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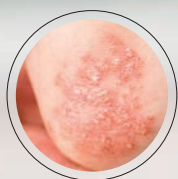
MIND &

BODY

THERAPEUTIC OPTIONS

The Key to Reversing Autoimmune Diseases

If you currently suffer with rheumatoid arthritis, these approaches could have a profound benefit



7 MILLION

▶ Around 7 million Americans have some form of inflammatory rheumatic disease.

INXTI/SHUTTERSTOCK

The link between sunshine and our health has grown clearer and offers important physiological effects for millions of Americans.

JOSEPH MERCOLA

The American College of Rheumatology estimates that more than 54.4 million people in the United States have an autoimmune disease. Some of the major ones would be rheumatoid arthritis (RA), multiple sclerosis, and inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's and ulcerative colitis.

Since I have massive clinical experience with RA, I am going to use it as an example of how all autoimmune diseases can be

treated. Why? Because they all have similar origins that are related to an antigen sneaking into your body and your immune system, confusing it with one of your tissues that tags your tissue as a foreign invader. The antigen that gets into your system determines which of your body's tissues will be affected.

In the simplest terms, an antigen is a molecule or molecule structure that your body identifies as foreign. As such, antigens trigger an immune response. The most famous antigen that most people are likely familiar with is the spike protein from the virus that

causes COVID-19.

From the late 1980s and for the following 10 years, I treated more than 3,000 patients with rheumatic illnesses, including systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), scleroderma, polymyositis, and dermatomyositis. RA has a devastating prognosis in many patients.

Rheumatoid arthritis affects about 1 percent of our population and at least 1.4 million Americans have definite or classical rheumatoid arthritis, although it's probably closer to 2 million. This number has increased in recent years, as in 2014, only

about one-half of a percent of the population suffered from RA.

Since around 7 million Americans have some form of inflammatory rheumatic disease, this means you likely know someone with it. It's a much more devastating illness than previously appreciated. However, most patients with rheumatoid arthritis also have a progressive disability. This is important, as the suggestions I am going to include should help improve all autoimmune diseases.

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COVID-19 Vaccines Didn't Work, so CDC Changed the Definition of 'Vaccine'

Public health officials rewrote the rules, and companies profited from the pandemic

JENNIFER MARGULIS & JOE WANG

In early 2020, when the public first learned that a novel virulent virus was making people sick in China and around the world, it made sense to institute public health measures to protect against it.

But, instead of encouraging doctors and scientists to look for ways to treat the virus and ways to keep sick people away from healthy people, as has been done during other pandemics in modern human history, government authorities actively prevented doctors from treating patients.

Tech companies quickly censored and deplatformed doctors who were discussing potentially effective treatment options, and scientific debate was silenced.

Instead of open, honest discussion about the effectiveness of preventative measures and the different treatment options, the world was told that the only way out of the Wuhan coronavirus crisis was via mass vaccination. If the public understood that there were options for treating COVID-19 and that the infection was mild in more than 99 percent of the people who contracted it, they wouldn't be as motivated to get a vaccine.

As someone born and raised in China, I, Joe Wang, saw firsthand how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) runs a well-oiled machine, controlling every aspect of people's lives, not for the good of the country, but for the personal gain of Party members. In the West, too, drawing from the CCP's playbook,



KEVIN FRAYER/GETTY IMAGES

Chinese workers and health officials direct travelers arriving on trains from Wuhan to be processed en route to 14 days in quarantine, in Beijing on April 8, 2020. China has had some of the strictest lockdowns in the world.

some quickly realized that they could capitalize on human fear and turn the pandemic into an opportunity for profit. The CCP used COVID-19 as yet another way to expand authoritarian control, which wasn't surprising.

But Western countries, too, weaponized people's fear in order to roll out unprecedented control over people's freedom.

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Stretching can help you maintain your flexibility—and it feels good.

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How to Keep Moving as You Age

Balance is a critical determinant of long-term health, mobility

LYNN JAFFEE

A recent study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine gives an eye-opening insight into balance and health.

Researchers asked participants between the ages of 51 and 75 to balance on one leg for 10 seconds with their head up and arms to their sides.

While most participants could hold the pose for 10 seconds, 20 percent of the group were unable to do so. When the researchers followed up seven years later, they found that members of the group who failed were 84 percent more likely to have died than those who could maintain a 10-second one-legged stance.

Time out: I just stepped away from my desk and timed myself balancing on one foot and then the other. I'm good—but just checking.

The point of the story is that maintaining abilities such as balancing on one foot plays a huge role in aging and longevity.

Balance is a great measure of function and overall health, because falling is the No. 1 cause of injury-related death in people who are older than 65. But it's not only balance that can predict health in later years. Things such as strength, flexibility, and level of activity also play a role in determining mobility, quality of life, and even memory.

Nowhere is the phrase 'use it or lose it' more appropriate than when it comes to staying active as you get older.

Over the years, I have run into a number of people who say they can't get down to and up from the floor. Some were relatively young, which surprised me. As a result, I began doing something I call up-downs, which involves repeatedly getting down to and up from the floor. I know, they should be called down-ups, but work with me—it's just a name. My goal is to do 10 of them each day, in the hope that if, sometime in the distant future, I should fall, I will have improved my chances of being able to get up.

Aging Well

There are a number of ways to maintain or improve your level of functioning as you age.

Walk

Walk, ideally a half-hour each day,

if you're able. Walking is the gold standard for staying mobile. It keeps muscles engaged and strong, increases the circulation of blood and oxygen to the cells, and may help to delay the onset of or improve memory loss.

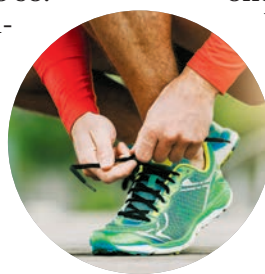
Regular physical activity actually increases the number of cells in the hippocampus, an area in the brain related to learning and memory. In addition, scientists have found that increasing the number of daily steps from 3,000 to 7,000 reduces the risk of mortality by half for people older than 60.

Choose an Activity

If walking isn't your thing, choose an activity—any activity—that will keep you moving. Biking is a great exercise and can help you to maintain your balance. Swimming helps with flexibility. Running is a good way to maintain cardio health. You get the idea—whatever works for you to stay active is a good choice.

Balance Yourself

Improve your balance. This is as simple as practicing the 10-second one-leg test daily. You can start by holding onto the back of a chair or standing near a wall and work your way up to balancing without support. You can literally reduce your risk of falling by working on your balance for as little as a minute or two every day.



Walking is a profoundly important physical activity, at any age.



A great way to get exercise is to find a physical activity you enjoy.

Practice Yoga or Tai Chi

Both are slow-moving and intentional and can be adapted to the needs of those with limited mobility. Yoga and tai chi are both good choices to maintain physical functioning because they help to increase strength, flexibility, and range of motion. In addition, regular practice of either yoga or tai chi can dramatically reduce stress.

Strength Train

Add some strength exercises to avoid frailty. There are a number of options from which to choose, depending on your ability and interest. Hand weights or resistance bands can be used to strengthen both your arms and legs, or you can do wall push-ups or planks—starting with modified positions and working up. To avoid injuries or overdoing it, find a trainer or physical therapist who can set you up with the right equipment and help you with your form.

Stretch

Stretch to maintain your flexibility. This is something that many people overlook as a part of staying fit and functional, which is puzzling because it feels so good. If you're new to stretching, I recommend getting some professional guidance from a trainer or physical therapist.

The bottom line is that there are a number of ways to avoid losing mobility and function as you age. Nowhere is the phrase "use it or lose it" more appropriate than when it comes to staying active as you get older. The key is finding activities that work best for you and doing them regularly. Your body will thank you.

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

COVID-19 Vaccines Didn't Work, so CDC Changed the Definition of 'Vaccine'

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Profits Over People

Fear, it seems, is more contagious than any given infection. An imminent—or ongoing—apocalypse sells newspapers, blows up social media platforms, and can be parlayed into a breathtaking amount of financial gain.

According to Forbes, 493 people became billionaires in 2021. China minted 205 of these. The United States, in second place, had 98. Sixty-one of the world's newest billionaires were in health care fields, among them were an Italian billionaire whose family makes the glass vials for COVID-19 vaccines; an Indian medical doctor whose hospital chain doubled its stock when it shifted its focus to COVID-19; the co-founder of BIONTech, the German company that worked with Pfizer to make its vaccine; as well as the CEO of the U.S.-based pharmaceutical giant Moderna.

'The Doctor Will Lie to You Now'

So, when Jerry Daniels, founder of Brothers Media Group, opened a panel during the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Dallas in August, with the insight that "COVID has everything to do with marketing," for a session titled "The Doctor Will Lie to You Now," it isn't surprising that practically the entire audience was nodding in agreement.

"What is marketing supposed to do?" Daniels continued. "It's supposed to influence people to take action and do something."

And much of public health's job is "messaging," that is, marketing the behaviors they want the public to adopt. In the case of COVID-19, the action people have been most influenced to take was to get vaccinated. The marketing campaign surrounding COVID-19 vaccines has been so effective that, as of Aug. 29, more than 12.6 billion shots have been put in people's arms worldwide.

Given the growing body of scientific evidence that shows quite clearly that the vaccines don't work to stop the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, as well as the hundreds of studies and clinical testimonials showing that the vaccines can have severe and even devastating health consequences, especially for young people, the fact that so many people continue to accept them is baffling.

The CDC is working hard to dupe the American people by claiming that the mission of these vaccines was never to stop the spread of coronavirus in the first place.

More than

12.6
BILLION

shots have been put in people's arms worldwide.

COVID-19 vaccines were pushed based on a promise they could stop the virus.



It is, according to Daniels, a triumph of marketing.

The Vaccine Doesn't Work, so the Definition Was Changed

For nearly 15 years, from November 2007 to August 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) working definition of "vaccine" was: "A product that stimulates a person's immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from the disease. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but can also be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose."

But in September 2021, according to Daniels, U.S. public health authorities changed the definition of "vaccine."

The new definition, which the curious reader can find under the title "Vaccine Basics" on the CDC's BAM! Body and Mind webpage, a classroom resource for teachers, became: "A preparation that is used to stimulate the body's immune response against diseases. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but some can be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose."

The CDC had deleted a key part of the definition of vaccines. You will no longer find anywhere on its website the assertion that a vaccine "stimulates a person's immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from the disease." However, a 2015 World Health Organization document cites the CDC's previous vaccine definition.

The COVID-19 vaccines don't produce immunity protecting people who are vaccinated from getting the illness. This fact should have spurred the CDC and every other health authority in the world to stop the current vaccination program and work overtime to create a better, more effective, and safer vaccine.

But, instead, the CDC is working hard to dupe the American people by claiming that the mission of these vaccines was never to stop the spread of coronavirus in the first place.

Are They Really Vaccines?

Three doctors participated in the CPAC panel in Dallas on Aug. 5: Drs. Robert Malone, Peter McCullough, and Brooke Miller. According to Malone, it's highly

problematic to call any of the injectables being used currently against SARS-CoV-2 "vaccines."

The term "vaccine" traditionally refers to a product that provides "prophylactic protection against an infectious disease," said Malone, a physician and research scientist who was part of the team that developed the mRNA technology used in several brands of the COVID-19 injections.

"We now have clear documentation that these products are not protecting against infection, replication, or spread of the virus, and the multiply-inoculated actually are having longer periods of infection."

The COVID-19 injections, Malone said, don't meet the criteria for a vaccine.

"Disagreement is the method by which we make scientific progress," said McCullough, a cardiologist who has publicly voiced his concerns about the safety of the vaccines.

Miller, a family physician based in Virginia, said that he felt enormous pressure not to speak openly about his concerns about vaccine safety, and to not even ask questions about what the government health officials were saying about the safety, efficacy, and necessity of the COVID-19 injections.

"Fear is, in part, a business model," Malone said. "You need to understand that CNN is generating profit by scaring our children and scaring our elders. It's a profitable enterprise. We call it 'fear porn.'"

But it was perhaps Daniels's question that resonated most with us.

"Why in the world are we still giving a genetic 'jab' to people when we know that it's killing them at record rates?" he asked. "Where is the sanity in that?"

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

Joe Wang, Ph.D., was a lead scientist for Sanofi Pasteur's SARS vaccine project in 2003. He is now the president of New Tang Dynasty TV (Canada).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people were told to stay at home and promised that doing so would help end the pandemic.



Vaccine side effects are a taboo subject in many circles.

Poorer Heart Health in Midlife Linked to Greater Brain Aging in Later Life

SARAH COWNLEY

A new study from a team of researchers from University College London (UCL) has found a link between heart health and brain aging. Researchers used MRI scans to estimate people's brain age and found multiple risk factors for a prematurely aging brain.

The study found that worse cardiovascular health at age 36 predicted a higher brain age later in life. Brain aging has been associated with worse scores on cognitive tests and predicts brain shrinkage (atrophy) over the following two years. Researchers believe this could be an important clinical marker for people at risk of cognitive decline or other brain-related health issues.

