the unique circumstances of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the COVID-19 vaccines have been marketed rapidly and used worldwide without adequate safety testing or certainty regarding their effects on humans. With such a large vaccinated population, it is only natural that adverse events would occur on a massive scale, and the medical and scientific community is increasingly discussing these adverse events publicly.

As of May 13, 2022, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), jointly administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration, had received more than 1.2 million adverse event reports since the introduction of the COVID-19 vaccines.

However, according to estimates published by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the number of adverse events reported by the VAERS was less than 1 percent of the actual number.

As of May 13, 2022, OpenVAERS has compiled the data on adverse events from VAERS records, which include more than 28,000 deaths, over 157,000 hospitalizations, over 129,000 cases requiring urgent care, and more than 190,000 cases requiring doctor office visits. All of them meet the definition of a serious adverse event.

VAERS also has 32 years of data on deaths from all types of vaccines worldwide. According to its data, the number of deaths remained steady at a few hundred per year until 2021, when it suddenly spiked to 21,889. And as of May 2022, there had been 6,955 deaths, and the count is still ongoing.

Some may say that as the vaccinated population worldwide is large, so is the number of reported deaths. Nevertheless, the point is that the impact of this global vaccine program on human health as a whole is enormous.

For each adverse event, even if it was reported as a rare percentage (e.g. death rates 0.01 percent, serious adverse events 0.6 percent) in vaccine phase 3 trials, a huge number will be seen by a denominator of a 5 billion vaccinated population (two thirds of total 7.7 billion).

A more important statistic is the vast majority of vaccine-related deaths that occurred within three days of vaccination, which shows the strength of the association.

People may argue that those people who died had intrinsic mechanisms including chronic diseases or risk factors that put them into a highly risky status to jobs. That is not necessarily wrong. Any disease normally would be a result of interplay of intrinsic factors plus external attacks. However, without adding those jobs, they would not die so early but would enjoy more time to live until they naturally reach their endowed lifespan.

Of these deaths, 65 percent were related to the Pfizer vaccine, which is the most used vaccine; 26 percent were related to Mod-

erna; 9 percent were related to Johnson & Johnson (Janssen vaccine); and the rest were unknown.

In terms of gender distribution, the deceased were predominantly male, with 53 percent (14,758 cases) of the deaths; and 42 percent (11,747 cases) were female.

The most common COVID-19 vaccine related adverse events reported by VAERS:

- Permanent disability: nerve injury
- Myocarditis, Pericarditis: cardiac injury
- Heart attacks: cardiovascular injury
- Bell's palsy: facial nerve injury (with unknown etiology)
- Shingles: dormant virus activated

These adverse events could have been caused by direct damage to the body's functions, attacks on the immune system, and blood clots caused by damage to blood vessels.

If we have an adverse event after vaccination, what can we do to eliminate the effects of the spike proteins?

Enhancing Autophagy

There are different strategies to detoxify spike proteins with western medicine from natural sources and Chinese herbal medicine: one is to prevent the attachment of spike protein to the ACE2 receptors (e.g. ivermectin, suramin, catechin, curcumin, Prunella vulgaris extract), the other is to neutralize the downstream toxicity by using N-acetyl-L-cysteine (NAC), etc.

Another method is to enhance the self-repair mechanism of cells.

The human body has amazing self-cleaning and repair mechanisms. When cells age, become inflamed or produce metabolic waste, instead of resigning themselves to death, our cells will activate their self-cleaning mechanisms. One of the most important of these mechanisms is called autophagy (aka autophagy)—which literally means "devouring oneself." This may sound like a bad thing, but in fact it is beneficial, because what is being devoured is the corrupted materials inside the cells, so this mechanism will make the cells healthier.

The autophagy mechanism was discovered by Japanese cell biologist Yoshinori Ohsumi, who has found that autophagy is associated with tumors, metabolic diseases, aging, and other life phenomena, and that it can play an important protective role in the human body. For these discoveries, he was awarded the 2016 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine.

In 2015, a study jointly published in the authoritative EMBO Journal by 32 scientists from Europe and the United States summarized four important roles of autophagy in human health:

- Maintaining normal cellular metabolic mechanisms and mitochondrial function;
- Mitigating DNA damage;

Alternatives to Autophagy

Foods rich in polyphenols can trigger healthy cell recycling (apoptosis).

- **Epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG):** from tea leaves
- **Oleuropein:** extract of olive leaves



Blueberries, a celebrated superfood.



Real tea (green, black, white, and oolong)



Turmeric is full of curcumin

- **Punicalagin:** The most abundant polyphenol in pomegranate
- **Apigenin:** commonly found in vegetables, fruits, herbs, and chamomile tea
- **Resveratrol:** from fresh vegetables and fruits
- **Pterostilbene:** a resveratrol derivative
- **Curcumin:** found in curry

Theoretically speaking, the body's autophagy mechanism can help reduce the damage caused by vaccines and spike proteins by cleaning up spike proteins and removing altered genes and harmful viral components.

The phagocytic vesicles in cells identify the mitochondrial fragments that have been damaged by spike proteins and do not function properly after becoming fragments, as well as toxin fragments, harmful proteins, and inflammatory factors.

A phagocytic vesicle would wrap them up and form an autophagosome, which breaks down these components with catabolic enzymes and sorts out those that can be recycled, such as amino acid molecules after proteolysis. The components that cannot be recycled will be broken down into water or electrolytes, which are then excreted from the body.

Therefore, if the body can boost its autophagy mechanisms, this can neutralize or even reverse the injury caused by spike proteins to cells.

How to Enhance the Autophagic Ability of Cells

The human body is an intelligent system, and our cells have many ways to enhance their autophagic ability, one of which is through diet changes.

One way to trigger the cells' autophagy mechanism is intermittent fasting.

In an intriguing animal experiment published in the journal Autophagy, researchers divided mice into two groups, with one being fed normally and the other fasting for one to two days. Then they observed the autophagosomes in the liver cells of these mice and discovered that

- only a small amount of autophagosomes could be detected in the hepatocytes of the normally fed mice;
- there was an increase in autophagosomes in the hepatocytes of mice after 24 hours of fasting;
- there was a further increase in autophagosomes in the hepatocytes of mice that had fasted for 48 hours.

The researchers also performed quantitative analysis of autophagosomes, by measuring the number, area, and circumference of autophagosomes in each cell and studying the expression of autophagosomes. They discovered that the number, area, and circumference of autophagosomes in mice after

Spike proteins from vaccines and COVID can create cellular problems.



24 hours of fasting increased significantly compared with those in normally fed mice; and after 48 hours of fasting, there was a further increase.

If intermittent fasting can enhance the autophagy of hepatocytes, it can reduce the damage to the liver caused by the vaccine spike proteins.

In addition, the researchers also analyzed the data of autophagosomes in mice brain cells and discovered them similar to those of hepatocytes.

The enhancement of autophagic cells in the brain is also helpful in eliminating adverse events caused by vaccines on the nervous system, such as brain fog.

We do not need complete fasting, as intermittent fasting can have a similar effect. In addition, fasting is not about eating less or not eating anything, but about "eating the right things."

As mentioned in the journal Antioxidants, there are organic chemicals called polyphenols in plants that have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and immunomodulatory properties and can have effects similar to autophagy by initiating the process of apoptosis, or programmed cell death, a natural and essential process initiated when cells are too old and need to be eliminated.

Therefore, it is recommended that we eat a lot of commonly seen vegetables and fruits in our daily life. In addition to replenishing our levels of vitamin C, this can also supplement many nutrients that enhance our autophagy and the ability to repair ourselves.

Yuhong Dong is the chief scientific officer for a Swiss biotech company and was previously a senior medical scientific expert for antiviral drug development with Novartis Switzerland and held similar roles at Novartis China. She is a postdoctoral fellow in the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and a doctor of infectious diseases.

Health 1+1 is the most authoritative Chinese medical and health information platform overseas. Every Tuesday to Saturday from 9:00 am to 10:00 am EST on TV and online, the program covers the latest on the coronavirus, prevention, treatment, scientific research and policy, as well as cancer, chronic illness, emotional and spiritual health, immunity, health insurance, and other aspects to provide people with reliable and considerate care and help. Online: EpochTimes.com/Health. TV: NDTV.com/live

3 Ways to Relieve Spike Protein Damage

1. Block the entry of spike proteins into the cells, by using ivermectin, suramin, catechin, curcumin, and Prunella vulgaris extract.
2. Neutralize free radicals and antioxidants to reduce the damage caused by spike proteins after they enter the cells, by using NAC (N-acetyl-L-cysteine), vitamin C, and other antioxidants.
3. Enhance the body's self-repairing ability to devour toxins by itself.

MIND-BODY CONNECTION

The Vagus Nerve:

A New Frontier of Brain-Body Medicine

Research into the vagus nerve is revealing why traditional approaches to well-being were so effective

AMY DENNEY

To access the benefits of mind-body medicine, you may want to familiarize yourself with the vagus nerve, which is a two-way communication system between the brain and your organs.

The 10th of the 12 cranial nerves, the vagus nerve is responsible for regulating emotional and physiological well-being.

It's the longest nerve in the autonomic nervous system—actually, we have two, one on each side of the body that weaves through the torso and neck. Vagus is Latin for “wandering,” aptly named, as this nerve communicates both sensory and motor information from several systems and many organs.

Because it's associated with blood vessels, the lungs, the heart, the stomach, the esophagus, and the intestines, the vagus nerve regulates circulation, breathing, heart rate, digestion, and other areas of our physical health.

The vagus nerve is considered by many researchers to be “anti-inflammatory,” because it can regulate inflammatory responses when it's working optimally.

When it comes to digestion, the vagus nerve controls many aspects of the process, including assisting the pancreas in releasing digestive enzymes, helping the gallbladder nudge out the correct amount of bile, and controlling the valve at the base of the stomach, as well as the one in between the small and large intestines.

About 80 percent of the fibers of the vagus nerve run from the body to the brain. This fascinating fact is what leads to “bottom-up” approaches in cognitive-behavioral research and practice. While it may be impossible to talk the brain out of a behavior (top-down therapy), practices that involve the body and tapping into the vagus nerve can send messages of safety, tolerance, and confidence to the brain. This bottom-up approach has been found to be particularly helpful for triggers and even for managing physical symptoms of disease and illness.

Polyvagal theory, or how the many (poly) branches of the vagal nerve connect to numerous organs, was first presented by Stephan Porges in 1994. Over the next decade, it started gaining acceptance in trauma therapy by pioneers who recognized the effectiveness of body-based approaches in the treatment of trauma.

In a normally regulated person, the body's autonomic nervous system easily moves between the sympathetic—the “gas pedal” of arousal that can assist us in fighting or fleeing—and the parasympathetic—the “brake” that gives our systems the chance to slow down for resting and digesting our food.

Someone who has a dysregulated nervous system often feels victimized by the overly exaggerated states that either put them in perpetual hyperarousal or leave them completely numb—or stuck on a pendulum, swinging between the two. Not only can this undermine relationships, but it can also wreak havoc on the immune system

and contribute to developing diabetes, heart disease, gut issues, and more.

Functional doctors often describe this in terms of vagal tone—how well your body self-regulates. Higher heart rate variability means you can regulate the beats of your heart, even when you're facing stress, and your body and emotions can respond in a calm way. Low vagal tone indicates prolonged stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional dysregulation not only during stress, but also when the trigger is no longer present.

Polyvagal theory continues to change the landscape of psychology and is making its way into biology.

As Bessel van der Kolk wrote in his bestselling book, “The Body Keeps the Score,” polyvagal theory “made us look beyond the effects of fight or flight and put social relationships front and center in our understanding of trauma.

It also suggested new approaches to healing that focus on strengthening the body's system for regulating arousal.” This deeper understanding of the nervous system is spurring a growing field of research. With that has come a renewed comprehension of the connectedness of body and brain and how this connection affects healing. While many traditions and philosophies from humanity's past held this connection as a medical fact, it was widely forgotten in the modern era. Now

that researchers have gained a physiological explanation and quantifiable data around the mind-body connection, it's again being applied in broader physical health care disciplines and communities. It underscores the need for a more holistic approach to healing.

That's what got the attention of Terry Powley, a Purdue psychological sciences professor, who has studied the vagus nerve for decades, shifting his attention from the brain to the gut.