The study participants were between 69 and 72 years old. All were part of an Alzheimer's Disease Research UK-funded Insight 46 study that had an estimated brain age from an established MRI-based machine learning model. All participants had been a part of the study throughout their lives, so researchers could compare their current brain ages to various factors.

It was found that people with poor cardiovascular health during midlife had worse brain health later in life. Researchers also found that higher brain age was associated with a higher blood concentration of neurofilament light protein (NFL). This elevation was previously found because of nerve cell damage, and it's now recognized as a useful marker of

neurodegeneration.

These findings also align with a previous study that suggests high blood pressure at age 36 can predict brain health later in life.

"The Insight 46 study is helping reveal more about the complex relationship between the different factors influencing people's brain health throughout their life," said Dr. Sara Imarisio, head of research at Alzheimer's Research UK.

"Using machine learning, researchers in this study have uncovered yet more evidence that poorer heart health in midlife is linked to greater brain shrinkage in later life. We're incredibly grateful to the dedicated group of individuals who have contributed to research their entire lives making this work possible."



There are many ways to strengthen the mind and body to maintain cognitive function as we age.

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

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Testimonial From a Patient

I ran into a former patient, Sarah Allen, after giving a presentation in Orlando, Florida, several years ago, which she happened to be attending. After talking to her, I decided we needed to share her important story as it would provide hope for so many who struggle with this disease. She first came to see me in August 2003. Even though she was only 28 years old at the time, she'd been experiencing symptoms of RA for about three or four years.

Sarah explains:

"I thought I was very healthy. I was young. I was a competitive triathlete. I believed I had a pretty good diet. So, I didn't really understand why I was experiencing so much pain in my fingers and in my feet.

"I had migrating pain, and a lot of tendinitis issues all throughout my body. It took Western doctors a long time to diagnose me. It took about three years going to different doctors before they knew what was wrong. It didn't show in my blood; I didn't have the RA factor, and my C-reactive protein (CRP) levels were normal. But it showed up on an X-ray."

Hallmark Signs of RA

One of the hallmark symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis is pain in your hands and/or feet. It tends to affect the proximal joints more so than the distal ones, i.e. the joints closest to your palm, for example, as opposed to the joints further out in the fingers.

So, if you have pain there, especially if it's symmetrical (affecting the same joints on both hands or feet), then almost by definition you have rheumatoid arthritis or an RA variant. It really doesn't matter what the blood work shows.

RA is far less common than osteoarthritis, or degenerative joint disease, which isn't as crippling and is a very different animal and shouldn't be confused with it. It's actually relatively easy to treat degenerative arthritis if you understand the components of a healthy lifestyle.

Rheumatoid arthritis is a far more complex disease. It's an autoimmune disease; your body is destroying itself, and it can be terminal—some people have even been known to commit suicide from the crippling pain.

It's quite notable that only a small percentage of people with the disease have a spontaneous, sustained remission without the help of medication. Some disability occurs in 50 to 70 percent of people within five years after onset of the disease, and half will stop working within 10 years.

RA Is Typically Treated With Toxic Drugs

Conventional care also doesn't offer a lot of hope for RA sufferers. Most treatments only ameliorate or treat the symptoms—typically using highly toxic drugs, including prednisone, methotrexate, and drugs that interfere with tumor necrosis factor, such as Enbrel.

This is why I'm so passionate about spreading this information because as Sarah can attest, there's an alternative, and this drug-free strategy really works. You don't have to suffer needlessly in a conventional treatment model.

Once diagnosed, Sarah went to a well-

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known rheumatologist in Milwaukee who told her she needed to stop running or risk becoming permanently disabled. He prescribed a low dose of methotrexate, which is actually an anticancer drug.

While it can be effective, the complications and the side effects are atrocious. Sarah had to check her liver status every month, and even though she was only on a low dosage for about three months, she started losing some of her hair. A rheumatology researcher at the Mayo Clinic whom she went to told her to keep taking the drug, but expect it to shave 15 to 20 years off her life.

"I was really afraid of what that drug was going to do to my body," Sarah says. "The physical therapist who recommended I get tested for RA said there was a lot I can do naturally. So I read a lot of books about rheumatoid arthritis and different alternative treatments.

"I read there's a possibility of it being connected with an infection, and that a low dose of antibiotics was being prescribed. I then came across your name in a book. I looked you up, found you in Chicago, and made an appointment."

Dr. Brown's Protocol
The book she's referring to is "The Road Back: Rheumatoid Arthritis—Its Cause and Its Treatment," written by Dr. Thomas McPherson Brown and Henry Scammell. Brown was a well-respected board-certified rheumatologist (he died in 1989), but he, like me, was a rebel.

He didn't agree with the use of prednisone, which was the standard of care for RA in the 1940s and '50s.

He believed RA was an infection caused by mycoplasmas, so he used the antibiotic tetracycline instead. Eventually, he modified his treatment to

more potent discriminating forms of tetracycline, such as minocycline. Brown ultimately helped bring more than 10,000 patients into remission. I first saw his work in a

"20/20" special done shortly before he died in 1989, and it really inspired me. I decided to study his work, began using his protocol on RA patients in my practice, and was really impressed with the results.

Eventually, I modified the protocol to the point where I abandoned antibiotics altogether.

There are a number of physicians that still use his protocol, but it would be uncommon to find ones that will be using all of what I consider the vital elements to successfully reversing RA that I list below. If you see one of these physicians, I would encourage you to integrate every one of the elements.

So, these are the steps that I believe are absolutely crucial to integrate into the reversal of not only RA but all autoimmune diseases.

Optimize Your Vitamin D Levels Without Pills

Since RA is an autoimmune disease, it is vital to optimize your vitamin D level. That's the most basic and least expensive strategy that one can easily implement. The early part of the 21st century brought enormous attention to the importance and value of vitamin D, particularly in the treatment of autoimmune diseases such as RA.

From my perspective, it's now all but criminally negligent malpractice to treat a person with RA and not aggressively monitor their vitamin D levels to confirm that they are in a therapeutic range of 50 to 70 ng/ml.

It's also vitally important to understand that your body was designed to get all the vitamin D it needs from the sun. I haven't swallowed vitamin D in two decades, yet am able to routinely get my levels up to 90 ng/ml. So the key is to get about one hour of sun exposure a day around solar noon, which is 1 p.m. if you are in Daylight Saving Time, with minimal clothing on. Ideally, you can walk during this time so you get your movement in.

Using Sun Exposure Wisely

Do practice responsible sun exposure. Avoid sunburns as a matter of routine. It's best to get sun exposure as early in the year as possible so that your skin can build up a protective tan. Also,

be aware that some foods contribute to better skin protection, like those high in antioxidants. Likewise, some foods undermine your health and put you at greater risk of skin cancer. Processed foods and foods with processed seed oils high in omega-6, which is loaded with linoleic acid (LA), should be avoided.

Sadly, most are unable to get enough UVB from the sun in late fall to early spring unless you live below the 20th latitude. Ideally, it would be far better to optimize your vitamin D by safe exposure of your skin to UVB. Even better would be to make sure that you get concurrent near-infrared (IR) exposure at the same time, as this will increase melatonin to suppress any free radical damage from the UVB.

Sunlight has these attributes.

Make sure to take 500 mg to 1,000 mg of magnesium and 150 mcg of vitamin K2, (not K1) which are important cofactors for optimizing vitamin D function. And, remember the only way you know what your vitamin D level is to test it. Most people I know are shocked at how low their level is when they finally get around to testing it.

Ultra-Low Seed Oil Diet

While considered an essential fat, when consumed in excessive amounts—which was more than 99 percent of people do—LA (an omega-6 polyunsaturated fat or PUFA) acts as a metabolic poison.

Most clinicians who value nutritional interventions to optimize health understand that vegetable oils, which are loaded with omega-6 PUFA, are something to be avoided. What most fail to appreciate is that even if you eliminate the vegetable oils and avoid them like the plague, you may still be missing the mark.

Chances are you're still getting too much of this dangerous fat from supposedly healthy food sources such as olive oil and chicken (which are fed LA-rich grains). Another common mistake is to simply increase the amount of omega-3 that you eat. Many are now aware that the omega-3 to omega-6 ratio is very

One of the hallmark symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis is pain in your hands and or feet.

important, and should be about equal, but simply increasing omega-3 can be a dangerous strategy.

Over the past century, because of fatally flawed research suggesting that saturated animal fat caused heart disease, the LA in the human diet has dramatically increased, to 30 or 40 grams a day from about 2 to 3 grams a day 150 years ago. LA used to make up 1 percent to 3 percent of the energy in the human diet; it now makes up 15 percent to 20 percent.

It's my belief that this radical change has had the most catastrophic effect on human health in the history of the human race. This dietary change has undoubtedly killed millions, probably hundreds of millions, prematurely and still continues to do so because people, and more importantly, nearly all physicians simply don't understand this.

At a molecular level, excess LA consumption damages your metabolism and impedes your body's ability to generate energy in your mitochondria. It's also likely the primary factor for the increases in obesity, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and dementia that have exploded in the past century.

There's also compelling evidence showing eliminating seed oils from your diet will dramatically reduce your risk of sunburn and skin cancer. Susceptibility to UV radiation damage is controlled by how much LA is in

your diet. It's like a dial that can control how fast it happens, and how fast you get skin cancer.

Time-Restricted Eating and Circadian Rhythm Optimization

In July, research published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology revealed that fewer than 1 in 14 adults in the United States have optimal cardio-metabolic health. This means they lack the ability to seamlessly shift between burning fat and carbs as their primary fuel source and as a result have impaired immune function.

It would seem profoundly obvious that having an impaired immune system wouldn't be good if you had an autoimmune disease. Fortunately, there is a simple inexpensive intervention, called time-restricted eating (TRE), that can help most everyone with this issue.

Research by Sachidananda Panda suggests that 90 percent of people eat for more than 12 hours a day, and over time, this habit will wreak havoc on your metabolism and limit your ability to metabolize fat as a primary fuel. When you eat throughout the day, and never skip a meal, your body adapts to burning sugar as your primary fuel, resulting in the downregulation of enzymes that utilize and burn stored fat.

As a result, you become progressively more insulin resistant and start gaining weight. Efforts to lose weight also become ineffective for this very reason, since to lose body fat, your body must first be able to actually burn fat. Many biological repair and rejuvenation processes also take place while you're fasting, and that's another reason why all-day grazing triggers diseases while fasting prevents them.

Time-restricted eating is just what it sounds like. It's a form of intermittent fasting in which you eat all of your meals for the day within a restricted window of time, ranging from six to eight hours. That means you're avoiding food (fasting) for 16 to 18 consecutive hours. Eating within a six- to eight-hour window is likely close to metabolically ideal for most. Eighteen-hour TRE windows work better for overweight people, and 16-hour TRE windows are used for normal-weight individuals.

The key is to make sure that you don't start your TRE window too late in the day. Ideally, the last food you eat should be at least 3 to 5 hours before you go to sleep. The last thing you want to do is eat right before bed as that will impair your health.

Contrary to longer fasts and calorie restriction, TRE is a strategy that can work for just about anyone. Remember, you're not actually limiting or counting calories. Weakness and lethargy, which are signs of undernourishment, simply don't occur. It's a practice that should make you feel fantastic and actually reduce your hunger over time.

Wouldn't it be great to not be controlled by hunger and sweets anymore?

Circadian Optimization

Panda is one of the leading researchers in circadian rhythm. I interviewed him about his book, "Circadian Code: Lose Weight, Supercharge Your Energy, and Transform Your Health From Morning to Midnight," if you are looking for more information. He has many great tips in his book on how to optimize your circadian cycle, which is important since it supports a healthy immune system.

If you think about the times you got sick in the past, my guess is that many of those times were related to altered or impaired sleeping schedules. This is a classic illustration of how important this strategy is.

Low-Dose Naltrexone

One new addition to the protocol is low-dose naltrexone (LDN), which I would encourage anyone with RA to try. It's inexpensive and nontoxic and I have a number of physician reports documenting incredible efficacy in getting people off of all their dangerous arthritis meds. Although this is a drug, and strictly speaking not a natural therapy, it has provided important relief and is far safer than the toxic drugs that are typically used by nearly all rheumatologists.

Naltrexone is similar to Naloxone (Narcan), which is a narcotic antagonist to save people's lives in opioid overdoses. In low or even microdoses, it's one of the few pharmaceutical drugs I wholeheartedly endorse and is remarkably safe.

Naltrexone blocks the opioid receptor only briefly, and by a different mechanism. When used in low dosages, the chief benefit is actually in the rebound effect, after the opioid receptor has been briefly blocked. Naltrexone is one of the few interventions that actually enables your

**Tips to Optimize Your Circadian Rhythm**

Be sure your sleep timing is close to the natural day and night cycles. The closer you are to the equator or vernal or autumnal equinox the easier that is, as the day and night time is evenly divided between them at 12 hours each. The further you move away, the more significant the change is all the way to the polar extremes of 24 hours of night in the winter to 24 hours of light in the summer.