His goal is to expand therapeutic applications of vagus nerve stimulations specifically to improve gastroparesis, a condition that affects the muscles of the stomach, preventing proper emptying and resulting in painful symptoms for patients. The vagus nerve is responsible for stimulating the

muscles of the digestive tract. But because this nerve is involved in so many bodily functions, it can be hard to untangle different aspects. Figuring out exactly how to isolate the stomach from the heart is a critical area of research that can lead to better treatments for patients.

Powley is part of an international team involved in a six-year, \$13.5 million study of the vagus nerve's connection to the stomach. Purdue's project to map the stomach nerves' circuitry and function is contributing to the National Institutes of Health's SPARC (Stimulating Peripheral Activity to Relieve Conditions) initiative.

Launched in 2016, the SPARC grant has allowed scientists to get more specific information about the vagus nerve using an electron microscope. This tool allows researchers to more accurately determine the body's bioelectric methods of stimulating the stomach, insight that can assist in future treatments. The grant expires this summer, but it has launched a \$9.8 million prize competition for concepts and plans to develop clinical solutions for targeting select nerves without unintended effects on surrounding organs.

Among the tools and technology highlighted by SPARC is infrared light therapy, which uses specific frequencies of invisible light to direct heat and energy to spots inside the body.

I had never heard of infrared light therapy personally until several years ago, when my husband experienced severe gastrointestinal pain. He saw several specialists over the course of a few weeks, and while a CT scan indicated a potential mass in his intestine, two scopes determined there was nothing there.

Of course, he didn't feel like there was nothing wrong, but he was dismissed for lack of additional treatment. At that point, he had already lost 40 pounds because eating and drinking had become increasingly painful. He was hardly sleeping, and he was unable to work at all.

A physician and friend of mine who had recently experienced gastroparesis as a side effect of cancer treatment recommended low-level light therapy for my husband. After three sessions using LED light pads on his

gut, motility was restored, and eventually, normal function returned.

Near-infrared light dilates blood vessels by increasing nitric oxide at the cellular level. Circulation improves and sensation returns as tissue is regenerated. Researchers typically describe this treatment as “photobiomodulation” or “infrared light therapy,” and there are thousands of studies and papers looking at its efficacy in the National Institutes of Health's PubMed.gov database.

One of the many functions of nitric oxide is to release acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that plays a role in the autonomic nervous system, especially important in bringing the body into a parasympathetic state. Separate from the vagus nerve, but equally important for the health of the brain and gut, acetylcholine production begins to decline with age.

The roles that the vagus nerve plays in physical healing may not ever be completely understood, but researchers are trying to develop technologies that will let them create effective treatments. SPARC researchers are accelerating the development of tools and technology that modulate activity in the nervous system and improve organ function. Besides light waves, some of those are electrodes, ultrasound, biosensors, and electrical currents. There are plenty of low-tech tools that are also getting attention in research and in practice. They include nutrition, somatic practices, supplements, and breathing practices.

One study of irritable bowel syndrome patients found that those given relaxation therapy experienced a significant decrease in pain, as well as lowered stress levels and improved quality of life.

Other approaches that have shown clinical improvement with stomach issues include mindfulness-based programs, yoga, hypnotherapy, and mind-body interventions.

The vagus nerve is simply one component of a complicated gut-brain interaction that also involves the endocrine, immune, and humoral systems. However, studies show an influential connection between vagal tone and food intake, weight gain, inflammation, and homeostasis. It can even help with the regulation of satiety and energy.

“Vagus nerve stimulation and several meditation techniques demonstrate that modulating the vagus nerve has a therapeutic effect, mainly due to its relaxing and anti-inflammatory properties,” according to a research review article published in Frontiers in Psychiatry in 2018.

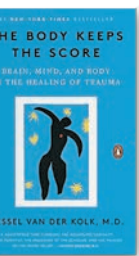
While urban lifestyles are contributing to a rise in environmental stressors and toxins that disturb the mind-body balance, we have many tools at our disposal to retune ourselves. While technology may soon offer new therapies, we can also tap into intuitive ancient practices that can undo the damage and prevent further inflammatory assault.

Amy Denney is an award-winning journalist, certified Holy Yoga instructor, and light therapy specialist. She works with clients looking for natural, side-effect-free solutions to pain and stress.

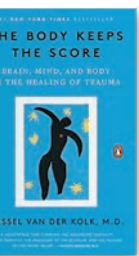
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A dysregulated nervous system can keep us in fight-or-flight mode. Deep stretches and exercise can help calm the nerves.



Bessel van der Kolk's bestselling book, “The Body Keeps the Score,” directs us to look at how trauma affects our fight or flight response.



Bessel van der Kolk's bestselling book, “The Body Keeps the Score,” directs us to look at how trauma affects our fight or flight response.

FOOD AS MEDICINE

The Power of Pomegranates

This giant berry includes a potent mix of compounds with medicinal effects

LISA ROTH COLLINS

When was the last time you had a pomegranate? Can't remember? Never had one? Have one occasionally but consider them too much trouble to enjoy more often? What's a pomegranate?

These are typical responses whenever someone is asked when they last enjoyed one of these less common fruits. We want to share some tasty information about pomegranates that we think will persuade you to give them a try or eat them more often.

What Are Pomegranates?

Pomegranates (*Punica granatum*) are small to medium-sized round, red fruits that are native to a region running from northeast Turkey to Afghanistan. They have a hard shell-like exterior that houses white flesh that is rich with juicy seeds called arils. The arils are the edible part of the fruit. Botanically, pomegranates are berries because they come from a single flower with one ovary and seeds.

In ancient times, pomegranates were used to treat a number of health problems, ranging from digestive disorders to intestinal parasites, skin problems, and more. The fruit was also prominent in mythology and was called the “fruit of the dead” because it was said to have emerged from the blood of the Greek god Adonis. Pomegranates also symbolized fertility in ancient Rome and Greece and were associated with Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. Today, scientists have recognized a number of health benefits associated with eating the seeds or drinking pomegranate juice.

Perhaps the most common complaint about pomegranates is the work involved in extracting the seeds. Once you break through the hard outer shell, the many seeds must be removed from the flesh, which can take some time. However, the nutritional and healing benefits make the effort worthwhile. Fortunately, there are plenty of videos online that will teach you how to prepare a pomegranate quickly and easily.

Health Benefits of Pomegranates
So what's so great about these tasty, crunchy seed morsels besides being a super snack? Here are a few ways pomegranate seeds and juice can provide some health advantages.

Reduce blood pressure: Research involving pomegranate juice has shown that drinking pomegranate juice can lower blood pressure and support cardiovascular health.

Boost bone and joint health: Bone and joint health are important for everyone, and especially older women in menopause and postmenopause. Research in postmenopausal rat models has shown that pomegranate

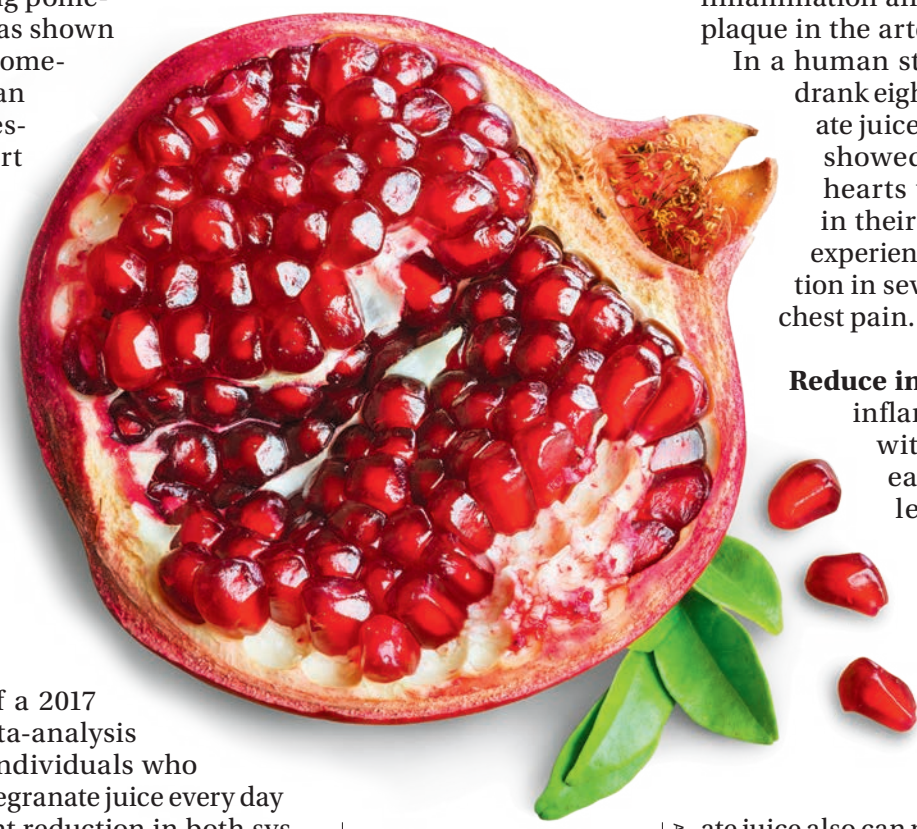
search involving pomegranate juice has shown that drinking pomegranate juice can lower blood pressure and support cardiovascular health. More specifically, pomegranate juice may inhibit serum angiotensin converting enzyme activity (the same thing prescription drugs do), which in turn lowers blood pressure.

The results of a 2017 review and meta-analysis revealed that individuals who consumed pomegranate juice every day had a significant reduction in both systolic and diastolic blood pressures. Less than eight ounces daily resulted in better systolic pressure results than higher amounts, while more than eight ounces resulted in a borderline significant effect in diastolic pressure. The reviewers noted that “it may be prudent to include this fruit juice in a heart-healthy diet.”

Source of phytoestrogens: Pomegranates are rich in phytoestrogens, which may help prevent and manage perimenopausal and menopausal symptoms. In an article from McGill University in Montreal, Joe Schwarcz said research has shown that some polyphenols in pomegranates can block the activity of aromatase, an enzyme involved in synthesizing estrogen. That is, experts found that pomegranate seed extracts reduced the activity of 17-beta-estradiol (involved in the development of breast cancer) by about 50 percent.

Antibacterial: Pomegranates contain compounds that may help eliminate certain microorganisms, including bacteria, yeasts, and fungi. These compounds may help with the microorganisms that cause bad breath and tooth decay, for example, according to research.

Boost bone and joint health: Bone and joint health are important for everyone, and especially older women in menopause and postmenopause. Research in postmenopausal rat models has shown that pomegranate



Pomegranates have been valued since ancient times for their therapeutic effects. Now researchers are starting to understand why.

SCOTT HEILBRONER/ISTOCK/GETTY

Pomegranates contain ellagitannins, compounds that have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

To find the studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at [TheEpochTimes.com](https://www.theepochtimes.com)

oil extract has positive therapeutic effects on bone health.

Support heart health: Laboratory studies have shown that pomegranate extract may help heart health by fighting inflammation and the accumulation of plaque in the arteries (atherosclerosis).

In a human study, individuals who drank eight ounces of pomegranate juice every day for five days showed evidence that their hearts were being protected in their blood tests. They also experienced a significant reduction in severity and frequency of chest pain.

Reduce inflammation: Chronic inflammation is associated with many serious diseases and health problems. Pomegranates contain phenolic compounds called punicalagins, which have demonstrated anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties in laboratory and animal studies.

Drinking pomegranate juice also can reduce inflammation in people with diabetes.

Support urinary health: For kidney stone protection, pomegranate extract may help. In a study of adults who experienced recurring kidney stone development, the use of 1,000 mg pomegranate extract for 90 days appeared to inhibit the formation of the stones.

Promote brain health: Pomegranates contain ellagitannins, compounds that have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Research has suggested ellagitannins may help protect against the development of Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease by reducing oxidative damage.

Enjoying Pomegranates

Pomegranates seeds can be enjoyed in smoothies, as a topping on salads, yogurt, puddings, and cereals, in fruit or vegetable salads, as a garnish on grilled meat or fish, added to punch, wine, cocktails, or mocktails, stirred into a dip, or alone as a snack. You can freeze the seeds and keep them for up to one year. Simply spread the seeds on a baking sheet, place them in the freezer for two hours, then place the seeds in individual freezer bags.