Ideally, you should not have any blue light after sundown. Unfortunately, the invention of electric light bulbs has trashed our circadian cycles. The ideal light would be a candle as it has the right wavelengths and intensity. Alternatively, a 3-watt non-flicker red LED light [12] is acceptable and isn't likely to impair your circadian cycle. You should also make certain that there is no light in your bedroom while you are sleeping; use a sleep mask, if necessary, to get complete darkness.

EMF exposure, especially at night, can disrupt your cycle and your health. It's ideal if you turn off both your Wi-Fi and phone at night, or at least keep it in airplane mode. The last thing you need at night is exposure to these fields, as it will impair your health.

**Benefits of Vitamin D From Sunlight**

The reason why it's so important to get vitamin D from the sun is because also provides many additional benefits.

It increases subcellular mitochondrial melatonin, which will radically lower oxidative stress where you need it most—in the electron transport chain of the mitochondria. Not only is melatonin a powerful antioxidant, but it causes your body to produce glutathione, which is essential for controlling oxidative stress.

Males will be pleased to know that a 2021 study showed that sun exposure for around 30 minutes near solar noon will increase testosterone levels.

It will increase nitric oxide to help optimize your blood pressure.

It will help convert vitamin A (retinol) to retinoids, which are required for optimal immune functioning.

own body and immune system to be able to function better and restore function.

Naltrexone requires a prescription from a doctor willing to work with you. Dosing guidelines can be found at ldn-researchtrust.org/2022_LDN_Guides. I also did an interview with Linda Elsegood, a Briton who founded the LDN Research Trust in 2004, and Dr. Sarah Zielsdorf, who has a medical practice in the Chicago area about the book they wrote, appropriately titled "The LDN Book."

Carnivore Diet

I would strongly recommend implementing every one of the above strategies. If you still aren't getting the improvement you need and deserve, then it may be time to consider removing all vegetables from your diet.

This radical shift in diet should be considered a disease treatment. For the vast majority of people, eliminating plant foods isn't a healthy approach to diet. But for those who are suffering with a severe and debilitating autoimmune condition, this approach may be helpful.

Mikhaila Peterson, the daughter of best-selling author Jordan Peterson, resolved her juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA), which is relatively uncommon, but notoriously challenging to improve, through this diet. Her results are nothing less than spectacular and certainly provide enough anecdotal confirmation to give this unconventional but safe approach a try.

For the scientific justification and help in implementing a carnivore diet, one of the best resources out there is Paul Saladino's book, "The Carnivore Code: Unlocking the Secrets to Optimal Health by Returning to Our Ancestral Diet," and also his podcast on YouTube called "CarnivoreMD."

You don't have to suffer needlessly in a conventional treatment model.

The reason why avoiding plants might provide relief with autoimmune diseases is that they are loaded with self-defense chemicals and antinutrients. While many people can eat these compounds without issue, others can experience consequences from the following:

- **Nightshades**—The solanaceae family of flowering plants includes a number of species that are outright poisonous. But the nightshade family also includes tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, eggplant, and goji berries, which are well-known to promote inflammation and joint pain in some people.
- **Phytic acid**—A natural substance found in plant seeds (including grains and legumes), this compound is known as an "antinutrient" for its ability to bind to minerals. Phytic acid impairs the absorption of iron, zinc, calcium, and other minerals, and can promote mineral deficiencies.
- **Oxalates**—Compounds found in dark leafy greens, such as spinach, kale, and other nutrient-dense plants. Most people can break down oxalates in the gut. For others, however, these compounds turn into sharp crystals and can lead to chronic pain, inflammation, oxidative stress, kidney stones, and autoimmune disease.
- **Lectins**—These plant compounds can promote a leaky gut, alter the microbiome, stimulate the immune system, and trigger inflammation. The highest levels are found in whole grains, legumes, and dairy.
- **Salicylates**—These are naturally occurring pesticides that plants use to protect against insects, fungus, and bacterial infection. In humans, they can cause a wide range of symptoms from tinnitus to ulcers. High concentrations are found in avocados, berries, grapes, almonds, honey, dried fruits, and many spices.
- **FODMAPs**—Though not technically a defense mechanism of plants, these compounds are a collection of short-chain carbohydrates that aren't properly absorbed in the gut. FODMAP is short for fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides, and polyols. These compounds can cause severe digestive distress for some people. High-FODMAP foods include a wide range of fruits, vegetables, cereal grains, condiments, drinks, and dairy foods.
- **Saponins**—Antifeedant compounds that protect many plants from predation by insects, microbes, and fungi, saponins have soapy, foaming characteristics. They promote a leaky gut and can cause bloating, gas, nausea, and

Linoleic Acid Content in Food

You can use the tables below to help you get a handle on the amount of linoleic acid (LA) in your diet. You can also use Cronometer.com to enter the foods you eat to identify just how much LA you are eating.

Cooking Oils percent Linoleic Acid (LA) Average Value (Range in Parentheses)		Seeds/Nuts percent Linoleic Acid	
Safflower	70 %	Poppy seed	62 %
Grape seed	70 %	Hemp	57 %
Sunflower	68 %	Wheat germ	55 %
Corn	54 %	Walnut	53 %
Cottonseed	52 %	Pecan	50 %
Soybean	51 %	Pumpkin	45 %
Rice bran	33 %	Brazil nuts	43 %
Peanut	32 %	Sesame	41 %
Canola	19 %	Peanut	32 %
Olive oil	10 %	Pine nuts	33 %
	(3 % - 27 %)	Chia	16 %
Avocado	10 %	Almond	16 %
Lard	10 %	Flaxseed	14 %
Palm oil	10 %	Pistachio	13 %
Tallow (CAFO)	3 %	Hazelnuts	12 %
Ghee (CAFO)	2 %	Cashew	8 %
Coconut oil	2 %	Macadamia	2 %
Tallow (Grass Fed)	1 %		
Ghee (Grass Fed)	1 %		

diarrhea. Legumes (soy, beans, peas, and lentils) as well as quinoa are rich in saponins.

- **Goitrogens**—These compounds can reduce iodine uptake in the thyroid gland and slow the production of thyroid hormones. The result can be an enlarged thyroid (goiter) and a host of metabolic disturbances. The most common plant goitrogens are compounds known as glucosinolates found in broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, arugula, radishes, turnips, collard greens, bok choy, and other similar vegetables.
- **Phytoestrogens**—These naturally occurring plant chemicals have a molecular structure quite similar to estrogen. Used as a natural defense against herbivores, they can disrupt animal fertility. In humans, phytoestrogens can cause hormonal dysfunction and may promote cancer. These compounds are most common in soybeans, flax, and sesame seeds.
- **Prolamins and glutenins**—Consisting of a wide range of proteins used by plants to store energy in seeds and found primarily in grains and rice, this group of compounds harbors the primary environmental factors in causing Celiac disease.

Early Emotional Traumas Are Pervasive in Autoimmune Diseases

With the vast majority of the patients I treated, some type of emotional trauma occurred early in their life, before the age that their conscious mind was formed, which is typically around the age of 5 or 6. However, a trauma can occur at any age and has a profoundly negative impact.

If that specific emotional insult isn't addressed with an effective treatment modality, then the underlying emotional trigger will continue to fester, allowing the destructive process to proceed, which can predispose you to severe autoimmune diseases such as RA later in life. In some cases, RA appears to be caused by an infection, and it's my experience that this infection is usually acquired when you have a stressful event that causes a disruption in your bioelectrical circuits, which then impairs your immune system.

This early emotional trauma predisposes you to develop the initial infection and also contributes to your relative inability to effectively defeat that infection. Therefore, it's very important to have an effective tool to address these underlying emotional traumas. In my practice, the most common form of treatment is called the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT).

Although EFT is something that you can learn to do yourself in the comfort of your own home, it's important to consult a well-trained professional to obtain the skills necessary to promote proper healing using this amazing tool. There are, of course, many other strategies other than EFT that can address these; EFT is just the one that I have the most experience with.

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

Some disability occurs in

50%

to

70%

of people within five years after onset of the disease, and half will stop working within 10 years.



Vegetables are essential and healthy but there are rare times when eating few to no vegetables can be therapeutic.



Linoleic acid is pervasive in our diet, from common cooking oils to being a mainstay ingredient in processed foods.



Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune condition that can affect the young and old.

More than
54
MILLION
people in the United States have an autoimmune disease.

What Could a 'Sound Bath' Do for You?

Limited research suggests this treatment modality can reduce pain and more

MELISSA DIANE SMITH

Sound baths are an easy-to-do form of therapy that's been found to offer emotional, spiritual, and physical benefits.

Picture a scene of elephants hearing sounds from Himalayan singing bowls played near them and becoming more relaxed during medical procedures and operations such as foot care, eye checks, skin care, and even blood draws. As amazing as it seems, scenes documenting this at the Patara Elephant Farm, a health recovery and reproduction management farm for elephants in Thailand, can be seen in the 2021 film "Going Om: An Exploration of Sound, Vibration, Energy and Wellness."

"When we saw this with the elephants, that's what really got me interested in making the movie," the film's director, Christina Grozik, said.

If listening to sounds from singing bowls helps heavy, large animals such as elephants relax, feel better, and enter a more ready, accepting state for numerous health care procedures, what can it do for us? Much the same and maybe more, research shows.

What Is a Sound Bath?

A sound bath is one type of sound healing, a practice that uses sound vibrations to relax the mind and body. During a sound bath, which is sometimes called a sound meditation, participants typically recline on the floor or on a massage table, or sit, while a facilitator or practitioner plays a variety of sounds with various musical instruments. The most popular instruments used for a sound bath are Himalayan (also called Tibetan) singing bowls, quartz crystal singing bowls, gongs, bells, and chimes, but harps, Native American flutes, drums, or other instruments can also be used.

Participants close their eyes and listen. They "bathe" in the sound, and they often feel the vibrations of the sounds from the instruments inside their bodies.

Focusing on the sound keeps the mind occupied, so many people find it easier to relax, to quiet an overactive, worrying mind, and to even meditate, than when there is no sound at all.

The Need for an Easy-to-Do Form of Stress Relief

Stress can impair the immune system and cognitive function, and increase the risk for chronic disease. It also has been linked to numerous health conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, addiction, and mental health issues.

When we're stressed, there is overactivity of the sympathetic nervous system (known as the fight-or-flight response) and decreased activity of the parasympathetic nervous system (known as the rest-and-digest state).

Meditation has demonstrated a significant positive impact on the nervous system, increasing the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system, and thereby reducing overall stress. But a common complaint is the time, patience, and discipline required to learn and practice meditation. An easy, passive form of relaxation and stress relief that doesn't require a steep learning curve or hardly any discipline could greatly benefit human health and well-being.

Some studies suggest sound baths may be this type of therapy.

Health Benefits of Sound Baths

Though there isn't extensive research on the health effects of sound baths, in four studies and one study review, sound baths have been shown to provide a variety of emotional, spiritual, and physical health benefits. Details and results from each study follow.

Improved Well-Being and Less Pain

One study published in the Journal of Evidence-Based Integrative Medicine in 2017 found that an hour-long sound meditation bath helped participants reduce tension, anger, fatigue, anxiety, and depression while increasing a sense of spiritual well-being. Participants in the study also tended to rank their pain lower after the sound bath than before the sound bath, although more research is

Himalayan (or Tibetan) singing bowls are the most popular form of instrument used during a sound bath.



needed to determine if the pain reduction is statistically significant.

The sound meditation used a range of Tibetan singing bowls, crystal singing bowls, gongs, bells, and didgeridoos. The main instrument used was the singing bowls for 95 percent of the session. People who had never before done sound baths experienced significantly less tension and anxiety afterward compared with individuals who had done sound baths before.

Reduction of Anxiety and Depression

Another study conducted across two months at a wellness center found a significant psychological and physiological benefit associated with a 40-minute seated Himalayan singing bowl sound bath, validated not only through a questionnaire, but also by using heart rate variability measures to objectively assess psychological health and stress throughout the session. The study, published in the International Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and Research in 2020, concluded that this therapy "can help in the reduction of anxiety and depressive mood and provide mind-body relaxation."

Deep Relaxation

A comparative study published in the Journal of Behavior Therapy and Mental Health in 2019 also found that Himalayan singing bowls can activate the parasympathetic nervous system and help people to achieve deep relaxation in just 20 minutes. The relaxation provided was statistically significant compared to just lying down and closing one's eyes in silence, even when measured using stress index and heart rate variability physiology parameters. Specifically, the stress index continued to reduce in a statistically significant manner during each subsequent five-minute interval for the sessions with Himalayan singing bowls.

Improvement in Mood, Fatigue, Blood Pressure, Heart Rate, and More

A review of four previous studies looked at a wider selection of evidence documenting the effects of singing bowls on human health. One of the included studies investigated the effects on patients with metastatic cancer, and another looked at those with chronic spinal pain. The review found improvements in self-reported well-being, including reduced distress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, tension, anger, and confusion, and improved vigor, as well as objectively measured improvements in blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate,



Some animal sanctuaries use singing bowls to relax their resident elephants when the large animals are receiving care, such as during blood draws.

and other markers that point to improved relaxation and reduced stress.

Reduction of Anxiety Before Surgery

Sound baths also help to reduce anxiety before surgery. A study published in Anesthesiology Research and Practice in 2018 included 60 participants. Half were asked to listen to the music of Tibetan singing bowls before getting surgery, and the other 30 were given headphones with no music. Researchers performed physiological and psychological tests and found that the heart rate and other vitals indicated that anxiety improved in those who had listened to the music.

This was the first study to examine the effect of listening to the music of Tibetan singing bowls on preoperative anxiety. The researchers concluded that listening to Tibetan music could help patients to manage preoperative anxiety, and that implementing this practice is a noninvasive intervention that's easy to administer and should be considered for clinical practice.

The Physics and Biophysics of Sound Baths

In an article on the physics and biophysics of sound healing, neuroscientist and biophysicist William Softky, who spent his career studying the mathematical theory of how fluid brains interact with vibrating bodies, explained that "coherent sound patterns can help nervous systems 'tune' themselves, in the same general way tuning-forks help experts tune pianos or harps."

He further explained that the nervous systems of our Paleolithic ancestors calibrated themselves well when the outdoor environment was simple and natural. But with all the sounds coming from our outside world today, including sounds we call "noise pollution" as well as artificial sounds we call "entertainment" and "connection," our delicate vibration-managing nervous systems can become de-calibrated.

"The solution to mental misery created by a de-calibrating sonic environment is to return to a calibrating one, such as a sound bath," Softky writes.

A sound bath is an antidote to media overload—an easy way to unplug from our cellphones and other electronic devices, slow down, and listen to healing sounds that allow the body to de-stress and become relaxed enough to more easily heal itself.

What to Expect During an Online Sound Bath

To sample a sound bath that offers some relaxing effects in the comfort of your own home, search for sound bath or sound bath meditation on YouTube, and play a video that appeals to you.

Shut your eyes, focus on your breath, and listen. We are all unique vibrational beings, so if you don't like one, experiment with other sound baths made with different kinds of instruments to see which ones help you feel your best.

If there are a lot of other noises around you, you may want to wear headphones that can block out other noises.

What to Expect During an In-Person Sound Bath

To hear the sound better and experience the full-body feeling of absorbing the vibrations, try a live, in-person sound bath—either a group sound bath or an individualized sound bath—from a sound healing therapist in your area.

A caveat: If you have epilepsy, a diagnosed psychosis, a pacemaker, artificial valves, or metal parts due to any surgery inside the body, check with your doctor first before trying an in-person sound bath or other types of in-person sound therapy.

The format, length, and location of a sound bath can vary widely. It can last for five to 10 minutes to a few hours, but typically lasts about an hour.

A sound bath also can take place in various spaces, including meditation or yoga centers and sound practitioners' offices. Outdoor sound baths can be held in gardens or parks.

It's important to wear comfortable clothes and to take note of what to bring in the listings or ads for each type of in-person sound bath. Depending on the location of the sound bath, practitioners often encourage participants to bring a yoga mat, blanket, pillow, eye pillow, or folding chair, and a bottle of water to hydrate as needed.

For the greatest effect, clear your schedule before and especially after "soaking" in a sound bath to extend the benefits of feeling relaxed, serene, and tranquil.

Melissa Diane Smith is a holistic nutrition counselor and journalist who has been writing about health topics for more than 25 years. She is the author of several nutrition books, including "Syndrome X," "Going Against the Grain," "Gluten Free Throughout the Year," and "Going Against GMOs."



Soothing sounds can make it easier to calm the mind and sleep.

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WISE HABITS

On the Shortness of Life

Contemplations on this brief and precious human life

LEO BABAUTA

We could use a daily contemplation on how limited our time is in this life. Most of us avoid thinking about it, or get worked up or sad when we think about it. But it's a powerful contemplation.

Today, I'd like to share a series of brief contemplations on the shortness of life that I find valuable.

1 We could ignore the very limited nature of this life and take it for granted, and find ourselves at the end of our lives filled with regret that we didn't use it more wisely.

Or we could wake up to the brief time we have here and decide to make the most of it.

If I'd known the last visits from my dad were the last, I would have cherished those days even more. Remembering this, I can make the most of the days I have left with people I care about—including myself.

2 We could fret about the limited nature of our lives, get sad or fall apart about it. We do that because we believe it should be some other way. But that's just another way to take for granted what we've been given.

Instead, we could fully appreciate this limited gift. When someone hands you an incredibly valuable gift, do you ask them why there's so little of it? Or do you rejoice at what you've been given?

Could we appreciate every single day as a valuable, powerful, joyous gift?

3 Often, we use up the current day worrying about or dreaming about upcoming days. And so we miss out on the day that's here right now.

That's like thinking about future meals, while you're eating your current meal. You can't enjoy the meal you're eating now.

What if we could savor the day we're currently living?

4 It's not the case that life is "short." This is a kind of judgment, because we want more. But life is also not unlimited. It's a limited resource, but we don't need to complain about its shortness.

This is like an actor who finally gets a chance to go on stage and spends the time moaning that he only gets one scene. Hey, bozo! Make the most of your one scene. Make an impact with what you have.

5 Do we want to spend the limited time we have putting our noses to the grindstone and trying to

do what we think we should do? Do we want to spend it feeling dull?

What if we could live a life full of wonder, joy, love, fully alive?

Do we want to spend the hour we have at the playground trying to rigidly make sure we're doing the merry-go-round correctly, or do we want to have a raucous good time?

6 Do we want to spend this limited time on earth constantly worried about ourselves, doing things right, what people are thinking about us, whether we're being loved or respected? This is like watching a glorious sunset, worrying about whether it's lighting you just right for your selfie.

What if we could forget for a bit about how we look, how we are coming across,

Make an impact with what you have.

Try to cherish the time you have with your loved ones, yourself, and this beautiful life.



ALIAKSANDRA SPIRYDOVICH/SHUTTERSTOCK

Cancer: Treating Illness by Generating Health

Addressing proximate causes of cancer helps the body to contain or eliminate the disease

BRANDON LAGRECA

Readers of my Empowered Patient blog may recall my straightforward explanation for the cause of cancer—carcinogens. Whether the culprits are chemicals such as glyphosate, non-native electromagnetic fields such as radio frequency radiation, or lifestyle behaviors such as smoking, the initiation of the cancer process is an epigenetic damaging of cells creating a "wound that doesn't heal."

In this paradigm, cancer formation is caused by unmitigated exposure to carcinogens. Seldom discussed are all the contributing factors—known as proximate causes—that inhibit healing of that initial wound. These proximate causes may not be potent enough to transform a precancerous cell into a malignant one, but they are the soil in which that cancer seed roots itself and grows unchecked.

Proximate causes can include lifestyle factors known to contribute to cancer, such as poor nutrition, a sedentary lifestyle, immune dysfunction, and stress.

Take stress, for example, the subject of my book "Cancer, Stress, and Mindset." After publication, readers and interviewees inquired whether I thought stress is a cause of cancer. I didn't explicitly make this claim in the book, opting to present the salient research and let the reader decide. My opinion is that chronic stress is a potent proximate cause of cancer, strongly promoting cancer growth that was already instigated by other means.

This doesn't mean the damaging influence

of stress should be ignored simply because it isn't the root cause of cancer. It's helpful if a root cause can be addressed, but when it can't, what's left are the proximate causes feeding cancer growth. Sometimes contributing factors may be the only levers we can pull.

When carcinogenic exposure is severe (a stroll through Fukushima) or prolonged (decades of cigarette smoking), it drives cancer initiation and progression independent of the terrain of proximate causes. In other instances, the seed that results in cancer wouldn't become a fulminant illness without contribution from proximate causes such as diet and lifestyle factors.

Consider the fact that some malignant tumors can persist for years without growth or metastasis—a stalemate between cancer cells and the vitality of the patient. Robust immune and detoxification systems, optimized nutrition, and stress mitigation are all



MILLES STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

whether we're OK, and, instead, fully love the breathtaking sunset in front of us?

Even more, what would it be like to love all of it, all beings—ourselves included?

7 When we have struggles in our lives, we think that something's wrong, that we shouldn't be struggling. And these struggles can seem like something we have to get through before we can finally start living the life we want.

What if the struggles were a part of the point of this limited time we have? The struggles are what form us and cause the growth and learning to mature us into our full selves. The struggles aren't a thing we have to get through—they're a big part of the thing itself.

Could we view this life as a crucible that helps forge us, that helps uncover who we really are? And embrace the struggles as a beautiful place of learning and wonder?

8 When we contemplate the shortness of life and become fully appreciative of the wonder of this brief time we've been given, life can take on a poignant quality. And this is beautiful.

The Japanese have a term, "mono no aware," that can be translated as "a sensitivity to ephemera"—those things that will not last. The idea speaks to this impermanent, ephemeral nature to all things. It's so sweet, tinged with some sadness, because everything we care about is beautiful and fleeting. This fleetingness only makes things more precious.

If you had a delicious treat in unlimited quantities, you might take it for granted. But if you knew that you could only taste this for a short time, that it would soon be gone, you might taste the sweetness of the treat with more vividness. More joy. More wonder.

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

“You live as if you were destined to live forever, no thought of your frailty ever enters your head, of how much time has already gone by you take no heed. You squander time as if you drew from a full and abundant supply, though all the while that day which you bestow on some person or thing is perhaps your last.”

Seneca

The body can overcome cancer to achieve a clean scan without conventional oncology treatment.

Carcinogens spur cancer and proximate causes feed it.

factors shaping that vitality. In other cases, the body can overcome cancer completely to achieve a clean scan without conventional oncology treatment. This is called "spontaneous remission."

As a cancer patient and holistic clinician invested in an integrative, terrain-based approach to healing cancer, it's disheartening for me to hear the conventional medical assertion that once someone is diagnosed with cancer, that "the cat is out of the bag" so working with lifestyle factors is futile. This belief disregards the innate healing capacity of the body. We should be as invested in studying health as much as disease, addressing proximate causes as much as treating root causes.

At its genesis, cancer is an epigenetic disease of carcinogenic exposure. In its full expression, cancer is a condition of proximate causes. Whether it's a junk food addiction or overwhelming stress, a proximate cause won't come up at the typical oncology appointment. These aren't matters easily addressed in a brief consultation focused on treating disease. But if we broaden our scope to empowering health, suddenly these factors become critical inroads to comprehensive recovery.

Brandon LaGreca, LAc, MAcOM, is a licensed acupuncturist in the state of Wisconsin. He is the author of "Cancer and EMF Radiation: How to Protect Yourself From the Silent Carcinogen of Electropollution" and "Cancer, Stress & Mindset: Focusing the Mind to Empower Healing and Resilience." He shares his thoughts at Empowered Patient Blog.

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INTENTIONAL LIVING

The 3 Most Essential Habits for Living Well

Life and other health habits fall into place when we tend to these most essential areas



JOSHUA BECKER

There are countless healthy habits that improve our lives. But I have found that when I practice just three effectively, most of the others take care of themselves.

I consider them the three most important habits in my life.

Now, if we were to sit down and create a list of habits we think essential for success in life, there's no doubt we could create a lengthy list without much thought:

- Healthy diet
- Reading
- Exercising
- Planning
- Budgeting
- Meditating
- Arriving on time
- Setting goals
- Evaluating the day

As a matter of fact, the longer we think about healthy habits, the more we'd add. Our list would grow and grow:

- Avoiding addiction
- Sleeping well
- Valuing relationships
- Smiling
- Avoiding distractions
- Quitting smoking
- Saying "I love you"

And each of those habits are, indeed, healthy. I would never discourage anyone from pursuing any of them.

But I have found, surprisingly enough, that when I intentionally practice just three from the list above, other habits begin to fall into place—almost naturally.

Conversely, when I let any of these three drop in importance, everything else suffers. That's why I call them essential.

The 3 Most Essential Habits in My Life for Living Well:

1. Exercising

Our physical bodies are the instruments through which we make a difference in the world. And taking care of them lays the foundation for all other pursuits in life. When I make a commitment to exercise

Our world is noisy and constantly clamoring for our attention—and not because it is out for our benefit.



Withdraw from the world in stillness, solitude, or meditation.



Eating more fresh vegetables, while avoiding processed foods, sugar, and alcohol, is a great way to fuel our bodies.

regularly (four or more times per week), I feel better about myself, I experience more energy and motivation in my day, and I feel a sense of control over my life that spills into other areas.

There isn't one specific practice of exercise that must be practiced by all. I have friends who get their exercise by hiking regularly, running often, playing tennis, attending a fitness class, or lifting weights at the gym. I also have older friends who simply make a commitment to walk 30 minutes each day.

But each of them, to the extent they're able, practice regular physical exercise.

Personally, I spend one hour each week-day morning lifting weights.

And when I'm doing that consistently, the second essential habit comes easier.

2. Eating a Healthy Diet

If our physical bodies are the instruments through which we make a difference in the world, our diet is the fuel for them.