Bottom Line

Pomegranates may present a minor challenge when attempting to get the tasty seeds out from the hard peel, but once you do, you will enjoy a nutritious, delicious, and healing treat. Pomegranate extract is also available in supplement form.

Lisa Roth Collins is a registered holistic nutritionist and also the marketing manager at [NaturallySavvy.com](https://www.naturallysavvy.com), which first published this article.

Labeling Requirements for Bioengineered Crops in US

JANIS SIEGEL

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) newest food labeling rule regulating the disclosure of genetically modified ingredients in foods went into effect in January and uses the term “bioengineered food.”

A bioengineered food “has been modified through certain lab techniques and cannot be created through conventional breeding or found in nature,” according to the USDA definition. The modifications produce a desired trait, such as pesticide resistance, a larger-sized product, greater crop yield, or resistance to browning and decay, to name a few.

According to the USDA's Economic Research Service, most often, crops are modified to increase their resistance to herbicides or be more insect-tolerant.

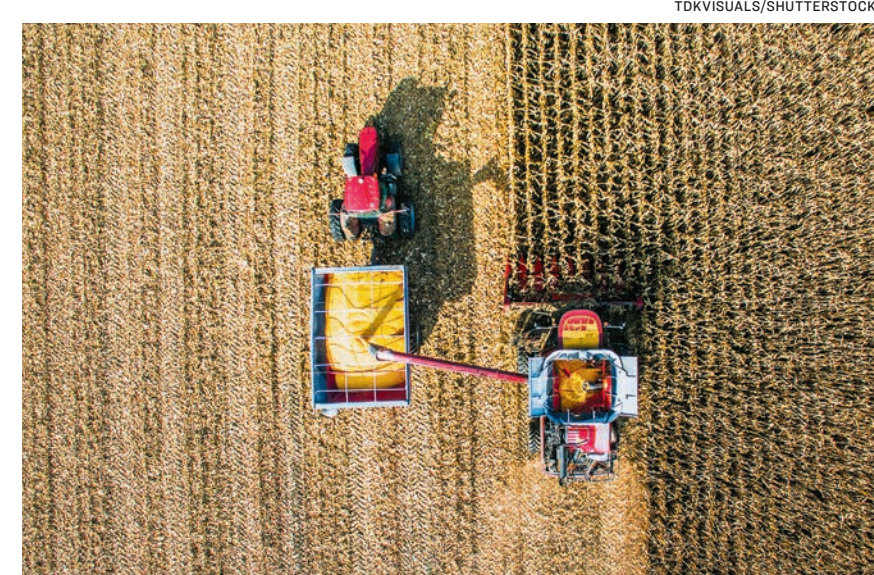
The new rule, under Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations, applies to 13 foods found on the list of bioengineered foods and requires all large and small food manufacturers, importers, and “other entities that label foods for retail sale to disclose information about bioengineered (BE) food ingredients.” The rule also applies to food sold in bulk containers, display cases, bins, and cartons.

Restaurants and retail food businesses that serve prepared foods aren't required to comply with the labeling rule.

Still, shoppers should become familiar with all the jargon that might be in the ingredient

lists of any food they buy or eat. Unsuspecting consumers continue to face the possibility that a gene protein from a food they're allergic to and want to avoid may be inserted into another food.

There are several interchangeable terms that let consumers know that a food is genetically modified or contains modified ingredients. Those terms—GM or GMO (genetically modified or GM organisms), genetically engineered, transgenic, any item with a trademark or registered symbol, or recombinant DNA—mean the food contains altered genetic material, which can come from a different species of plant, animal, or microorganism.



TDK VISUALS/SHUTTERSTOCK

The modifications produce a desired trait such as pesticide resistance, or a larger sized product, greater crop yield, or resistance to browning and decay, to name a few.

pers seek non-bioengineered [sic] or non-GMO product claims when purchasing food.”

Since 1995, when GM crops were introduced into the U.S. food supply, food safety and health advocates have been calling for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to label these products and to conduct more research into the health effects of these DNA-altered foods.

More importantly, no one agency or group has researched whether the inserted DNA from a bioengineered food clears or if fragments of the foreign DNA remain in the digestive tract of humans.

According to “Human Health Effects of Genetically Engineered Crops,” a 2016 book published by the Committee on Genetically Engineered Crops, genetic engineering hasn't been shown to significantly increase the yield from these crops and determining the “absolute safety of eating specific foods and the safety of other human activities is uncertain.”

Consumer groups are concerned that these foods could cause mild to serious reactions.

Janis Siegel is an award-winning news journalist and columnist that has covered international health research for SELF Magazine, The Times of Israel, the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, and others. Siegel launched a health column featuring cutting-edge research from world-class academic institutions.

MINDSET MATTERS

Is It Time for a Mental Health Makeover?

Gaining mastery over your own mind is key to a healthy and happy life

Our mind is a tool that too few of us ever learn how to use properly.

A person has on average **70,000** thoughts in a day. Align those thoughts with who you want to be.

Continued from Page 1

One reason this phenomenon exists is that we each have our own set of beliefs, ideas, notions, and past experiences that color how we view the world around us. In a sense, we notice what we expect or want to see. The frame we look through can mean the difference between seeing the glass half empty or half full.

Reframing is the process of shifting our view of a situation, of looking at things in a way that breaks away from our preformed notions and beliefs—particularly the negative ones.

This technique allows us to look for the opportunities in the challenges, for possibilities in the problems. It's not a denial of our difficulties, but rather a realization that contained within anything are elements of both the positive and the negative. It's what we choose to focus on that counts.

If we can reframe the way we look at the difficult things that happen and look for the positives in them, we can start to retrain our brain. By teaching ourselves to be “intentionally optimistic,” we can shift from a “glass-half-empty” mindset to a “glass-half-full” mindset. And the more we practice it, the easier it becomes.

A positive mindset, according to a 2019 study in the scientific journal PNAS, comes with some significant benefits. For one, people with an optimistic outlook live an average of 11 to 15 percent longer than their negative counterparts. Optimistic people also enjoy a better quality of life, have more energy, recover faster from injury and illness, have lower rates of depression and anxiety, and have better coping skills for dealing with life's inevitable challenges.

I'm reminded of the movie “Groundhog Day,” in which Phil, the main character, is a “glass half empty” kind of guy. But through

With persistent attention and awareness, we can elevate our thoughts and improve our state of mental health.

trial—and lots of error—Phil has both the worst day of his life, and, ultimately, the best day of his life, all under the exact same set of circumstances. Nothing external changes; the only thing that changes is Phil and how he chooses to respond to his situation.

When we understand that the only thing we have control over is ourselves, we can learn to build a foundation of peace and unshakable calm. The external world loses its power over us.

So how can we start the practice of reframing in our daily lives? For starters, we can ask ourselves some simple questions:

- How can I look at the situation in a different way?
- What do I believe about the situation and what am I assuming?
- How can I empathize with the other parties involved and view things from their perspective?

MINDSET MATTERS

Should Versus Want: Freeing Yourself From the ‘Shoulding’ Habit

When we are honest about our deeper values, we can turn feelings of obligation into meaningful sacrifices

NANCY COLIER

Have you ever noticed how much of your life is driven and dictated by the word (and feeling) of should? Most of us devote an inordinate amount of time and energy to doing and being what we think we should do and be. At the same time, we spend a surprisingly small amount of attention on what we actually want. The result is that we end up drained and exhausted, disconnected from our essential source of energy, authenticity, and vitality.

Of course, should is an important sentiment; we need shoulds in our life to function as human beings. We have to do certain things we don't want to do—to stay alive, participate in society, hold a job, take care of our

family, stay out of jail, maintain successful relationships, and essentially, create a life we might want.

We do a lot of things we should because we want to make people we care about happy. There's nothing inherently wrong with this. The problem I'm addressing here is not the fact that “shoulds” exist, or that we listen to and operate from them. It's not a problem that we have to grow out of our 5-year-old self who believes that she should only have to do what she wants to do.

The problem created by the energy of should is the impact it has on our relationship with want. In short, should has the power to obliterate want. When we're children, we're deeply connected to (and vocal about) what we want. We have no difficulty identifying and expressing our wants. But over time, through cultural conditioning, a sense of duty, family experience, conscientiousness, and a host of other factors, we lose that connection and end up living

Rather than do things simply because you should, reflect on the deeper values that compel you.

in what can only be described as a constant state of should, and shoulding ourselves into exhaustion.

In an effort to be seen as good: good parents, good partners, good friends, good workers, good daughters and sons, and just plain good people, we learn to function with one gauge above all others. Should becomes our way to be loved. As grown-ups, we operate out

of a sense of should such that we stop asking ourselves, feeling connected to, expressing, or acting from what we want. We end up dis-



TOM MERTON/GETTY IMAGES

- What can I learn from the situation, and how can I improve myself so I can do better next time?

Asking how leads to more actionable steps, while asking why helps with introspection and understanding.

Let's say you're passed over for a promotion, and instead it goes to your coworker. You may feel angry for being treated unfairly, resentful, and if you're honest with yourself, maybe even a bit jealous. But instead of focusing on what you lost, why not reframe it? Maybe the promotion would have taken more time away from your family, or maybe it would have created more stress and pressure at work. Maybe it's to teach us patience or how to think of others before ourselves or to reveal one of our shortcomings we may have ignored or overlooked.

In this way, we can let go of our hurt feelings and even feel happy for our coworkers. Another tip is to reframe hardship as a challenge rather than a problem. “Problem” has a heavy, negative feel to it, while “challenge” feels like a call to action, something that energizes and motivates us to give it our all and overcome it.

And remember that nothing—whether we view it as good or bad—lasts forever. Change is one of the few certainties we have in life, as nothing stays the same. If we can bear this in mind, when the inevitable storm appears in life, it will be easier to view it as a temporary setback rather than something more significant.

We should also remember that hardship is what makes us dig deep and learn what we're made of. Hardship helps us take stock of who we are. It's how we discover some of life's greatest lessons and how we experience some of our most significant personal growth.

While reframing takes effort, awareness, and practice, the payoff is tremendous. By turning lemons into lemonade, we can see the value in our hardships and be left with a sense of hope and gratitude.

Mind Your Thoughts

I used to think my thoughts sprang forth from my very core and were a part of the essence of who I was as a person. But as I began to examine my thoughts more closely, I was surprised to discover that wasn't always the case.

The average person has about 70,000 thoughts per day, according to some researchers. That's a lot of thoughts to examine. But as I began to focus on them, I discovered that many of my thoughts didn't align with how I view myself, nor with who I want to be. I was shocked and even a bit dismayed at just how many of my thoughts weren't what I wanted them to be.

Instead, many of my thoughts had negative roots, such as fear, anger, jealousy, resentment, laziness, competitiveness, and looking down on other people for their shortcomings, to name just a few. When I looked closer, I saw that many of these thoughts came from emotion, rather than rational and kind thinking.

According to psychologists, if we're not mindful, we may also catastrophize (make things seem worse than they are, common in those with anxiety), polarize (view something as either good or bad, with no in-between), and filter (focus only on the negative part of a situation and ignore the positive).

As Thoreau said, “We must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives.”

This requires us to become keenly aware of what we're thinking, eliminate the thoughts we don't want, and then replace them with



Create a calming space to destress and reflect on life.



Pause for a few minutes everyday to give kindness to others and yourself.

what aligns with who we want to be.

Sometimes these thoughts can seem hard to control, and the mental pressure to agree with negative thoughts may be strong. But like anything, the more we practice, the more natural it becomes and the more successful we'll be.

So the next time you get upset when someone cuts you off in traffic or you're worrying about that big assignment at work, ask yourself if these thoughts align with who you want to be. Are they serving you well, or are they interfering with the good parts of your being?

The things that we focus on are the things that we give energy to, and these things become our reality.

With persistent attention and awareness, we can elevate our thoughts and improve our state of mental health.

Connect With Yourself

Just as it's important to pay attention to what we're thinking, it's equally important to know ourselves and what our core values are.

If we don't know who we are and what we stand for or the kind of person we want to be, we're like a leaf blowing in the wind—with no direction and no sense of purpose. When we have no moral roots to ground us, we can easily drift along with whatever comes our way. And without knowing what our values are, we lack a reference for evaluating our thoughts. This ultimately creates a sense of anxiety and uncertainty in our lives.

Looking for meaning and purpose is also important to our mental health. Humans need to feel as though there's a reason for their existence and that they're making



Looking on the Bright Side

How can we start the practice of reframing in our daily lives? For starters, we can ask ourselves some simple questions:

- How can I look at the situation in a different way?
 - What do I believe about the situation and what am I assuming?
 - How can I empathize with the other parties involved and view things from their perspective?
 - What can I learn from the situation and how can I improve myself so I can do better next time?
- Tip: Asking how leads to more actionable steps, while asking why helps with introspection and understanding.

a meaningful contribution to the world around them. Asking why we're here, how we can improve what's around us, and how we can help others is important.

While these questions take some deeper reflection, taking a few minutes for quick self check-in also has value. Creating a morning ritual with time for a little quiet and solitude can nourish our soul and help us start off the day on the right foot. With the world filled with so much noise and so many distractions, it can be a challenge to hear what's going on inside ourselves. A short morning check-in creates a little space for this important self-connection.

Doing something simple, such as checking in with ourselves to ask how we're feeling and why, setting an intention for the day, or repeating positive affirmations, can help boost our mental well-being.

And as we go through the day, we can regularly check in with ourselves to ask what we're feeling, both mentally and physically, and if there's anything we need to improve upon.

Slow Down

Life moves fast. Taking a little time to pause every day can clear our minds and help us feel reinvigorated.

It doesn't have to be anything monumental—simple things can make a big difference. For instance, getting some fresh air and sunshine by taking a walk in nature, or even around the block, can be a great mood elevator. Spending some time in meditation or prayer or sitting down to journal our thoughts can also bring a sense of calm and peace.

A calming bedtime routine, along with getting a good night's sleep, will help our minds feel clear and refreshed, while drinking plenty of water and eating fresh fruits and vegetables nourishes and energizes our bodies and minds.

Decluttering what's around us also helps. If you're working in a messy office, that physical disorganization can lead to a sense of mental disorganization and bring an unsettled mental feeling. Take a little time to get rid of what's unnecessary and organize what is.

Finding a creative outlet is another great way to clear your mind and can act as a type of active meditation. Hobbies such as photography, sculpture, gardening, playing an instrument, or knitting are great for creating a serene state of mind.

And don't forget to take a deep breath and smile. When we're lighthearted and happy, we naturally smile. But the reverse is also true—when we smile, it helps lighten our minds and elevates our mood.

Finally, make time for human connection, and practice kindness and thinking of others first. Studies have shown that those who have strong personal relationships, as well as those who are kind and giving, aren't only mentally and physically healthier, but they even live longer.

By doing some small, simple things every day, we can come to know ourselves better, see the opportunities in our difficulties, and create new habits for ourselves that bring us a sense of mental calmness and fortitude.

Remember, as the Taoist sage Lao Tzu once said, “If you correct your mind, the rest of your life will fall into place.”

Tatiana Denning 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.

connected from ourselves, from our vitality, and authenticity; we end up untethered from what we really want and need. We end up fundamentally depleted.

The first step in recovering from your shoulding habit is to become aware of it. Awareness is the kryptonite to acting it out. Start by simply recognizing the voice of should in your mind, learning to hear it as its own distinct entity. Sometimes the voice of should is clear and obvious and sometimes it's more like a wallpaper sentiment papering the background of your consciousness.

What's important is that you become aware of how and when your inner should shows up, that you bring it out of the shadows and into the light.

Simultaneously start inviting want into the picture. When you're making a choice or considering an action, ask yourself, is this choice coming from should or want. Do I think I should do it or do I actually want to do it? Why do I feel I should do this? What makes this a should?

And furthermore, what am I afraid will happen if I followed what I want in this case? Ask yourself too, what is the want behind this should, if there is one? For example, if you are shoulding yourself to go to the gym at 5:30 a.m., perhaps the deeper want is to

be able to go hiking without running out of breath, or maybe just to keep yourself healthy so that you can stick around for your child.

The should surrounding the gym is a means, or so you think, to the deeper want for health that sits below it. Ask yourself, “Do I still believe that this is the best way to take care of the deeper want in this case?”

The problem created by the energy of should is the impact it has on our relationship with want.

Just becoming conscious of these two different experiences, want and should, and the different feelings, assumptions, and experiences associated with each; getting clear on what's actually true for you is a profound practice in and of itself.

Know too that when you are acting from should, you may well be discarding and ignoring what you want. Regardless of whether you can give yourself what you want at the moment, perhaps there is a way to give yourself some of what you want while still accom-

plishing your should.

Perhaps there's room for balance; maybe should can be a slice of the pie but not the whole pie. Maybe, for example, a couple of days each week, you can take a walk with a friend instead of hitting the treadmill before work. Maybe it's not either/or, but rather both/and.

Breaking your shoulding habit, ultimately, means changing your relationship with the feeling and experience of should altogether. If you're on your way to lunch with your angry and dismissive mother-in-law, a choice that's coming entirely from should, rather than shaming and blaming yourself for not wanting to do it, rather than telling yourself how bad a daughter-in-law and how selfish a person you are for not wanting to do it, you can instead choose the path of kindness—for yourself.

You can acknowledge with self-compassion the fact that spending time with this difficult person is hard and that there's a reason you don't want to do it. And yet, that you're choosing to do it anyway, which is courageous. And furthermore, that this hard thing you're about to do aligns with your deeper values—your love for this woman's son, and for her too in her suffering.

In allowing your authentic truth, and acknowledging that you don't want to do it (why would you?) but that you're doing it anyway

because it matters to you, you are actually being kind to yourself. You are honoring your truth, allowing the experience to be hard and unwanted, which then keeps you connected to your own heart and on your own side. The lunch with your mother-in-law and with yourself is then different: kinder and more bearable.

But if you really want to break out of the cage of should, you have to be willing to get to know and respect your own wanting. Ask yourself, what would it mean to start living your life from want? What would you risk if you were to let want guide your life?

At the end of the day, you have to be willing to risk whatever that is. But if you do and if you are, your life will bloom in a radically new way. Instead of feeling exhausted and depleted, you will be rejuvenated and revitalized, in synch with the life force that is your own wanting.

Nancy Colier is a psychotherapist, interfaith minister, thought leader, public speaker, and the author of “Can't Stop Thinking: How to Let Go of Anxiety and Free Yourself from Obsessive Rumination,” “The Power of Off,” and the upcoming “The Emotionally Exhausted Woman: Why You're Depleted and How to Get What You Need” (November 2022.)

Helping Others Is the Key to Happiness

Research is affirming that being good is essential to feeling good

JOSHUA BECKER

When is the last time someone helped you? Was it carrying the groceries into the house? Or taking time to brainstorm solutions to a tricky situation? How did you feel after you were helped?

Now think of the last time you helped someone. Did you hold the door for a stranger at the store? Did you do a family member's chore for them? Did you volunteer at the middle school dance? How did you feel afterward?

Helping others is a benefit to us. In fact, according to studies, helping others makes us even happier than when others help us.

Carolyn Schwartz, a research professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, was looking for ways to support those with multiple sclerosis. She arranged monthly peer-support phone calls, and was surprised to find that those who offered support were helped even more than those who received the support.

"A newly emerging school of thought suggests that a simple, age-old principle may be part of both the prevention and the cure: Help others to help yourself," writes Lisa Farino for the G.O. Community Development Corporation.

In your search for meaning in life, helping others may be overlooked. But researchers are continuing to discover that "kind and helpful behavior causes us to feel that our lives are meaningful," reports the University of California-Berkeley's Greater Good Magazine.

When we think of things that matter and ask ourselves, "What really matters to me?" we often keep ourselves at the center.

But according to studies (and experience), when we look beyond ourselves and begin asking what really matters, we find that helping others really matters. What may start out as a selfish pursuit—helping others so that I can feel better—will end up a selfless benefit, for everyone.

We feel good because we have helped someone else feel good. And it's inevitable that we'll want to do it again.

This feedback loop has been found in studies of

helpful people.

"When you're experiencing compassion, benevolence, and kindness, they push aside the negative emotions," Stephena Post, a research professor of bioethics at Case Western Reserve University, told Farino. "One of the best ways to overcome stress is to do something to help someone else."

Additionally, when we direct our resources of time and money toward others, we begin to discover pursuits more valuable than accumulating material possessions.

Removing the trappings of possessions seems like a detour in the pursuit of helping others, but it's more like a mathematical equation: When we don't dedicate our time and money to material possessions, we have more mental and material capacity to help others.

There are plenty of great articles about why this works, but if you want to jump to the benefits, here are a few ideas to get you started helping others.

Start Small

Give your place in line to someone at the grocery store. Place your neighbor's Sunday paper on their front stoop on a rainy day. Jump up to open the door, carry a package, or take out the trash for someone.

What may start out as a selfish pursuit—helping others so that I can feel better—will end up a selfless benefit, for everyone.



Helping others helps ourselves.



We feel good when we help others feel good and want to keep it going and growing.

Practice helping others every day.

Help in Larger Ways

Try to do something bigger once a week. Buy a coffee or a grocery store gift card for the man without a home whom you see every time you go to the local shopping center. Mow your elderly neighbor's lawn. Send an email to your child's school staff, thanking them for their service to the students. Offer rides to people who need to get to the doctor or the store. Stop by a neighbor's house to check in and ask if there is anything you can help them with.

Helping Others as a Lifestyle

As these practices become second nature, make them a normal habit you exercise regularly. Volunteer a couple times a year at the soup kitchen—ladling soup, cleaning bathrooms, or raking leaves. Ask your local synagogue or church if there are any building or personnel needs you can fulfill a few times a year. Reach out to a nearby school to see if you can tutor students or run a coat drive.

Start by asking the question: "Can I help in any way?" That's all it takes.

That, and a willingness to hear the answer and give your help. And happiness will be right around the corner.

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

Being kind pushes away negativity.



Dyslexia is a common problem for many children struggling to read, but there are ways to work around this challenge.

D Y S L E X I A

Turning a Stumbling Block Into an Advantage

Dyslexia can be excruciating, but can also lead to unique traits

JENNIFER MARGULIS

Brooke Gottlieb is 21 years old and a student at Coastal Carolina University. A competitive lacrosse player for a Division I school, she's majoring in health communication. She's earned straight A's every semester since her first year of college, and has been nominated for multiple writing awards.

While that may not seem remarkable, Gottlieb is also dyslexic.

What Is Dyslexia?

The word "dyslexia" is derived from the Greek prefix "dys" (meaning inadequate) and from the Greek word "lexis" (meaning words).

Dyslexia is a learning disability that

Dyslexia is 'a neurological condition caused by a different wiring of the brain,' according to the International Dyslexia Association.

causes challenges with reading and processing language. More specifically, dyslexia is "a neurological condition caused by a different wiring of the brain," according to the International Dyslexia Association. It is characterized by difficulties with word recognition, trouble reading, and poor spelling.

Dyslexia by the Numbers

- One in five people in the United States has dyslexia, according to the National Association of State Board Education.
- Dyslexia is the most common neurobehavioral disorder affecting children, according to recent research.
- There may be a genetic component to

dyslexia. According to the National Library of Medicine, dyslexia occurs "in 50 percent of children who have a parent with dyslexia and in 50 percent of the siblings of dyslexic persons."

Being Dyslexic Doesn't Make You Dumb
Dyslexia isn't correlated with intelligence, concluded a 2010 study published in the *Journal of Psychological Science*. In this study, a team of researchers from the Yale School of Medicine and the University of California Davis tested 445 students annually in reading and biannually in IQ over the span of 12 years.

Continued on Page 15

More and more people are living alone, and that means they may be at risk.



Coping With Loneliness

New tools and old habits can help us deal with social isolation

WENDY MEYEROFF

There's a "Peanuts" cartoon panel that might make you smile or—thanks to our ongoing struggle with social isolation—even cry a little. Creator Charles Schulz's famous hero, Charlie Brown, is lying in a puffy beanbag-type seat with a thought above his head: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder, but it sure makes the rest of you lonely."

Everyone knows how the pandemic created social absence and locked us away

from loved ones, limiting our contact to a digital facsimile.