A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that 46 percent of Americans have a poor-quality diet—which means that almost half of us aren't properly fueling ourselves for our best lives.

But the research gets even worse. Not only are we not properly preparing ourselves for optimal living, our diet may actually be cutting our lives short. According to the same study, "suboptimal diet is among the leading causes of poor health, particularly obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and diet-related cancers."

Bringing greater intentionality to the food we eat is a habit that pays off immediately in the short term (more energy) and in the long term (better health).

I'm not a nutritionist, and each of us are unique, so I'm not here to offer prescriptive steps on this habit.

But for me personally, I have found the following steps to be most helpful in creating a more healthy diet: Remove processed sugar*, limit carbohydrates, eliminate alcohol, and increase daily intake of vegetables.

There's a lot of wiggle-room in that diet for me to practice it effectively, but those are the four guardrails I've found most helpful.

*Eliminating processed sugar is, by far, the hardest for me to follow, and when I begin to fall into bad habits around diet, this is

always the first place I slip up. I have learned that I do best eliminating it entirely—rather than limiting consumption.

3. Engage in Solitude/Meditation/Prayer

Each of the first two essential habits in my life deal with the physical body, but life is more than skin and bones.

A healthy life also concerns itself with matters of the heart and soul. In order for me to be living my best, I must make time for solitude, meditation, and prayer.

Our world is noisy and constantly clamoring for our attention. Not because it is out for our good—sometimes it's just trying to bend our will toward the cultural pursuit of the day or direct our passion toward whatever it's hoping to sell us.

The only way to listen to our hearts and center ourselves around more important pursuits is to withdraw from the world in stillness, solitude, or meditation.

I believe that Blaise Pascal was right when he said, "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone."

We can embrace every positive habit change in the world, but if our hearts and souls aren't centered on worthy pursuits, we'll end up wasting the one life we've been given, effectively chasing all the wrong things.

The practice of meditation or solitude is practiced by people of every faith and non-religious background, so it isn't difficult to find different ways to embrace this habit in your life. I'm not necessarily here to prescribe that for you.

But personally, I spend 30 minutes every day in quietness, contemplation, faith-based reading (the Bible), and prayer. Without it, I, too, quickly lose my way.

There are also other healthy habits that I'm intentional about pursuing in my life, my marriage, my family, and my work.

But when I am doing well with these three habits, all the others become easier and easier.

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

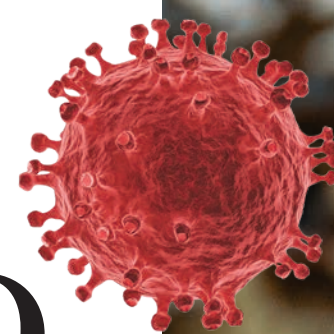
Eating more fresh vegetables, while avoiding processed foods, sugar, and alcohol, is a great way to fuel our bodies.

46 PERCENT
46 percent of Americans have a poor-quality diet

PHOTOGRAPHÉE.EU/SHUTTERSTOCK

Long COVID

Contributing to Disabilities by the Millions: Report



This tiny virus is causing complex issues that require broader forms of treatment.

Interdisciplinary treatments aimed at both mind and body are needed for these complex conditions

MARINA ZHANG & DR. YUHONG DONG

From early 2021, stories have emerged of people experiencing post-COVID-19 symptoms that were so debilitating, they impacted their ability to work and live a normal life.

Rebecca Meyer spoke on CNN in January 2021 about her 11-month struggle with long COVID symptoms, having contracted symptoms from an infection.

Prior to infection, she was a healthy woman with no underlying health conditions. However, 11 months into the sickness, Meyer maintained that she was still "very much in the symptom-management phase of [her] sickness."

Her bedroom looked like a pharmacy, owing to the many medications she had tried.

Speaking about her health, Meyer's voice cracked with emotion; she needs a feeding tube due to gastroenteritis from her post-COVID symptoms, and is very much out of her four children's lives.

Continued on Page 10



Ask a Doctor: What Is Leaky Gut?

Intestinal permeability can lead to a host of problems, but it's also treatable

DR. ANN CORSON & SHERRA VORLEY

A leaky gut is when the intestinal lining develops holes that allow harmful substances to leak into the bloodstream.

The intestinal lining has two main jobs. The first is to digest food to absorb nutrients and water into the bloodstream for distribution throughout the body.

The second job is to act as a barrier, restricting the entry of harmful substances. In fact, the gastrointestinal tract contains a huge number of immune system cells that act as a first line of defense against toxins and infections.

The intestinal epithelium of the small intestine (the tissue that lines the small intestine) is made up of finger-like projections called villi that are formed from a single layer of columnar cells called enterocytes. The surface of those enterocytes consists of even smaller finger-like projections called microvilli. The

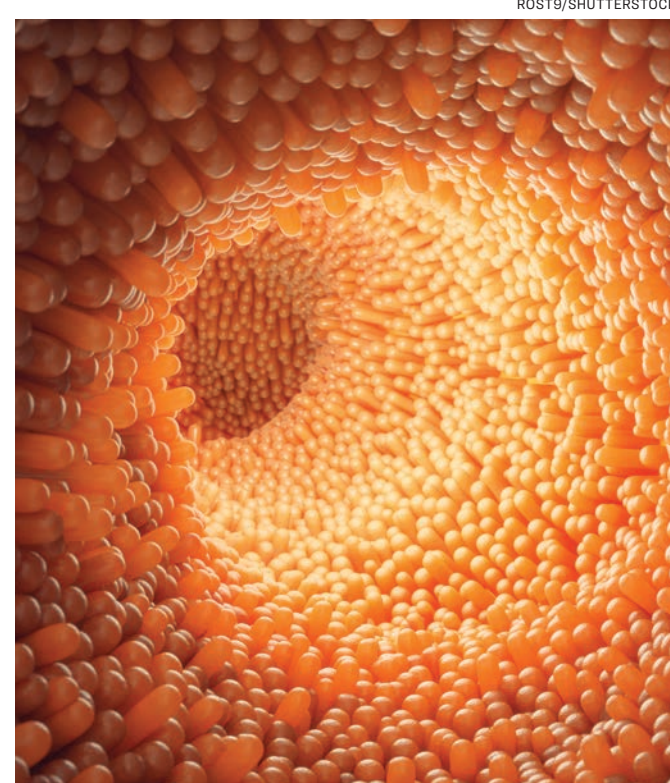
Exposure to stress changes our brain-gut interactions which can lead to a wide range of gastrointestinal disorders

microvilli maximize the absorptive surface of the enterocytes. The majority of nutrient absorption occurs through the small intestinal villi and their many microvilli.

The enterocytes are almost like bricks in a wall. Between each enterocyte along the gut lining are a group of proteins that form a seal that holds adjacent cells tightly together. These are called tight junctions. Water and nutrients pass into the enterocytes through the microvilli, while the tight junctions act as physical and biological barriers that block large molecules and harmful substances from entering the body.

The intestinal lining functions well when the tight junctions between enterocytes are strong and intact. But if the tight junctions between cells are damaged, larger particles, toxins, and infections are able to pass between the enterocytes into the bloodstream.

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The interior of your intestine is covered with these tiny finger-like projections called villi that have even tinier finger-like projections on them called microvilli.

TRUTH and TRADITION

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Long COVID Contributing to Disabilities by the Millions: Report

Interdisciplinary treatments aimed at both mind and body are needed for these complex conditions

Continued from Page 9

At the time, she reported that she had been reliant on her boyfriend, who lost his job during the pandemic, to take care of her and the children.

"I was an active mom of four. And now I don't get out of bed. I don't eat. I don't spend time with my children like I need to. This can happen to you," she said.

Despite being more than two years into the pandemic, there has been little progress on our understanding of long COVID symptoms, and patients affected by it have remained largely neglected. Meanwhile, the debilitating conditions that many long COVID patients are suffering from have persisted, and a new group of disabled individuals has been established.

Young and Disabled

While most clear out their COVID-19 symptoms in days to a few weeks, recent studies estimate that about 1 in 8 people who have been infected will have persistent COVID symptoms, despite testing negative for COVID-19.

Doctors still don't understand the drivers behind these symptoms, or why these people are affected. Many long COVID patients, also known as long-haulers, are younger in age and previously had no underlying health conditions.

However, many are hit with a myriad of mental and physiological conditions, including symptoms common to acute COVID such as cough, fevers, shortness of breath, headaches, fatigue, and muscle aches, as well as less common COVID symptoms, including brain fog, severe fatigue, chest pains, depression and anxiety, pins and needles sensations, heart palpitations, and sleep problems, along with other strange conditions.

Not all long COVID symptoms are debilitating, but for some, suffering from long COVID could mean a complete change to their lifestyle.

Not all long COVID symptoms are debilitating, but for some, suffering from long COVID could mean a complete change to their lifestyle.

The disabilities apparently caused by long COVID are directly related to critical organs, including the brain, heart, lungs, and muscles.

A Global Problem

Disabilities from long COVID and debilitating vaccine injuries (which often share similarities to long COVID symptoms) are growing and becoming a problem of both national and global concern.

Debilitating long COVID symptoms can make it difficult for people to enjoy social activities and hold down a job.

News reports have emerged that people with long COVID or vaccine injuries have faced discrimination in the workplace or were laid off because of their conditions.

In July 2021, the Department of Health and Human Services listed long COVID as a disability under Titles II (state and local government) and III (public accommodations) of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The statement cited that individuals filing claims for long COVID disability would be assessed individually by health experts to determine if their health problems are from long COVID.

The latest U.S. government figures revealed a staggering 385,000 people have been living with symptoms of long COVID for a year or more.

A study by Brookings estimated that about 4.5 million Americans with long COVID are out of work.

This not only impacts the American workforce, but is also a significant global problem both in matters of labor and health care. Studies from the Netherlands showed that

COVID-19 and long COVID have driven up sick leave during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development published policies encouraging the implementation of sick-leave income for people suffering from COVID-19 symptoms to protect their income, health, and jobs.

While this provided temporary relief to the people who needed paid leave as a safety net, it also invariably increased government spending, with most countries coming out of the pandemic seeing unprecedented inflation rates.

Health conditions as a result of COVID-19 and related problems are also contributing to a shortfall in labor. Given that the world is already burdened with labor shortages from two years of lockdowns and rapidly changing work environments and career outlooks, disabilities from long COVID and vaccine injuries only add fuel to the fire.

A study published before the pandemic showed that, by 2030, more than 85 million jobs could go unfilled because there aren't enough skilled people to take them. This number is expected to be significantly higher coming out of the pandemic.

The World Health Organization has reported more than 6.4 million deaths from COVID-19 and related problems.

The expectation for work has also shifted during the pandemic. After two years of mostly working remotely with unstable employment and income, people coming out of lockdowns are reporting mental health problems. Some came to the conclusion that work isn't as important as their health or mental well-being and have since postponed seeking employment. Additionally, many who declined to receive the vaccines have lost their jobs.

Interdisciplinary Approach to Treating Both Mind and Body

Considering that long COVID is an interdisciplinary disease with a myriad of conditions that affect multiple organs, holistic health approaches have been encouraged by clinicians to treat the symptoms as a whole. Dr. Christian Sandrock, a professor of critical care and infectious disease medicine at the University of California-Davis School of Medicine, said that the only universal treatment for "long-term symptoms of COVID-19" is to "improve the quality of life," including adjusting sleep and reducing stress.

A few options of integrative care have emerged in the scientific literature to resolve long COVID.

Psychological Therapies

Long COVID is detrimental to mental health. Patients often report symptoms that may be synonymous with depression and anxiety, including insomnia and muscle weakness.

Fatigue is a primary symptom of long COVID. For the patients in a state of social isolation, as well as financial and relationship difficulties, their situation can worsen fatigue, which can further cause negative impacts on mental health and quality of life, forming a negative spiral.

People with long COVID are encouraged to seek counseling and interact with support groups for people sharing similar conditions.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a holistic and energy-based medicinal practice based on the understanding that the body and its organs correspond to different energies.

Energy in excess or deficiency can affect particular organs, causing imbalances to the body. Therefore, by inserting very thin needles into acupoints at different meridians, energy balances can be restored in different organs.

Acupuncture has long been acknowledged as a medical practice that can alleviate symptoms of chronic pain.

Studies have shown that acupuncture increases the release of neurotransmitters, including serotonin and noradrenaline. It also promotes the release of endorphins and melatonin and improves immune function.

The practice reasons that mental illness is from imbalances in energies in various organs.

Studies have shown that acupuncture can improve mental conditions, including depression and anxiety. Research indicates that depressive symptoms may be alleviated through the release of serotonin and noradrenaline, and electroencephalography readings show that electroacupuncture (a form of acupuncture) may be just as effective as the antidepressant drug amitriptyline, without the side effects.

In people with anxiety, acupuncture enhances a sense of stillness, general restfulness, and unresponsiveness to painful stimuli. It also boosts the release of endorphin, a hormone related to the feeling of happiness and satisfaction, as well as melatonin, a hormone that modulates the circadian rhythm and improves sleep.

Electroencephalography readings showed that acupuncture increased alpha waves, which are associated with a normal wakeful state when the subject is quietly resting. Studies have shown that acupuncture reduces patients' need for preoperative sedatives, and the use of acupuncture comes with reduced side effects, in comparison to prescription drugs for pain.

For long COVID symptoms, acupuncture is suggested to stimulate the central nervous system. Specifically, it reduces the "fight-or-flight" stress responses of the sympathetic nervous system, while stimulating the parasympathetic "rest-and-digest" responses.

Studies on long COVID patients suffering from chest palpitation and shortness of breath—symptoms synonymous with anxiety—found that patients experienced a decrease in the severity of the symptoms following acupuncture sessions.

Rehabilitation Interventions

Rehabilitation, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy, could help patients

return to daily life. Studies on aerobic and pulmonary physiotherapy found these therapies improve patients' shortness of breath, anxiety, and fear of moving. High- and low-intensity aerobic exercises increased appendicular muscle mass as well as handgrip strength in patients with long COVID.

Rehabilitation and nutrition programs can also prevent and improve loss of muscle mass in patients.

Chiropractic Therapy

Chiropractic therapy is a holistic therapy that focuses on the musculoskeletal system, especially the spine. Chiropractors believe that vertebrae can become misaligned or move out of their normal position, creating subluxations that put pressure on the tissues around them.

This pressure can affect not only the immediate joints, but also other visceral organs and the whole body. Therefore, chiropractors believe that symptoms of stiffness, dizziness, lack of energy, general malaise, posture imbalance, neck and back stiffness or soreness, spine muscle spasms, constant headaches, and lessening of mobility are all signs of subluxation.



Common Symptoms of Long COVID

1. Impaired Brain Function:

Long COVID impairs brain function and causes nerve damage. Studies have shown that more than 30 percent of SARS-CoV-2 viruses attack the nerves. Nerves are a reservoir of hidden viruses and are connected to internal organs. Many "long-haulers" experience brain fog, difficulty sleeping, headaches, and dulled thinking and memory.

2. Impaired Heart Function:

Fatigue is a primary symptom in long-haulers, as well as muscle aches and increased fatigue after exercise. Many suffer from reduced cardiac output, meaning they have to reduce the intensity of their exercise, and some can't exercise without putting their health at risk.

3. Impaired Respiratory Function:

Studies have found that long COVID patients have decreased lung function, owing to scarring and inflammation. This can lead to decreased oxygen uptake and shortness of breath from lowered blood oxygen levels.

4. Impaired Muscle Function:

Persistent immune actions against viruses damage cells, including muscle cells and tissue. Inflammation from the immune responses can trigger inflammation in muscle fibers and induce muscle weakness.

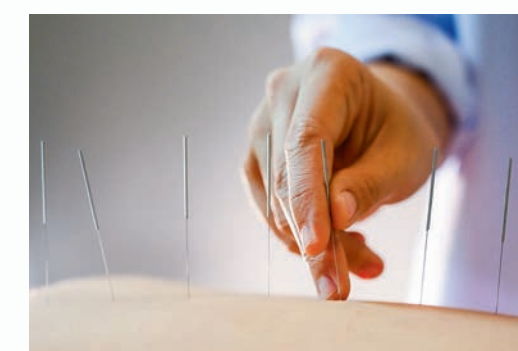
5. Impaired Blood Vessel Function:

Inflammation in the body damages the cells that line blood vessels, and can possibly impair oxygen supply to organs and muscles. This can cause fatigue and aches.

Patients facing long COVID will likely benefit from a range of treatments for both mind and body.



Psychological therapies can be helpful for those suffering anxiety and depression as a result of long COVID.



Acupuncture is a holistic therapy that can be helpful for those facing psychological effects from long COVID.



Meditation is associated with many mental and physiological health benefits, including improved immune signaling.

Vertebrae can be realigned through skeletal manipulation, which is when chiropractors apply a force to the area that is misaligned and use various techniques to manipulate relevant joints.

Primarily, chiropractic therapy has been used to treat back pain; however, several studies have indicated that it can also treat pain in the joints and limbs, muscle pain and tenderness, insomnia, headaches, and fatigue.

Meditation

Meditation, a mental exercise used to attain greater spiritual awareness, is an umbrella term for various practices, including yoga, tai chi, breathing and mindfulness exercises, and many others.

Meditation has been associated with many mental and physiological health benefits.

Studies have shown that meditation improves symptoms of depression and anxiety, as well as concentration and focus.

Physically, meditation has been shown to reduce inflammation and strengthen the immune system. Studies in immunocompromised (HIV and cancer) patients showed that meditation increased or reduced the decline of immune cells and also prevented immune aging.

Mindful meditation has been suggested to regulate and restore immune signaling. Studies showed that meditation improved interferon messaging. Interferons are dysregulated in people with severe COVID symptoms and have been suggested to also drive vaccine injury. Restoring a robust interferon pathway may improve the symptoms in people suffering from long COVID and in people sharing similar symptoms.

Meditation and mindful exercises have been encouraged during the pandemic and for long COVID patients to recover from fatigue and mental distress.

Even minimal meditation improves mental health. Studies have shown that novice meditators who listened to a 10-minute meditation tape before attention tests received higher scores than people who didn't meditate beforehand.

Some meditation guides recommend that beginners start with 2 to 5 minutes of meditation whenever they want to regulate stress or emotions. However, given that meditation could mean various practices, everyone can experiment with the duration and frequency to see what works best for them.

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Dr. Yuhong Dong, a medical doctor who also holds a doctorate in infectious diseases, is the chief scientific officer and co-founder of a Swiss biotech company and former senior medical scientific expert for antiviral drug development at Novartis Pharma in Switzerland.

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deaths and related problems have been attributed to COVID-19 according to the World Health Organization.

Ask a Doctor: What Is Leaky Gut?

Intestinal permeability can lead to a host of problems, but it's also treatable

Eating probiotic-rich food can help protect the gut microbiome and reduce the risk of developing a leaky gut.



Continued from Page 9

That is known as leaky gut, or leaky gut syndrome. Other names for this type of functional defect of the intestinal epithelium include “increased intestinal permeability” and “hyperpermeability of the intestinal tract.”

There's some controversy regarding leaky gut among conventional medical practitioners and those who practice in a more holistic or complementary fashion. While leaky gut syndrome may not currently be recognized as a medical diagnosis, increased intestinal permeability is noted to be present in a range of diseases.

It's like the chicken-and-egg situation. Which came first, the symptom or the cause? In conventional medicine, leaky gut, although real, is regarded as a symptom of various gastrointestinal diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease and celiac disease.

From a holistic point of view, however, an impaired intestinal barrier allows toxins and harmful substances into the bloodstream, which then results in a cascade of inflammatory responses that can manifest as a wide range of disease states throughout the body.

The gut microbiome is a complex ecosystem of microorganisms that lies as a biofilm on the surface of the intestinal epithelium. It's well-established that the microorganisms in the gut, made up of mostly beneficial and some harmful bacteria, viruses, and fungi, are fundamental for nutrient absorption, metabolism of essential nutrients, and proper immune system function.

Leaky gut can result from gut inflammation and an imbalance of the gut microbiome. Imbalance or overgrowth of the normal microbiome with pathogenic microorganisms is known as gut dysbiosis.

Gut dysbiosis contributes to leaky gut and the movement of pathogens and harmful metabolites into the bloodstream.

A plethora of diseases have been linked to dysbiosis of the gut microbiome. These include gastrointestinal diseases such as Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, and colon cancer. Interestingly, gut microbiome-related diseases aren't limited to the digestive system.

Substantial evidence links asthma, food allergies, cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, hepatic encephalopathy, and eczema to an imbalance in the gut microbiome and leaky gut syndrome.

Even more interesting, some mental disorders and autism have been shown to have an association with gut dysbiosis and leaky gut syndrome.

Main Causes of Leaky Gut

1. Glyphosate

Stephanie Seneff, a senior research scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has researched how glyphosate disrupts the gut microbes. The most widely used herbicide in the world, glyphosate is both an herbicide and crop desiccant that's used heavily in agriculture.



The glyphosate in Roundup is damaging to the gut microbiome.

2. Gluten

The immune system responds to substances it considers harmful by causing an inflammatory reaction.

Gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley, can cause inflammation of the intestinal lining in susceptible individuals. This is diagnosed as gluten sensitivity or celiac disease.

Inflammatory molecules damage the integrity of the gut's tight junctions, leading to leaky gut. Gluten has been shown to activate zonulin, a protein that opens the tight junctions of the small intestine and can be measured as a marker for intestinal permeability.

3. Mold Toxins

Research indicates that mold toxins, also called mycotoxins, can induce leaky gut.

Dietary toxic mold exposure may result in leaky gut through interactions between ingested mycotoxins, the gut microbiome, and the intestinal epithelium.

Mycotoxins from exposure to water-damaged buildings enter the body through the airways or through the skin. Some of the mycotoxins that enter the mouth and nose can be swallowed and contribute to leaky gut.

The gut microbiome helps to detoxify harmful substances. Certain beneficial bacteria protect the body by binding and metabolizing ingested mycotoxins.

Unfortunately, over time, or if dysbiosis is present, mycotoxins can alter the gut microbiome and reduce its detoxification capacity. This results in an accumulation of mycotoxins that disrupts the integrity of the intestinal epithelial barrier, which, in turn, contributes to the development of leaky gut.

Moreover, mycotoxins impair gut health on a structural and functional level. Not only do they displace beneficial bacteria with increased pathogenic bacteria, increasing intestinal permeability, but mycotoxins also cause nutrient malabsorption, exacerbate oxidative stress and inflammation, and allow

Dietary exposure to glyphosate harms the gut and the gut microbiome. Glyphosate disrupts an important enzyme in the shikimate pathway, which is essential for the health of beneficial bacteria. Damage to this pathway also stops the good bacteria from making nutrients essential for health.

Glyphosate is also a very efficient mineral chelator and makes ingested minerals unavailable to the gut microbes. For the microbes to function properly, they rely on those minerals and the shikimate enzyme pathway.

Seneff has noted a strong correlation between the rise of gluten intolerance over time and the rise of glyphosate used on wheat as a desiccant prior to harvest. Chronic exposure to glyphosate disturbs the gut microbiome creating a starting point for many diseases, including arthritis and neurological diseases.

In the recent Epoch Health podcast, “The Legal Poison in Our Foods: Dr. Stephanie Seneff on What Glyphosate Does and How to Avoid It,” she states: “Glyphosate basically kills important bacteria in our own gut microbiome that are essential for producing proteins, neurotransmitters, and many other essential things. Once this happens, it allows for the overgrowth of pathogenic bacteria that make us sick.”

harmful bacteria, viral, and parasitic infections through the intestinal wall.

Other Causes of Leaky Gut

There are many other causes of leaky gut. Toxins can disrupt the intestinal epithelial layer. Deficiencies of certain vitamins and minerals can weaken the epithelial lining of the intestines. An imbalance or dysbiosis of the gut microbiome is a significant etiology of leaky gut. Other factors contributing to leaky gut include:

A Low-Fiber Diet

Gastroenterologist and gut health expert Dr. Will Bulsiewicz, who wrote the best-selling diet and lifestyle book “Fiber Fueled,” describes the benefits of increasing fiber in the diet. Eating a broad range of fiber-rich foods found primarily in whole plant foods leads to billions of well-fed, high-functioning gut microbes. A low-fiber diet, on the other hand, starves out beneficial microbes. This creates dysbiosis by making room for pathogenic and harmful microbes.

Unhealthy Diet

A diet based on highly processed foods, refined sugars, and unhealthy fat content can lead to increased intestinal permeability or leaky gut.

Chronic Stress

Exposure to stress changes brain-gut interactions. This can lead to a wide range of gastrointestinal disorders, including inflammatory bowel disease, irritable bowel syndrome, food allergies, motility problems, and other digestive issues. Physiological effects of stress on the gut include negative effects on intestinal microbiota and an increase in intestinal permeability.

Zinc Deficiency

Zinc positively influences the barrier function of the intestinal lining. There is evidence that zinc's action on intestinal tight junctions and enterocyte barrier function makes the mineral a potential therapeutic agent to help to heal gastrointestinal dysfunction and leaky gut.

Potentially Problematic Medications

Several medications can contribute to leaky gut:

- Antibiotics kill both good and bad microorganisms, including those that inhabit the microbiome, which can lead to leaky gut.
- NSAIDs, or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, are disruptive to the intestinal barrier and can contribute to leaky gut.
- Steroids may suppress the immune system leading to leaky gut, which, in turn, leaves the body open to infection.
- Birth control pills contribute to excess estrogen which may lead to the overgrowth of Candida, a species of yeast that can cause leaky gut.
- Antacids suppress gastric acids and can alter the gut microbiome over time, causing an overgrowth of bacteria, which may lead to leaky gut.

Fixing Leaky Gut

There are many things you can do to help to improve any problems you're experiencing with your gut.



A healthy diet with plenty of fiber is one of the most important ways to maintain a healthy gut.