In most places, peoples are back to visiting in person. Many are going to the library, the movies, and even to one of their most important social environments: the workplace.

Whether or not we end up back in isolation, as COVID-19 variants continue to interfere with our lives, it's time to review social isolation, its effects, and how we can do more than just cope.

Continued on Page 14

For some, isolation can cause dangerous physical and mental decline.

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Chocolate for a Leaner, Longer Life

A little bit of chocolate has been linked to noteworthy health gains



Chocolate offers unique slimming and longevity benefits, as well as antioxidants that can help prevent chronic disease—but it's important to eat the "good" type and only in ideal amounts.

Studies point out that chocolate may not only make life sweet, but also help lengthen it. Chocolate isn't a recent invention; its health benefits date back to ancient times, when the Aztecs made a chocolate drink from the cacao bean.

The antioxidant content of chocolate may explain some of its health-boosting potential. Phenols in cacao can inhibit free radicals and help build immunity. From having a potentially longer life to attaining a leaner body, chocolate may be both a smart and delicious natural intervention.

Chocolate as an Anti-Obesity Treat

A March 2021 study investigated how adding 10 grams of cocoa-rich chocolate every day to the diet of postmenopausal women would affect their body composition.

The six-month randomized trial divided the subjects into two: the intervention group, which received 10 grams (g) of 99 percent cocoa chocolate daily as part of their habitual diet, and the control group, which didn't receive any cocoa. The quantity of chocolate received by the first group included 65.4 milligrams (mg) of polyphenols.

Measuring factors involving body composition, the cocoa was linked to a favorable decrease in the intervention group when it came to body fat mass and body fat percentage (as analyzed in the trunk, arms, and legs), with an insignificant reduction in body mass index. The researchers wrote, "Daily addition of 10 g of cocoa-rich chocolate to the habitual diet of postmenopausal women reduces their body fat mass and body fat percentage without modifying their weight."

In a separate study, cacao derivatives were analyzed in animal models for five weeks. The researchers found that the treatments significantly slashed body weight by 39 percent, systolic blood pressure by 27 percent, triglycerides by 55 percent, total cholesterol by 24 percent, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) by 37 percent, and the triglycerides/high-density lipoprotein (HDL) ratio by 54 percent. The cacao derivatives improved the metabolic function of the subjects without leading to secondary effects, the team noted.

Chocolate as a Heart-Healthy Food

Flavonols, which are plant-derived polyphenolic compounds in cocoa, have been linked to improved endothelial function and blood pressure in humans.

A March 2021 study explores the effect the consumption of cocoa flavonols has on stress-induced changes in humans' vascular function. The study recruited 30 healthy men to consume a cocoa beverage 1.5 hours before an eight-minute mental stress task, assessing forearm blood flow, blood pressure, and cardiovascular activity before and after, both at rest and during stress.

In the results, cocoa increased forearm blood flow at rest and during stress, with similar effects on stress-induced cardiovascular and blood pressure responses in both situations. Key to the outcomes are flavanols, which effectively counteract endothelial dysfunction and enhanced peripheral blood flow during stress, according to the authors.

But how much chocolate should lead to these benefits? A meta-analysis of 23 studies with 405,304 participants shows that reduced cardiovascular disease risk may occur with less than 100 g (about 3.5 ounces) of weekly consumption.

It's important to note that larger amounts may negate the benefits and cause adverse effects associated with high sugar intake.

Chocolate as a Longevity Promoter

How about the relationship between eating chocolate and mortality? Research

published in July 2021 examines this link in the U.S. population, studying 91,891 participants aged 55 to 74.

The researchers assessed the subjects' chocolate consumption through a food frequency questionnaire. With an average follow-up of 13.5 years, they documented 19,586 all-cause deaths.

The lowest risk for dying from all-cause mortality was seen at a chocolate intake of 0.7 servings per week and from cardiovascular events at 0.6 servings a week. The benefits were more pronounced in subjects who never smoked compared to current or former smokers.

While the exact causes of aging are yet to be clearly understood, research suggests that telomeres are connected to the aging process. A study found a strong correlation between telomere shortening rate and the lifespan of species such as humans.

Interestingly, research published in 2020 found that adolescents who consumed two servings per week or more of chocolate candy have longer leukocyte telomere length compared with

Phenols in cacao can inhibit free radicals and help build immunity.

nonconsumers, possibly because of its effect on the apolipoprotein A1 (ApoA1)/HDL pathway.

In a 2008 study, cocoa also demonstrated antioxidant, pro-oxidative, and metal-chelating properties on the common fruit fly.

In choosing to use chocolate for its weight loss and longevity benefits, it's important to consume the right kind.

Read more scientific studies on the benefits of cocoa or chocolate and how this celebrated health food, in the right amounts and form, may serve as a sweet strategy against disease and premature death at GreenMedInfo.com

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

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Look for the Best Chocolate Available

Dark and Raw: The darker, the better, as this means less sugar is added in the mix. Go for at least 70 percent cacao content, favoring raw cacao because more flavanols are preserved.

Organic: This helps you avoid residues of the herbicide glyphosate and other pesticides used in conventional farming.

Fair Trade: Cacao crops are often unfairly traded and are even associated with the use of child slaves.



High-quality chocolate confers the blessings of the bean, an antioxidant-packed superfood with some delicious benefits.

published in July 2021 examines this link in the U.S. population, studying 91,891 participants aged 55 to 74.

Weighing the Value of Plant-Based 'Meats'

Meat alternatives offer a tasty meal but have their drawbacks as well

JEFF PERKIN

Reassuring logos and label claims on meat substitutes may offer a comforting image. However, in today's strange world of food-processing technology, marketing wizardry, and chronic diseases, it's more important than ever to make informed food choices.

When it becomes popular to avoid certain items or ingredients, the food industry responds with a substitute that simulates the real thing. Sometimes, the products that come out of that effort bring their own problems.

"Remember, the front of the label is food marketing at its cleverest. It's designed to seduce you into an emotional purchase and then trick you with misleading claims," functional medicine physician Dr. Mark Hyman says in a video on his website.

If a food product was heavily processed in a factory, there are several factors to consider, including how well the original ingredients have retained their nutrients, what additives, preservatives, and problematic ingredients were added, and even potential endocrine disruptors in the packaging.

Why Plant-Based Meat?

We're living in a brave new world of food technology, with heavily-funded companies competing to develop the most meat-like products, from lab-grown cultured meats made from in vitro cell cultures of animal cells to simulated meat-like substitutes. The prospect of eating lab-grown, "cell-based meat" is understandably off-putting to many meat-eaters and vegetarians alike. Even though it resolves, in a somewhat unsettling way, some of the ethical concerns about meat production, it brings its own ethical and environmental questions.

The overconsumption of meat (especially of low quality) in American diets has helped produce major health problems and environmental concerns. Eating too much meat is linked to heart disease and cancer. Industrial animal agriculture, with its overcrowded, unnatural, and often inhumane practices, also is a huge source of pollution. It also results in raising unhealthy animals that are dependent on hormones, vaccines, and antibiotics.

Animals that are 100 percent grass-raised and finished in a more natural environment are much healthier and happier. The problem is that meat raised with these higher standards of care is hard to find and more expensive, which makes it an unlikely option for giant fast food chains looking to sell burgers as cheaply as possible. After all, the quality of the meat doesn't matter to many people if additives and condiments can enhance the flavor.

Some forms of meat are more dangerous than others. For instance, heavily processed meats such as bacon, hot dogs, and lunch meat have already been classified as Group 1 carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

For these reasons, many people are seek-

ing meat options. Economic concerns, such as the rising cost of animal feed and labor shortages, are also making traditional meat products more expensive, including higher-quality, more humanely raised meats. Plant-based meat products are held up as a solution to some of these issues.

What Does 'Plant-Based' Really Mean?

While faux meats may satisfy the cravings of a vegetarian-in-transition, they come in all grades of quality. That raises the question of whether they are healthy or even safe? Because of the sometimes extreme amount of processing involved in creating the latest generation of meat substitutes, a number of issues arise, researchers note.

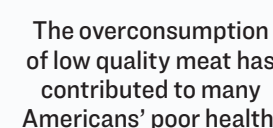
"Several potential challenges are associated with food safety and nutrition, including different kinds of chemical and microbial contaminants in the ingredients used, food adulteration issues, high levels of food additives, the use of genetically modified ingredients, mislabeling, new sources of allergens, vitamin or mineral deficiencies, and changes in protein quality," Diana Bogueva, head of the Centre for Advanced Food Engineering at the University of Sydney, and David Julian McClements, professor of food science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, wrote in a recent article.

Many faux-meat products use highly processed ingredients in addition to preservatives, oils, added sugars, and high levels of salt. The resulting product can be much less healthy than the shiny, progressive marketing messages that consumers are ingesting. It's important to look for information on the product's packaging to determine if it has been bioengineered (genetically modified) and to see what types of strange-sounding ingredients may be present.

"Plant-based meat alternatives contain near-neutral pH and high protein and moisture content, making them susceptible to microbial growth and spoilage," Bogueva and McClements wrote. To extract protein from plants, companies use chemicals, enzymes, and physical methods such as ultrasound. That's before the protein is combined with other ingredients and put through extrusion processes to become physically meat-like. These products also have to be packaged and correctly temperature-maintained to avoid contamination, physical alteration, or microbial growth.

In this context, the term "plant-based" can quickly become secondary to the term "hyper-processed." While it may technically be true, it can also

Many faux-meat products use highly processed ingredients in addition to preservatives, oils, added sugars, and high levels of salt.



The overconsumption of low quality meat has contributed to many Americans' poor health.

Mushrooms are a natural alternative to meat with many health benefits.

become misleading. If the plants are processed enough to taste like meat because of additives and questionable processes, they've traveled a long way from their most nutritious starting point.

While they are clearly not a healthier alternative to actual plant foods, these substitutes can give meat eaters a satisfying alternative. They also offer a solution to some of the environmental and economic problems associated with animal food production and the ethical concerns of some consumers. So it's not that all meat replacements are unwelcome, it's just that consumers need to understand the nature of the products they are buying.

Natural Plant-Based Alternatives

Eating a mostly plant-based diet, with whole fruits and vegetables, nuts, beans, mushrooms, and seeds can have remarkable benefits, including a lowered risk of cancer.

According to a long-term Japanese cohort study, "substitution of plant protein for animal protein, mainly for red or processed meat protein, was associated with lower risk of total, cancer-related, and cardiovascular disease-related mortality."

While few plants have the complete array of nine essential proteins—that is the proteins that can't be synthesized by our bodies—a combination of plant foods can provide all nine.

And while plant-based eating can certainly be a good thing, it's important to remember that not all "plant-based" diets are equal. Plant-based junk food is widely available and many meat alternatives fall firmly within the category of "hyper-processed foods." It's important to focus on eating the plants themselves rather than the "frankenfoods" that may be created from them.

There are many age-old, natural alternatives to newer meatless burgers. It's easy to find recipes online for veggie burgers and dishes that utilize beans, lentils, mushrooms, potatoes, soy, and tempeh (fermented soy). The Cleveland Clinic's website has a recipe for a "zesty black bean burger" without the use of vegetable oils or excessive additives. Legumes and soy also may be allergens for some people, so substitute according to the requirements of your unique gut makeup.

Jeff Perkin is a graphic artist and integrative nutrition health coach. He can be reached at WholySelf.com

The idea of eating 'cell-based meat' developed in a lab is off-putting to many meat-eaters and vegetarians alike.



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THE EPOCH TIMES

Prebiotics and Probiotics

What you need to get your gut health back on track

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



Prebiotics are the fiber rich foods we eat that feed the good bacteria.

MAT LECOMPTÉ

If you're not thinking about your gut health, you're missing an important element of your overall health.

Your gut can influence mood, immunity, metabolism, and the functionality of your body's internal systems.

How does it have this kind of power? Think about it this way: You've got trillions of cells in your body that most consider central to existence. Well, "gut health" is really a way of describing the bacterial population in your system—your microbiome. You actually have far more bacteria and fungi living inside you than the

number of your actual cells.

So, how do you make sure you've got the best bacteria to keep you feeling good and healthy? Make sure you're cultivating the right kinds of bacteria and that you're feeding them adequately.

Your genetics certainly play a role in your microbiome. But that's not the only factor involved. You've got the power to control what bacteria populate your gut and how they either build or diminish your health.

Prebiotics and probiotics play a huge role in gut health. Probiotics are literal living bacteria that you can eat to improve your gut health. Prebiotics are the things you can eat that actually feed these bacteria to help them thrive.

Probiotics are found in fermented foods such as yogurt,

kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, papaya, and pickles. Prebiotics are in most plant-based foods. Fibrous foods are generally prebiotic and help feed your gut what it needs for optimal health.

On the other hand, processed and sugary foods can populate your gut with unhealthy bacteria. These bacteria can promote inflammation, bad moods, fatigue, digestive problems, and more.

But they aren't permanent residents. You can potentially evict them, in time, by eating more vegetables and plant-based foods, boosting probiotic intake, and limiting processed foods and sugary drinks.



Probiotics are in fermented foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, and yogurt.

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

Setting Up a Home Gym



Get fit without a membership, gym clothes, or leaving your living room

STEPHEN SOWULEWSKI

Have you ever thought of having a dedicated space for fitness? The goal of having fitness at your fingertips may be easier than you think, and it may make exercising that much more top-of-mind and accessible.

First and foremost, you want to make sure you have a real wish to get fit. If your exercise bike or the treadmill has turned into a clothes rack, you should pause and question why that is. Maybe you need another route to physical health, like a drop-in sports league or a social commitment to exercise with friends.

But if you're worried about the size of your space, no worries. A home gym can vary according to your circumstance. Some people have a mat they pull out and a few dumbbells in the corner, others transform their garage into their own private gym.

A home gym can be an investment. Whereas gym members are responsible for monthly or yearly memberships, home gyms could save people a lot of money and time. Moreover, if one takes care of their equipment and services it periodically, the only real costs involved would be on the front end when purchasing the equipment and modifying any spaces.

Free Weights Versus Strength Training Machines

There are pros and cons to owning both free weights and strength training machines. Machines are relatively safe to use in comparison with free weights but take up a lot more space and offer a more limited range of movement. In some cases, you need a spotter when you're pushing your limit with free weights. For example, if you are doing a bench press exercise with free weights, it's essential to have someone "spot" you to assist if the weight becomes too heavy to manage. With exercise machines, you can easily and safely drop the weight without fear of injury.

But because free weights have no restricted motion and can move in many different directions, they offer a wider range of exercise possibilities and can help to improve balance.

If your budget is a concern, free weights are fairly inexpensive compared to machines. They also take up much less space and are easier to tuck away. That said, there are some innovative machines that are designed to take up less space and offer a combination of exercises.

Dumbbells, Bars, and Plate Weights

Having various increments of weight can allow for more options depending on the exercise. A dumbbell rack or a dumbbell tree can store your weights in less space or you can tuck dumbbells under your bed. Dumbbells are a nice addition to a home gym because they can be used to work all the major muscle groups including arms, chest, shoulders, legs, and back. If you want

When investing in these more expensive pieces of equipment, it's prudent that you buy with a purpose.



Dumbbells are a nice addition to a home gym because they can be used to work all the major muscle groups including arms, chest, shoulders, legs, and back.



You can do many exercises with an exercise ball that costs around \$20.

the look and feel of a fitness center, you can purchase a bar and some plate weights along with a bench. Take safeguards to ensure that the plate weights are secure with the use of collars to keep the plates from sliding off the bar. Look for a bench that can incline and decline, which increases the range of exercises that you can perform.

Exercise Ball

An exercise ball looks fun but it may be daunting for beginners who are unsure how to sit on it and exercise. These are sometimes referred to as stability balls and are used widely in physical medicine and rehabilitation. They usually come in three sizes: 22 inches (55 cm), 26 inches (65 cm), and 30 inches (75 cm), which are aligned to a person's height as opposed to their weight.

There are myriad exercises that can be done with an exercise ball and they can be purchased for around \$20. You can even use them at your desk instead of an office chair since they allow for more active sitting and offer a kind of passive exercise as you sit.

Jump Rope

If you don't want to pound the pavement or make room for a costly treadmill, buy a jump rope. This simple but effective fitness staple isn't just for high school physical education classes. A study by researchers at Arizona State University found participants who jumped rope for 10 minutes daily boosted their cardiovascular health by the same amount as those who jogged for 30 minutes daily.

Exercise Bands and a Mat

Resistance bands are inexpensive and light enough to tote anywhere—even when traveling. These colored bands offer different levels of resistance, from low-level yellow to more challenging blue and black. Red and green are more moderately resistive. They can be used for both upper-body exercises and lower-body exercises.

Since many exercises take place on the floor, a comfortable mat is important, especially on harder surfaces. Be certain your mat offers adequate cushioning for

the lower back and tailbone, as well as for the head and neck. Some exercise mats are longer and thinner for use in yoga classes.

Cardiovascular Equipment

There are tremendous benefits to doing your exercises outdoors and with other people. But if you struggle to find the time, or just want the convenience, exercise machines offer great options.

When investing in these more expensive pieces of equipment, it's prudent that you buy with a purpose. If you bristle at the thought of walking on a treadmill to nowhere or if malaise overcomes you when sitting on an exercise bike after being seated at work all day, there are other options available.

For example, if you were part of the crew team in college and long for those days again, a rowing machine might be a smart purchase. Perhaps you enjoy the versatility of an elliptical machine that lets you work your upper body and lower body simultaneously. Other options include upper-extremity bikes for those who may have injuries or other issues in their lower extremities. Cross-country ski machines, stair climbers, and recumbent bikes are other options for individuals who might not be able to use an upright stationary bike due to poor balance or debilitation.

Depending on your health or ability, it's important to consider the pros and cons of weight-bearing and non-weight-bearing exercise. For an exercise to qualify as weight-bearing, the skeleton must support the weight. For example, pedaling a bike is weight-bearing only if you stand in the pedals but if you stay seated, it qualifies as non-weight-bearing. Running on a treadmill would be considered a high-impact weight-bearing exercise.

Weight-bearing exercises, including those that include some impact, offer numerous benefits and can strengthen bones as well as muscles. But for those with ailments such as arthritis or osteoporosis, you may need to play it safe and avoid the weight.

Bodyweight Resistance

I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the obvious—using our own body weight as resistance is an excellent way to exercise. It's free, always accessible, and you don't need any equipment. A hike in the woods, push-ups, lunges, planks, or climbing the high school bleachers are all great ways to get fit. Speaking of the school grounds, find the jungle gym and you have an instant pull-up station. There are hundreds of different bodyweight exercises and endless instructional videos freely available online.

Dr. Stephen Sowulewski is a professor in the School of Health Professions at Reynolds Community College, an adjunct professor in Virginia Commonwealth University's Honors College and the University of Richmond's School of Continuing Studies. He also serves on the board of directors at the Men's Health Network in Washington, D.C.

You don't need to spend a lot of money or have a large space to get a great workout in the comfort of your home.



Resistance bands are inexpensive and light enough to tote anywhere—even when traveling.

Got Long COVID?

Medical expertise is vital, and seniors should prepare to go slow

JUDITH GRAHAM

Older adults who have survived COVID-19 are more likely than younger patients to have persistent symptoms such as fatigue, breathlessness, muscle aches, heart palpitations, headaches, joint pain, and difficulty with memory and concentration—problems linked to long COVID.

But it can be hard to distinguish lingering aftereffects of COVID-19 from conditions common in older adults such as lung disease, heart disease, and mild cognitive impairment. There are no diagnostic tests or recommended treatments for long COVID, and the biological mechanisms that underlie its effects remain poorly understood.

"Identifying long COVID in older adults with other medical conditions is tricky," said Dr. Nathan Erdmann, an assistant professor of infectious diseases at the University of Alabama-Birmingham's school of medicine. Failing to do so means older COVID-19 survivors might not receive appropriate care.

What should older adults do if they don't feel well weeks after becoming ill with the virus? I asked a dozen experts for advice. Here's what they suggested.

Seek medical attention. "If an older person or their caregiver is noticing that it's been a month or two since COVID and something isn't right—they've lost a lot of weight or they're extremely weak or forgetful—it's worth going in for an evaluation," said Dr. Liron Sinvari, director of the geriatric hospitalist service at Northwell Health, a large health system in New York.

But be forewarned: Many primary care physicians are at a loss as to how to identify and manage long COVID. If you're not getting much help from your doctor, consider getting a referral to a specialist who sees long COVID patients or a long COVID clinic. Also, be prepared to be patient: Waits for appointments are lengthy.

At least 66 hospitals or health systems have created interdisciplinary clinics, according to Becker's Hospital Review, an industry publication. For people who don't live near one of those, virtual consultations are often available. For specialist referrals, ask whether the physician has experience with long COVID patients.

Also, more than 80 medical centers in more than 30 states are enrolling patients in a four-year, \$1.15 billion study of long COVID that is being funded by the National Institutes of Health and is known as RECOVER (Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery). Older adults who choose to participate will receive ongoing medical attention.

Pursue comprehensive care. At the University of Southern California's COVID recovery clinic, physicians start by making sure that any underlying medical conditions that older patients have—for instance, heart failure or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease—are well controlled. Also, they check for new conditions that may have surfaced after a COVID infection.

If preexisting and new conditions are properly managed and further tests come back negative, "there is probably an element of long COVID," said Dr. Caitlin McAuley, one of two physicians at the Keck School of Medicine clinic.

At that point, the focus becomes helping older adults regain the ability to manage daily tasks such as showering, dressing, moving around the house, and shopping. Typically, several months of physical therapy, occupational therapy, or cognitive rehabilitation are prescribed.

Dr. Erica Spatz, an associate professor of cardiology at the Yale School of Medicine, looks for evidence of organ damage, such as changes in the heart muscle, in older patients. If that's detected, there are well-established treatments that can be tried.

"The older a person is, the more likely we are to find organ injury," Spatz said. At the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab in Chicago, a rehabilitation hospital, experts have discovered that a significant number of patients with breathing problems have atrophy in the diaphragm, a muscle that's essential to breathing, said Dr. Colin Franz, a physician-scientist. Once inflammation is under control, breathing exercises help patients build back the muscle, he said.

For older adults concerned about their cognition after COVID-19, McAuley recommends a neuropsychological exam.

"Plenty of older patients who've had COVID feel like they now have dementia. But when they do the testing, all their higher-level cognitive functioning is intact, and it's things like attention or cognitive fluency that are impaired," she said. "It's important



If you recovered from COVID-19 but feel as if you aged suddenly, it is entirely possible you are struggling with long COVID.

Plenty of older patients who've had COVID feel like they now have dementia. But when they do the testing, all their higher-level cognitive functioning is intact, and it's things like attention or cognitive fluency that are impaired.

Dr. Caitlin McAuley, physician, Keck School of Medicine clinic

The most important message older patients need to hear is 'give yourself time to recover.'

Dr. Greg Vanichkachorn, director, Mayo Clinic's COVID Activity Rehabilitation Program

If you're not getting much help from your doctor, consider getting a referral to a specialist who sees long COVID patients or a long COVID clinic.

to understand where deficits are so we can target therapy appropriately."

Become active gradually. Older patients tend to lose strength and fitness after severe illness—a phenomenon known as "deconditioning"—and their blood volume and heart muscles will start shrinking in a few weeks if they lie in bed or get little activity, Spatz said. That can cause dizziness or a racing heart upon standing up.

In line with recent recommendations from the American College of Cardiology, Spatz advises patients who have developed these symptoms after COVID-19 to drink more fluids, consume more salt, and wear compression socks and abdominal binders.

"I often hear that going for a walk feels awful," Spatz said. When returning to exercise, "start with five to 10 minutes on a recumbent bicycle or a rower, and add a couple of minutes every week," she suggested. After a month, move to a semi-recumbent position on a standard bike. Then, after another month, try walking, a short distance at first and then longer distances over time.

This "go slow" advice also applies to older adults with cognitive concerns after COVID. Franz said he often recommends restricting time spent on cognitively demanding tasks, along with exercises, for brain health and memory. At least early on, "people need less activity and more cognitive rest," he noted.

Reset expectations. Older adults typically have a harder time bouncing back from serious illness, including COVID-19. But even seniors who had mild or moderate reactions to the virus can find themselves struggling weeks or months later.