Avoid Glyphosate and Other Toxins

There are several ways of counteracting exposure to glyphosate. Those include choosing high-nutrient organic foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and legumes along with herbs and spices to help fight the effects of glyphosate. A lifestyle with special attention to digestive health along with optimized liver and kidney function will also help.

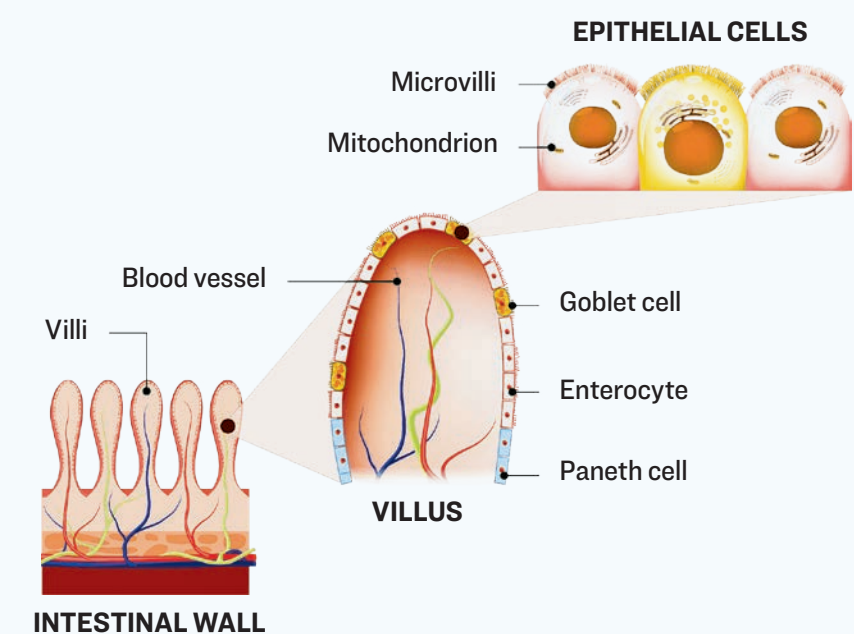
Limit Gluten

Wheat, barley, and rye are the main grains that contain gluten. Those familiar with gluten sensitivity and celiac disease know just how challenging it can be to avoid gluten. Many beverages, snack foods, candy, and prepared foods have gluten hidden in their ingredients.

Keeping to a whole-food diet is one way to limit exposure to wheat, barley, and rye. It's also important to diligently search ingredient lists for the many possible sources of gluten such as wheat, barley, rye, spelt, bran, flour, modified food starch, natural flavors, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, soy sauce, malt vinegar, farina, durum, semolina, and barley enzymes.

While limiting exposure to gluten, support your digestive tract and microbiome with a healthy diet and dietary supplements such as zinc, L-glutamine, grass-fed collagen peptides, prebiotics, probiotics, and fiber.

Other potentially helpful supplements include deglycyrrhizinated licorice, curcumin, berberine, and mucilaginous herbs such as marshmallow root.



The villi and microvilli of the intestinal wall expand the gut's surface area to maximize nutrient absorption.

Be Aware of Toxic Mold Exposure

Toxic molds can cause chronic illness and contribute to leaky gut syndrome.

Unfortunately, such exposures can be quite common given the inadequacies of modern heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems and building designs that frequently lead to damp areas that give birth to toxic molds.

Many chronic illnesses are linked to mycotoxin exposure. Resolving these exposures requires fixing the source and treating the resulting condition. Protect yourself from exposure whenever possible while augmenting strategies to reinstate gastrointestinal health.

Eat More Fiber

A whole-food, plant-based diet might sound, at first, hard to achieve. Start by simply increasing the amount and variety of plant foods in the diet. Begin by eating nuts, fruit, grains, beans, vegetables, and seeds. Evidence shows a fiber-rich diet will help to modulate the gut microbiota.

Seek Support

If you think you may be suffering from intestinal permeability, you can find a support program to help to treat and heal leaky gut.

Dr. Zach Bush is an internationally recognized doctor, educator, and thought leader on the microbiome in health and disease, and food systems. He is triple board-certified in internal medicine, endocrinology, and hospice care. He has developed a support system for the microbiome called ION, which promotes strengthening the integrity of the barriers of the body's gut, sinuses, and skin.

Another approach is to follow the four R's, as described by Dr. Amy Myers, which include: removing toxic and inflammatory foods, and gastric irritants; restoring essential ingredients for proper digestion; reinoculating with beneficial bacteria; and repairing the gut lining with nutrients. She provides supplements and valuable information in The Myers Way protocol to treat leaky gut.

Healthy lifestyle choices will help to improve digestive health while naturally repairing a leaky gut. Reducing stress, improving sleep, and getting sufficient exercise are always helpful but are also proven to aid in the recovery of leaky gut. Taking probiotics can help to inoculate the microbiome. We can also feed the microbiome with a high-fiber diet for improved digestive health while recovering from leaky gut.

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

Sherra Vorley is a writer passionate about organic agriculture and holistic health. Her wish is to help people by providing actionable tools for disease prevention and holistic healing.

How to Get Enough Calcium—Without Dairy

Calcium is an important nutrient and there are plenty of foods to provide your daily requirement

ZRINKA PETERS

Calcium could, in all fairness, be called the king of minerals. It's the most abundant mineral found in the human body, and it plays a critical role in the formation and maintenance of bones and teeth, as well as muscle contraction, blood clotting, and nerve signaling. The vast majority of the body's calcium—98 percent according to the National Institutes of Health—is stored in the bones.

There's no dispute among experts that getting enough calcium is essential, but that's where the agreement ends. Precisely how much calcium is necessary for optimum health and which dietary sources are best for obtaining it remain hotly disputed topics.

Calcium needs vary significantly according to age and sex. During times of rapid growth—such as adolescence and pregnancy—needs are higher than during times of “maintenance.” Also, post-menopausal women have increased calcium needs as they experience an accelerated rate of bone loss because of falling estrogen levels.

We've been told for decades that calcium is essential and that dairy products are the best

source of calcium, so it's a short hop to the conclusion that we should all be loading up on plenty of milk, yogurt, and cheese if we're to avoid weak bones and recurring cavities down the road.

But what about those who are allergic to milk? Cow's milk is the most common food allergen among infants and young children, with about 2.5 percent being affected, according to nonprofit FARE, or Food Allergy Research and Education. While many outgrow their dairy allergy eventually, some don't and carry it into adulthood.

Add to this those who suffer from lactose intolerance, which recent research shows afflicts roughly two-thirds of the world population, and those who follow a vegan diet, and there's a sizable chunk of the population who, either by necessity or by choice, avoid dairy products and must have their calcium needs met from other sources.

As worrisome as it might be to veer from the “GotMilk?” campaign, rest assured that it's entirely possible to get sufficient calcium without consuming dairy products. There are a variety of calcium-rich plant foods and calcium-fortified foods and beverages

to choose from, and supplements are also an option if needed. Considering that an eight-ounce glass of cow's milk averages 300 milligrams (mg) of calcium, compare these non-dairy options.

Getting enough calcium is essential at every age, but for those who don't consume dairy products, there's no need to fear falling short. Intentionally including plenty of calcium-rich non-dairy foods as a regular

part of the diet makes it easy to get enough of this essential mineral.

Zrinka Peters has been writing professionally for over a decade. She has a BA in English Literature from Simon Fraser University in Canada and has been published in a wide variety of print and online publications including Health Digest, Parent.com, Today's Catholic Teacher, and Education.com

Life Stage (Years)	Recommended Daily Amount (Calcium)
Children 1–3 years	700 mg
Children 4–8 years	1000 mg
Children and Teens 9–18 years	1300 mg
Adults 19–50 years	1200 mg
Adult men 51–70 years	1300 mg
Adult women 51–70 years	1200 mg
Pregnant and breastfeeding teens	1300 mg
Pregnant and breastfeeding adults	1000 mg

Getting adequate calcium is important to maintaining health and mobility.

Dietary sources of calcium

Almonds: Almonds top the list of calcium-rich nuts. 100 grams (g) of almonds, which is a substantial serving at about 100 nuts, contains 273 mg of calcium, along with healthy fats, iron, protein, and fiber.



Canned salmon and sardines: When canned with their soft, edible bones, these fish options provide an impressive amount of calcium. One 3.75-ounce (92 g) can of sardines contains 351 mg of calcium, according to the USDA's FoodData Central, while a three-ounce (85 g) can of salmon contains 241 mg.



Fortified orange juice: While eating one whole orange will net you roughly 65 mg of calcium, one cup of calcium-fortified orange juice supplies a hefty 349 g—more than a third of the RDA.



Kale and collard greens: Several leafy greens are high in calcium, but some—such as spinach—contain significant amounts of an antinutrient called oxalate, which hinders calcium absorption. Kale and collard greens are both low in oxalates and high in calcium, providing 177 mg and 268 mg per cup, respectively.



Molasses: The calcium content of molasses varies significantly depending on type, but, along with substantial amounts of iron, potassium, and magnesium, the amounts are notable. One tablespoon of molasses contains 41 mg of calcium. Blackstrap molasses, which is more concentrated and nutrient-dense than regular molasses, contains much more at 100 mg per tablespoon, which is 10 percent of the daily value recommended for adults by the USDA Dietary Guidelines.



Calcium-set tofu: Tofu is made using three basic ingredients: soybeans, water, and a coagulating substance, such as magnesium chloride or calcium sulfate. When calcium sulfate is used as the coagulating substance, the calcium content of tofu is very high—as high as 683 mg per 100 g for raw, firm tofu, while firm tofu using other coagulating agents may have between 100 mg and 200 mg of calcium per 100 g of tofu. Check the nutritional label to see the calcium content of the tofu brands in your area.



Plant-based milk substitutes: Soy, almond, rice, and oat milks are often fortified with calcium to levels comparable with cow's milk. One cup of soy milk contains 300 mg of calcium, equivalent to a cup of cow's milk. Rice and oat milks are fortified to similar levels, and one cup of unsweetened almond milk boasts even more calcium at 449 mg per cup.



White beans: Among beans and legumes, white beans rank among the highest in calcium content. A total of 100 g of dried, small white beans contains 236 mg of calcium. Other varieties of beans and lentils contain less calcium but are still rich sources of fiber, protein, and a variety of micronutrients.



Seeds: Poppy, sesame, and chia seeds all contain impressive amounts of calcium. Just one tablespoon of poppy seeds contains 127 mg of calcium—more than 12 percent of the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for most adults—while sesame and chia seeds both contain about 9 percent of the RDA.

Winter squash: One cup of cooked butternut squash contains 84 mg of calcium, while the same amount of acorn squash contains even more at 90 mg. Both varieties, along with other orange-fleshed species, are also loaded with vitamins A and C and gut-supporting fiber.



INTENTIONAL LIVING

Gratitude: The Key to Being Satisfied

Immediately ease your suffering by practicing intentional gratitude

MOLLIE DONGHIA

“The grass is always greener on the other side,” we’re told when a situation or season of life leaves us feeling discontent.

Believing that someone else has it better or that better days are ahead of us, we strive to pursue greater opportunities or nicer things. If our circumstances were different, we would be happier. So we continue down this trail and rob ourselves of one of the most valuable gifts life has to offer—gratitude.

Preacher Charles Spurgeon summed up the human mentality clearly in this quote: “You say, ‘If I had a little more, I should be very satisfied.’ You make a mistake. If you are not content with what you have, you would not be satisfied if it were doubled.”

This thought sums up the behavior of many adults in our society. We desire bigger houses, newer cars, and nicer things. The luster of what we have quickly wears off as we look to the next advance. Rarely do we allow ourselves to enjoy what we already have.

Our constant pursuit of happiness leaves us wanting, expanding our desire rather than our satisfaction. So how then can we truly become content when our eyes are fixed ever forward?

When we open the door to living with more gratitude (even on the hard days), we begin to see that more “stuff” won’t supply us with lasting satisfaction. Here are five ways in which gratitude allows us to live healthier, happier, more meaningful lives.

Gratitude allows our attitude to become more optimistic

Is your glass half full or half empty? Research has found that when we’re optimistic and have positive thoughts about the future, our mental health and overall well-being improve. When we begin the day with gratitude and acknowledge what we’re grateful for, it allows us to focus on the present rather than casting a negative view on what could be better or different. Gratitude feeds optimism.

Gratitude keeps our expectations realistic

Being grateful for what we already have teaches us to keep our expectations in line with reality. We recognize our needs versus our wants. We’re more likely to spend within



DRAZEN ZIGIC/SHUTTERSTOCK

our means and resist impulse purchases. And we begin to realize that more “stuff” won’t make us happier, nor will elevating our material expectations.