The most important message older patients need to hear is "give yourself time to recover," said Dr. Greg Vanichkachorn, director of the Mayo Clinic's COVID Activity Rehabilitation Program in Rochester, Minnesota. Generally, older adults appear to be taking longer to recover from long COVID than younger or middle-aged adults, he noted.

Learning how to set priorities and not do too much too quickly is essential.

"In this patient population, we've found that having patients grit their teeth and push themselves will actually make them worse"—a phenomenon known as "post-exertional malaise," Vanichkachorn said.

Instead, people need to learn how to pace themselves.

"Any significant health event forces people to reexamine their expectations and their priorities, and long COVID has really accelerated that," said Jamie Wilcox, an associate

professor of clinical occupational therapy at the Keck School of Medicine. "Everyone I see feels that it's accelerated their aging process."

Consider vulnerabilities. Older adults who have had COVID and who are poor, frail, physically or cognitively disabled, and socially isolated are of considerable concern. This group has been more likely to experience severe effects from COVID-19, and those who survived may not readily access health care services.

"We all share concern about marginalized seniors with limited health care access and poorer overall health status," said UAB's Erdmann. "Sprinkle a dangerous new pathology that's not well understood on top of that, and you have a recipe for greater disparities in care."

"A lot of older [long COVID] patients we deal with aren't accustomed to asking for help, and they think, perhaps, it's a little shameful to be needy," said James Jackson, director of long-term outcomes at the Critical Illness, Brain Dysfunction, and Survivorship Center at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

The implications are significant, not only for the patients but also for health care providers, friends, and family.

"You really have to check in with people who are older and vulnerable and who have had COVID and not just make assumptions that they're fine just because they tell you they are," he said. "We need to be more proactive in engaging them and finding out, really, how they are."

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

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

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Coping *With* Loneliness

New tools and old habits can help us deal with social isolation

Continued from Page 9

Why Do We Need Contact? After enormous success in early 20th-century movies, actress Greta Garbo was famous for saying, "I want to be alone." And she was—pretty much disappearing from Hollywood and most social venues, never marrying, having no children, and maintaining few acquaintances near her New York City sanctuary.

But it's been proven that any kind of long-term solitude—even when it's essentially voluntary—can create dangerous health issues.

As a review study published in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* in 2011 puts it, when we perceive ourselves as socially isolated, it leads to changes in our biochemistry, including inflammation, immunity, and even the expression of genes. "Together, these effects contribute to higher rates of morbidity and mortality in older adults," the researchers conclude.

Even before the pandemic, "We were seeing a variety of societal trends, such as things like people's social circles or social networks getting smaller," said Julianne Holt-Lunstad, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Utah's Brigham Young University and a longtime guru on social isolation.

A 2018 study she did pointed to a 2013 report showing that "over a quarter of the U.S. population, and 28 percent of older adults, live alone." Her team's report states that "one-third of adults over age 45 report being lonely ... equating to over 42 million older adults who experience chronic loneliness."

"More people are living alone," said Holt-Lunstad. "Not that living alone necessarily means that you're isolated, but that can certainly increase one's risk. Fewer people are getting married, or are delaying marriage, and fewer people are having kids. And again, that doesn't necessarily mean that someone's isolated, but, particularly with an aging population, it might mean fewer familial types of resources to draw on for social support."

Nina Vasani, chief medical officer at the mental health app Real, agrees. "We've been in a loneliness epidemic for several years, predating even COVID," she said. "This epidemic has impacted all parts of society, including all ages, demographics, and socioeconomic groups. But when COVID hit, it significantly exacerbated the feelings of social isolation."

True Dangers of Loneliness

Ellie Borden, clinical director of Mind by Design, which provides psychological assessments, treatments, and life and business coaching throughout Ontario, Canada, goes into more detail.

"Social isolation is an actual measure of the amount of people we choose to surround ourselves with," she said. "Loneliness is feelings about the quality of one's relationships. It's where your relationships are, and where you want them to be. If you feel that there is a big space or gap between these two points, there may be feelings of loneliness."

Experts agree that there are normal reasons for long-term "aleness," which can start with relatively normal seclusion. "Someone may socially isolate because of a physical impairment following an accident or being injured," Borden said. "Or they're in mourning, in an abusive relationship, or even spending most of their time scrolling on social media."

"Mental health concerns—like depression, anxiety, personality disorders, and low self-esteem and/or self-worth—can cause someone to isolate, and vice



versa," she said. Issues like these often involve a period of isolation before an individual gets back to their regular social routines. Still, the earlier an individual in distress seeks connection and support, the better.

For some, isolation can cause dangerous physical and mental decline, notes Holt-Lunstad.

"Social isolation increases our risk for premature mortality," she said.

"It increases your risk for cardiovascular disease. It increases your risk for depression and anxiety. And it increases your risk for cognitive decline. So it has significant health risks associated with it—and yes, it is something that we need to take quite seriously."

Maybe you don't need help, but you've been having concerns about a loved one. Borden offers these points to check:



Technology can offer us a way to connect with others, but all too often it ends up keeping us further apart.

WML/IMAGE/SHUTTERSTOCK

"Frequently canceling plans, avoiding people and events they normally wouldn't, seeming worried or anxious around people, losing interest in hygiene, low interest in things they previously enjoyed, not wanting to get out of bed, and lack of physical activity."

Those who withdraw and isolate to this extent are usually suffering from underlying issues that may need to be addressed with the help of a professional.

The Technology Blessing—

and Curse Since the turn of the millennium, new digital tools have offered us a way to connect—and a way to isolate.

"One of the best tools we have to help us connect to others is social media," said Vasani. "Some social media platforms were originally created with connectivity and sharing as their intention."

But, as Vasani reminds us, "it is important to note that we have to be really mindful about how we're using social media. Because while some types of social media use can help us connect with others, other types can exacerbate social isolation. Some forms of communication can feel supportive and build strong bonds, while others might feel invasive and taxing."

Holt-Lunstad also offers warnings about using social media platforms and other tools to stay connected.

"While they hold a lot of promise, we do need to be cautious and make sure they are adequately tested, because there have been some instances where studies have shown that their use actually

makes things worse.

"My colleagues and I did an international survey that included 101 different countries, and in 10 different languages, looking at what kinds of factors contributed to loneliness. And one surprising [factor] was dissatisfaction with online chat or online video conferencing tools.

Those who reported dissatisfaction with those also reported greater severity of loneliness," she reports.

It's Always About Coping

Some of the best lessons we can learn are through those who have faced hardship. When it comes to learning how to stay connected, Kathy Harmon-Luber has faced terrible challenges.

"Over many, many years, I've had a lot of spinal diseases develop," she said. She'd been very active until 2016 when a new issue created a truly dark episode that made her focus on the importance of mindset and how important social connection was to her mental well-being.

"The fourth spinal disc rupture occurred, leaving me bedridden for nearly five years," she said. "And that was crazy, because I'm a really active, somewhat athletic person. It was a shock. I thought it would heal pretty quickly, but it took a long time. And it was inoperable."

So, how did Harmon-Luber fight depression and other mental health issues?

"I think part of what really helped me get through being so bedridden was, 'How can I be connected to people?' That's number one. Everybody needs a place of refuge and connection," she said.

"I really made an effort to stay connected. I recognized that as a lifeline. Getting caught in a loop of bad thought, of negative thought—it's really easy to go to that place with all the wrong questions."

Ultimately, Harmon-Luber wrote a book, "Suffering to Thriving," just published on May 10.

"What I try to emphasize through the book is: Every moment is a choice," she said. "We can choose something better. We can choose to be grateful, instead of catastrophizing about every bad thing that could happen at a time like this. When we change our mindset, we tend to attract better things into our lives. Look at the pandemic or any bad thing that befalls us in life, and say, 'Where is the opportunity in this?'"

Old-Fashioned Doesn't Mean Outdated

We've learned many lessons in life about connecting with others, but likely haven't taken the time to really review and acknowledge what we've learned.

Vasani, the chief medical officer at Real, suggests that we do.

"Think back historically to times or activities that made you feel connected with others, that gave you energy, and made you feel part of a community," she said. "Write that down. Journal on those experiences. What were the specific elements that resonated with you?"

"Then get creative about recreating those experiences. Maybe it means taking something that was in-person and turning it into a virtual experience. Maybe it means instead of traveling, doing something locally. Figure out new ways to create events and opportunities that are safe and aligned with the guidelines of what we're able to do today."

Vasani said that things like connecting with your community, practicing mindfulness and gratitude, reflecting, journaling, and learning best practices around sleep can help tremendously. "These are all things you can do without any cost."

Wendy Meyeroff, the *Ghostwriter Who Grabs Attention*, has been a health and technology writer for business and consumer markets for over 20 years.

Human connection is an essential need that gets harder for many people to fulfill as they age.

When we perceive ourselves as socially isolated, it leads to changes in our biochemistry, including inflammation, immunity, and even the expression of genes.

Children are growing up with fewer meaningful friendships than in previous generations.



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Turning a Stumbling Block Into an Advantage

Growing up dyslexic has surprising benefits

Continued from Page 9

She has "seen so many children who are struggling to read but have a high IQ," she told *Science Daily*.

"High-performing dyslexics are very intelligent, often out-of-the-box thinkers and problem-solvers."

A 2011 NIH-funded study that involved brain imaging also found that dyslexia isn't correlated with intelligence. For this study, a team of researchers from MIT and other institutions measured the brain activity of 131 children in Pittsburgh and San Francisco. Students in the study ranged in age from 7 to 16 years old.

The children fell into two categories: Some were "typical" readers and some were "poor readers," and the researchers separated them into three groups: typical readers with typical reading and IQ scores; poor readers with poor reading skills but typical IQ scores; and poor readers with low IQ scores.

The scientists then used functional magnetic resonance imaging scanners to look at the brains of the children while they engaged in an on-screen reading activity. The children had to look at pairs of words and indicate whether or not the words rhymed.

The researchers found that children with dyslexia had similar brain imaging as children with poor reading skills, even those who had high IQ scores, leading them to conclude that reading difficulties for people who are dyslexic are independent of other cognitive abilities.

"Reading difficulty," one of the research team explained in a statement, "is independent of other cognitive abilities."

What Is It Like to Read With Dyslexia?

For someone who doesn't have dyslexia, it's hard to understand what it feels like. Imagine reading with the lights off. The words are somewhat visible, but it takes an extra effort to see them and process them.

You have to reread the page a few times because it is difficult to comprehend what you're reading in the dark. This can cause frustration and make reading strenuous and unpleasant.

Those with dyslexia, the people I interviewed told me, experience this feeling of "reading in the dark" on a daily basis, even though they are reading with the lights on.

Challenges Associated With Dyslexia Gottlieb said one of the most difficult challenges associated with dyslexia is the amount of time it takes to complete reading or writing assignments.

When Gottlieb was in high school, she told me she would start her homework every night after lacrosse practice, around 6 p.m. While her peers typically finished their homework in one to two hours, Gottlieb was up doing work until



Dyslexia compels children to adapt in ways that can make them stronger.

Although dyslexia is considered a learning 'disability,' it really should be known as a 'learning difference and advantage.'

I a.m. most nights.

The worst evenings were when she was tasked with reading multiple textbook chapters. It took her hours to finish a handful of pages because of her difficulty to process and comprehend the words on the page.

But, Gottlieb said, the demands accompanying dyslexia aren't limited to the school or work environment. Dyslexia can cause disruptions in other aspects of everyday life.

One of the most difficult tasks for Gottlieb involves following directions and reading maps.

During a recent drive to the dentist—on the other side of town—Gottlieb missed her exit on the highway despite having the GPS synched up to her car.

She ended up going 30 minutes in the opposite direction. Gottlieb's sister was a passenger in the car and tried to help, but she also is dyslexic. So they both ended up missing their long-awaited dentist appointments.

If You Think You or Your Child Is Dyslexic, What Should You Do?

Take your child to a licensed educational psychologist for testing. A professional evaluation of reading, language, and writing skills is required to formally diagnose dyslexia. Optimize your child's school experience and success by reaching out to a school counselor for academic accommodations such as extended testing time and the use of assistive technology. Early detection is key. Don't shy away from getting your child proper testing if you suspect they are dyslexic, just because you feel ashamed. Recognizing your child's learning style will only help them to be more successful. Although dyslexia is considered a learning "disability," it really should be known as a "learning difference and advantage."

Thinking Outside the Box Is a Gift

Here's what you rarely hear about children and adults who are dyslexic: Dyslexics have the ability to think outside the box of the typical learner and see the world in a unique way. Those with dyslexia adapt by leaning into their strengths. They are known to be highly creative, imaginative, observant, and persistent.

Jordan Pease, an entrepreneur and philanthropist based in southern Or-

gon, isn't sure if he was born with dyslexia or if it's related to a head injury he had from a bike accident when he was 6.

"I'm in my early 50s now, and it was probably well into my high school years that I finally started to realize that there was some kind of disorder that caused me to feel like I was handicapped in certain, narrowly specific areas," he said. "I don't have a way to gauge it, but I'd characterize my dyslexia as 'moderate' compared to other people that I've encountered or read about with the condition."

Growing up, Pease had difficulties spelling, often transposed numbers, and sometimes even had trouble just dialing the phone, challenges that continue to this day. Writing on lined yellow paper in school was especially hard for him because he couldn't distinguish the letters from the lines.

These days, he notices that he has trouble driving in the late afternoon when there are long shadows: the contrasting light and dark areas on the road are difficult for him.

"It's like a motor revving up under a load," Pease said. "My brain really gets taxed with tasks that are very simple for most folks."

Given his challenges with alphabetizing and numerical ordering, the last thing you would expect is that he would open a library. But, about 20 years ago, that's just what he decided to do. He felt strongly called to found a library for people interested in alternative information about life on other planets, health, economics, and more. His motivation was to provide people easy access to information that inspires, heals, and transforms.

The Rogue Valley Metaphysical Library in Ashland, Oregon, has been thriving under Pease's leadership ever since.

As for Gottlieb, she used to feel frustrated by her dyslexia, but now she says she's embracing it as advantageous. Her plan is to become a writer.

"My biggest stumbling block when it comes to meeting my writing goals is that I am dyslexic," she wrote recently. "Growing up, I saw this as a disadvantage because it always took me way longer than my peers to finish my work. It used to take me hours to complete one page of writing. Others who know that I am dyslexic often assume that I am incapable of producing advanced writing prior to even reading my work."

"However, when I came to college it was my goal to turn this stumbling block into my advantage. I believe that being dyslexic allows me to see the world through a different lens than most people. I rely on my auditory abilities and talk out loud as I write. I have been able to conquer my dyslexia by relying on my strengths. I am now a much faster writer compared to when I was in high school and find that writing flows easier for me than it ever has before."

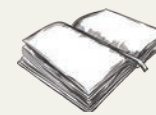
"As a junior in college, I have been able to maintain a 4.0 GPA every single semester since my freshman year and have been nominated for multiple writing awards by my professors. Although it still is not easy, I am proud that I have been able to turn my stumbling block into my advantage."

Jennifer Margulis, Ph.D., 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 prime-time TV in Paris, and taught post-colonial literature to non-traditional students in inner-city Atlanta. Learn more about her at JenniferMargulis.net

Strategies to Help With Dyslexia

Those with dyslexia learn to cope by developing strategies to act as "flashlights" to ease their challenges. These coping strategies include:

Starting assignments early and not procrastinating. It generally takes people with dyslexia a lot longer to finish reading or writing tasks. To alleviate the stress of completing something last minute, you must plan ahead and give yourself extra time.



Taking advantage of technology. There are several online services available that make living with dyslexia easier. Search "assistive technology to help with dyslexia" and you'll find multiple options. Some that are particularly helpful include:

NaturalReader: A free text-to-speech program. Upload PDF or Word documents to the program and choose which voice you prefer. NaturalReader will read any document you upload. All you have to do is listen.

Speech-to-Text Programs.

Typing long essays can be strenuous for many dyslexics. Both Microsoft Word and Google Docs have free "speech-to-text" options, as do both the Apple and Microsoft operating systems. Depending on the program or operating system, all you have to do is enable the use of the microphone on your computer and click "voice typing." As long as you speak clearly, your speech will be dictated. This can help save a lot of time.

Bookshare.

Audiobooks speed up and aid with reading comprehension for many with dyslexia. Bookshare is a service that provides access to free audiobooks. You can also get free audiobooks via your local public library. Try downloading Libby, a free app that lets you borrow audiobooks and eBooks from many libraries.

Stay organized. To-do lists are lifesavers. Break large tasks into smaller, tangible parts, and always use a planner. The Simplified Planner, created by Emily Ley, is Gottlieb's favorite.

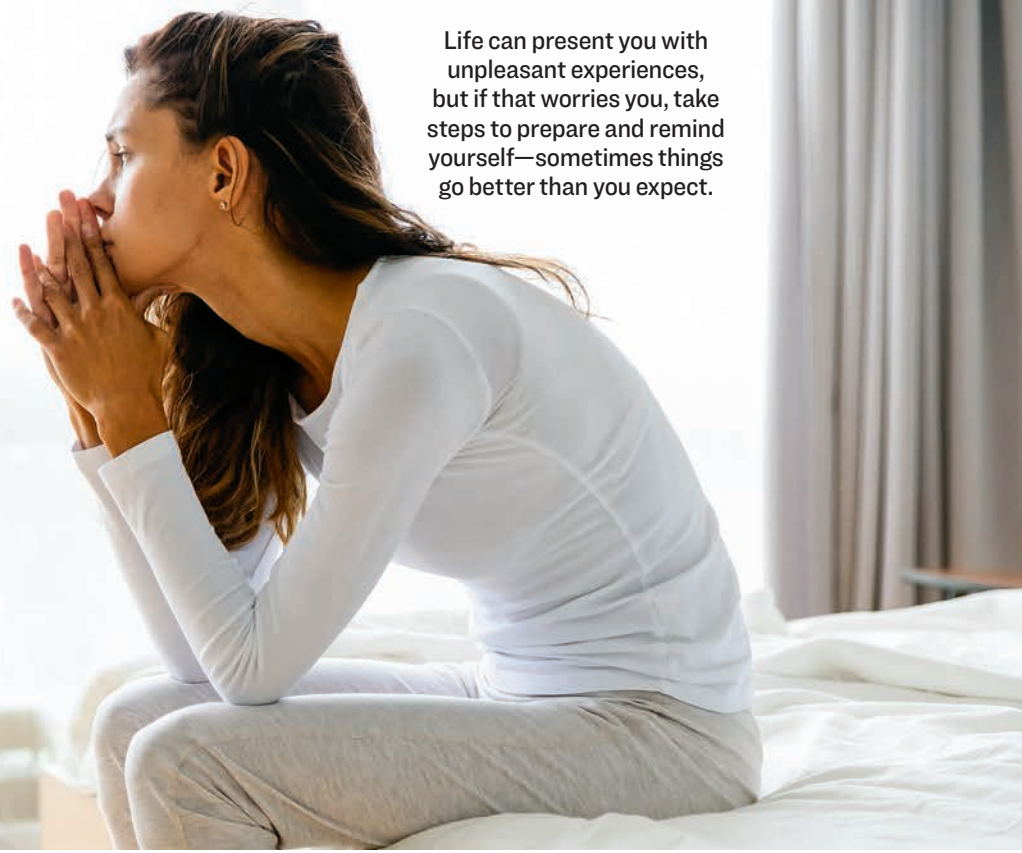
Find a study buddy.

Relaying information to another person is an effective way to master skills when you have dyslexia. Parents, friends, classmates, tutors, and siblings can all be study buddies. Turn studying into a game, like Jeopardy or Guess-Who, to make it feel more like fun and less like work.

Have a good sense of humor. Don't expect perfection. It's okay to make mistakes. Spell check can't identify the word you're trying to spell? Laugh it off. You miss your long-awaited dentist appointment? You gained good sister-sister bonding time ...

Solving Anxiety

Learning to deal with the 2 halves of anxiety is key to eliminating it



Life can present you with unpleasant experiences, but if that worries you, take steps to prepare and remind yourself—sometimes things go better than you expect.

FIZKES/SHUTTERSTOCK

TENESHA L. CURTIS

Nearly 20 percent of the population suffers from an anxiety disorder, such as obsessive-compulsive disorder or social phobia. While there are serious concerns about diagnostic inflation—that is, the expanding definition of behaviors that may not actually reflect a mental illness—some researchers argue that the rise in these disorders is more than just psychiatric overreach.

Therefore, treating true clinical anxiety disorders takes a trained mental health professional. But the more mild anxiety that most of us may feel throughout any given day (passing a test, asking someone out on a date, and so on) may be manageable with a better understanding of how anxiety works. Once you wrap your head around what makes anxiety tick, it becomes easier to dismantle it and feel more calm and confident in these common, stressful situations.

Occasional anxiety is an intense feeling of worry about something that's uncertain. This often leads to experiences such as having racing thoughts and feeling fear. These symptoms often stem from two beliefs:

- “Something unpleasant is going to happen.”

- “I won't be able to handle it.”

If you can combat one of these two halves of anxiety, you can greatly reduce how much anxiety you feel. If you can debunk both halves, you may come close to eliminating your nervous feelings.

Something Unpleasant

“I'm going to fail the exam.”

“My crush is going to reject me.”

“My boss is going to turn me down for a raise.”

These are all manifestations of the idea that “something unpleasant is going to happen.” There are two ways to fight against this belief. The first is to remember that it may not be true that this is the case. You could pass the exam. Your love interest could accept your offer of a romantic date. Your boss may give you the raise that you're about to ask for. Just because you're afraid of a particular outcome doesn't mean it's guaranteed to happen.

The second way to defend against this kind of belief is by preparing for that unpleasant outcome. Even though it's not guaranteed to happen, it's also not impossible for it to happen. Being prepared can help you feel more secure about handling

it if it does take place. This preparedness can reduce how stressed you are about it. You might be surprised by how much better you'll feel by simply having a plan B.

Research the makeup exam and the cost of study groups. Then, if you do fail for some reason, you already know what you need to do to retake the exam.

Just because you're afraid of a particular outcome doesn't mean it's guaranteed to happen.

Choose a date night while something else casual is happening with family or friends, such as a cookout or a watch party. If all goes well with your request for a date, you go on the date! But if you get rejected, you have somewhere you can go to be surrounded by people you care about and soften the disappointment you might feel. If your boss rejects your request for a raise, anticipate what you can do to make yourself more valuable or find a better job.

Handling It

“If I fail the exam, I'll never get into a good school.”

“If I get rejected, I'll never find love.”

These thoughts are different ways to express the belief that you won't be able to handle the unpleasant thing if it ever takes place.

To combat this, remember that you've likely been through many unpleasant experiences at this point in your life. Things that left you heartbroken, angry, disappointed, or bewildered. Yet you survived after having gone through those things. One key method for battling the idea that you can't handle an unpleasant situation is simply to remember that you can. Yes, it might hurt or be humiliating or be expensive or frustrate you. But that doesn't mean you can't survive it at all.

Again, being prepared goes a long way. You can handle most things in life if you know they're coming and have time to get ready for them. The shock of an unexpected disappointment is often more powerful because it's a surprise. You take some of its power away by recognizing it as a possibility and preparing for it before it happens. If it doesn't happen, that's great. But if it does, you're ready to manage it appropriately.

New Thinking Patterns

It's hard to break thinking patterns overnight, but if you work at reframing how you look at situations that cause you anxiety, you can gradually start to feel less anxious over time.

“I've studied hard for this test, and I can always take it again if I need to. I'll do my best!”

“I can always hang out with my friends at the parade on Saturday if I get rejected. I owe it to myself to at least ask.”

Unpleasant things aren't always going to happen. Even if they do, you're capable of surviving that painful situation. Get in the habit of thinking through the two halves of anxiety. Day after day and year after year, you may find that you feel less anxious and more confident in your everyday life. If you feel like your anxiety is getting worse over time or that it's completely unmanageable, reach out for assistance by calling 1-800-662-4357 (HELP) or visiting SAMHSA.gov.

Tenesha L. Curtis is formally trained as a psychotherapist specializing in addictions counseling. She was born and raised in Louisville, Ky., before moving to her current home just outside Atlanta. She is the publishing manager at Volo Press Books. Connect with her online at TeneshaLCurtis.com



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