Gratitude allows you to slow down

When we constantly seek the next hit of dopamine from a trip to the mall or an upgraded kitchen, we inevitably add to our financial burden. Getting more stuff means needing more money and having less time. If you hunger for new experiences instead of items, this same situation can play out. Or if we measure our worth by what we accomplish rather than having a basic appreciation for who we are, we can also run ourselves ragged. When we begin with gratitude, we can take a slower approach to life, and savor the moments that make up this life. Practicing gratitude leads to taking on less but making our commitments more meaningful.

a brief prayer of gratitude—for my warm bed that allowed me a restful night’s sleep, the hot cup of coffee awaiting me, the beautiful sunshine pouring through the windows, and the opportunity to care for my children another day. This habit encourages me to start the day focusing on positives, instead of dwelling on what could be better.

Keep a Gratitude Journal
Studies have found that when we practice gratitude, it helps us sleep better, lowers stress, and improve our relationships. Another study found that keeping a gratitude journal decreased materialism in young adults and also encouraged them to become more generous.

Writing in a gratitude journal has been key to my morning routine. I briefly list about five

Think about those closest to you and consider making a list of the qualities you admire most about those people.

Gratitude encourages better relationships

As we focus on the positive aspects of those closest to us, this allows for deeper, more intimate relationships—one of the key indicators of a healthy lifespan. Instead of complaining about what we would like to change in a person, gratitude allows us to focus on the good qualities and resist harboring negative views of that individual.

Think about those closest to you and consider making a list of the qualities you admire most about those people. Doing this produces positive feelings and encourages a healthier view of those relationships.

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

Rarely, do we allow ourselves to enjoy what we already have.

3 Simple Ways to Practice Gratitude Each Day

Practicing gratitude may not be our natural tendency, but with mindful effort, we can learn to avoid the cycle of discontentment that comes from always striving for more. Consider these simple ways to practice gratitude every single day.

Give Thanks

Whether you’re religious or not, acknowledging what we’re thankful for allows us to focus our thoughts on the positive parts of our life rather than the negative ones.

Each morning before getting out of bed, I say

things I’m grateful for that day. Having this written down is also a powerful way to help with feelings of discontent on those hard days, as I can look back and remember what I’ve been grateful for in the past.

Practice Negative Visualization

The ancient stoics practiced a thinking technique called negative visualization, where they spent a short time imagining how the positive events in life could be taken away. While this may seem morbid to some, it helps to keep an attitude focused on what we’re truly grateful for without taking things for granted.

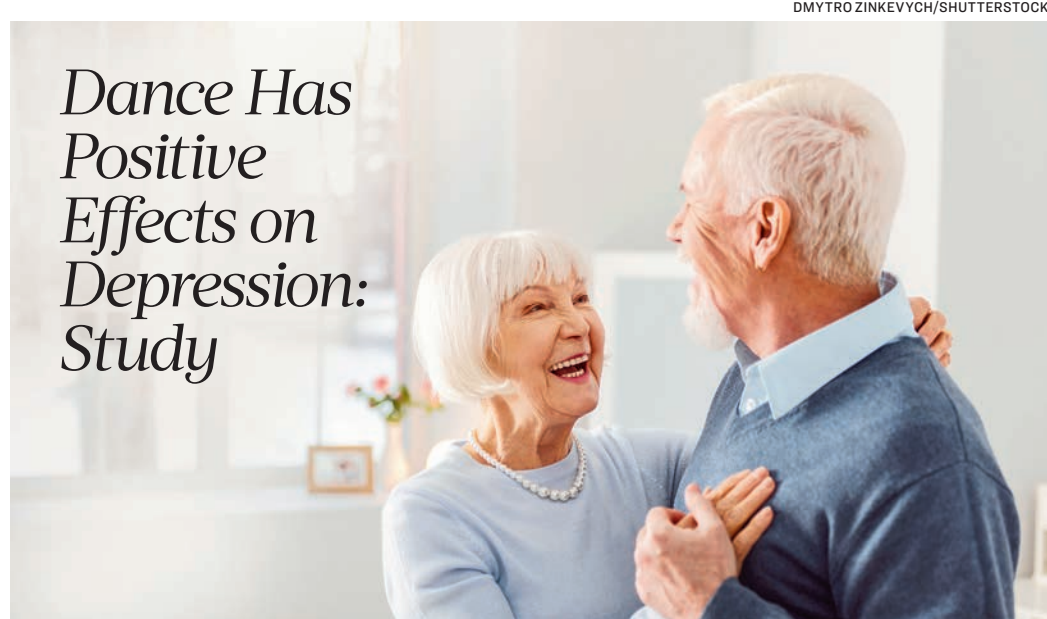
For example, if I’m frustrated with the task of having to constantly prepare snacks and meals for my family, I practice this technique by imagining how I would feel if we didn’t have access to enough food or the money to

feed them. Sadly, this is a real problem for many adults and children around the world, so being grateful for the opportunity to feed them reminds me to be grateful rather than frustrated.

This practice allows us to appreciate what we have, understand the outcomes if we lose those blessings, and go forth with a grateful spirit by seeing that what we already have is often more than enough.

Even though the pull of society will tell us to reach for more in order to feel successful or happy, we can resist this urge by practicing gratitude. We’ll never feel fully satisfied with a mindset of wanting what we don’t yet have, so choose to break the cycle of discontentment and live a life filled with more peace by being grateful for what’s already yours.

Dance Has Positive Effects on Depression: Study



Dance can help free a person from illness and help them see their condition differently.

SARAH COWNLEY

Did you know that dancing has positive effects on depression? Studies have found that dancing can help improve mood, reduce stress and anxiety, and promote a positive self-image. So, if you’re feeling down, why not give dancing a try?

There are plenty of different types of dances to choose from, so you’re sure to find one that

suits you. And who knows—maybe you’ll even start to enjoy it.

A new study from the University of Eastern Finland has released an avatar-based dance choreography illustrating the narratives of six study participants regarding their desired future. The hope is that people can find the good in everyday life through dance and that it may help people deal with issues and events through movement without using words.

Senior Researcher Hanna Pohjola found evidence in earlier studies that dance can help free a person from illness and help them see their condition differently. She specifically found that within a dance company where all of its dancers were diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, the role of the dancer was emphasized, and the disease was reduced to the background.

Studies have found that dancing can improve mood, reduce stress and anxiety, and promote a positive self image.

In an article on the research on the university’s website, Pohjola said, “A similar phenomenon can also be seen in our depression study as well. The participants identified themselves as dancers first, and dance took priority over other things.”

For the study analyzing the relationship between dance and depression, each participant had a collaboratively produced dance narrative that was based on the participants’ own stories and their narration through

dance. Named Minuina (“As Me”), the dance choreography paints a picture of the desired future through movement.

The process of performing a dance to help with depression has not been studied much yet, but this new research is paving the way to understanding more. Researchers hope to learn more about the activation of the mirror neuron system in the brain through dance. Mirror neurons are neurons that react to sounds, movements, expressions, and gestures and mimic what another person is doing and feeling. This is why they are also called empathy neurons.

When a person sees a dance genre that is familiar to the viewer, the mirror neuron system is activated. In this study, they were activated by the participants recognizing their own movements being performed by the avatar. This brain activity could offer more insight into how dance could help with mental health and cognition.

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

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MADE TO MOVE

Can’t Get Your Teen Off the Couch?

High-intensity interval training is a great addition to a teen’s physical activity

Quick bursts of exercise are a great way to get teens off devices for crucial physical activity.



DAVID LUBANS & ANGUS LEAHY

Many parents understand the frustration of coming home from work to find their teens slumped on the couch with their eyes glued to their phones or the TV.

This isn’t unusual, and dozens of studies have shown that physical activity levels decline during the teenage years. In Australia, less than 10 percent of older adolescents are getting enough physical activity. According to statistics from the American Heart Association, among U.S. high school students, only about one in four get the recommended hour per day of physical activity.

Adolescence is also a time when there’s a spike in mental health problems. It’s a key period of human development characterized by rapid psychological and biological changes due to the onset of puberty and associated hormones.

During this time, young people are developing a sense of identity and independence as they transition into adulthood and establish health-related behaviors. Introducing your teen to high-intensity interval training (HIIT) is one way to get them moving and feeling better.

What’s High-Intensity Interval Training?

High-intensity interval training is a time-efficient form of exercise that involves relatively short yet intense bouts of activity, combined with rest or low-intensity activity.

The intensity of the exercise should be at about seven to nine out of 10 on a scale of perceived exertion.

What Are the Benefits?

In our recent study, we found that two to three HIIT sessions per week, each lasting about eight minutes, improved students’ aerobic and muscular fitness over the six-month study period. The exercises included things such as shuttle runs (running back and forth between two lines) and push-ups.

After the program, students who participated completed, on average, four more laps on the shuttle run test and had small increases in the number of push-ups completed. They also had reductions in the stress hormone cortisol, which we measured in their hair.

There’s also emerging evidence that

participating in high-intensity interval training can have short- and long-term benefits for young people’s mental health and cognitive function.

We also conducted a review of studies on high-intensity interval training and found that participating in a single HIIT session can improve how young people feel.

There’s emerging evidence that participation in HIIT can improve children’s cognitive function. In this New Zealand study, children participated in video-based HIIT workouts five times per week over a six-week period. Compared to a control group, the research team found significant improvements in cognitive control and working memory among children who participated in the HIIT sessions.

How to Get Started and Make It Enjoyable

Start simple: A good starting point is to do 30 seconds of exercise followed by 30 seconds of rest, repeating the pattern eight times. We’ve found this to be effective and enjoyable for teens in a number of studies.

Incorporate variety: We recommend that teens complete a variety of aerobic activities (such as shuttle runs, running on the spot, or burpees) and resistance exercises (such as push-ups, squats, or lunges) designed to increase heart rate. And while high-intensity interval training can be done in the living room, changing the exercise setting can also help satisfy your teen’s need for variety. For example,



Among U.S. high school students, only about

1 in 4

get the recommended hour a day of physical activity.

Introducing your teen to high-intensity interval training (HIIT) is one way to get them moving and feeling better.

Outdoor activities are a great way for teens to have fun and exercise.

doing a session on the stairs at the beach or park might be more motivating than doing the same session in the backyard.

Modify intensity: As teens improve their fitness, they can increase the duration of the work interval, decrease the rest interval, or increase the total number of intervals completed within a session to ensure that they’re getting a good workout.

Make it enjoyable: Playing music and exercising with friends and family are strategies that can make high-intensity interval training more enjoyable. Although most people don’t feel great in the middle of an intense exercise interval, there’s evidence that they’ll feel good about 20 minutes after completing exercise. We’ve found that participating in high-intensity interval training increases adolescents’ mood and vitality (energy and alertness). Reminding teens to think about how they’re feeling after participating in a training session helps them experience the psychological benefits.

Use technology: Wearable technologies (such as activity trackers and heart rate monitors) can help increase engagement during exercise, as they can provide you with real-time heart rate data to see how hard you’re working. While these can be expensive, lower-cost options are available. If you don’t want to design your own sessions, there are thousands of fitness apps and online training videos to choose from.

David Lubans is a professor at the University of Newcastle in Australia, and Angus Leahy is an associate lecturer at the University of Newcastle. This article was originally published by The Conversation.



Wearable technologies can help increase engagement during exercise

Participate in a Variety of Physical Activities

High-intensity interval training is a great way to get teens moving and interested in physical activity, but it shouldn’t be the only type of physical activity they undertake. Rather, it should be part of your teen’s physical activity smorgasbord, which includes:

- active transport (walking and cycling).
- team and individual sports, such as swimming, football, volleyball, or basketball.
- resistance training, such as free weights, bodyweight exercises, or exercises using elastic resistance bands, to improve muscular fitness.
- other forms of recreational activity, such as dancing, surfing, skiing, and mountain biking.

If we want our teens to be active now and into the future, we need to provide them with the motivation, confidence, and knowledge to engage in a wide variety of physical activities.

Moving Lightly Through the World

What would happen if we met life’s mud puddles with a child’s gleeful abandon?

LEO BABAUTA

You might know that I’m a fan of simplicity and minimalism, but for me, it’s not just about having less stuff or even doing less.

For me, it’s a way of moving through the world with lightness. Not lightly tiptoeing around trying not to make an impact, but with lightness in my heart. Moving lightly through life is like hiking up a mountain without the burden of a heavy bag and with a spring in your step. It’s facing the new day with joy instead of dread.

Moving lightly is taking on your work with a feeling of empowerment and peace. It’s the leap in your heart when you reconnect with a friend who you love.

It’s how a child romps around in a field

of flowers or splashes triumphantly in a mud puddle.

It isn’t, however, how we pile our worries and complaints on top of ourselves until we’re weighed down.

Instead of moving lightly, we avoid and procrastinate or push ourselves to do stuff we don’t want to do and carry the weight of it all. We try to create systems of control to manage the chaos of life so that we don’t have to step into the unknown.

What if we let go of all of that and simply moved through life with an open heart? With a feeling of playfulness and joy, of being willing to splash in the mud and make a mess?

What would be different if you did your work this way? If you connected with others, collaborated with others, and loved others in this way?

What would it be like to romp through your day in this lighthearted way?

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

We try to create systems of control to manage the chaos of life so that we don’t have to step into the unknown.



Moving lightly is taking on your work with a feeling of empowerment and peace.

Using Meditation in Pediatric Medicine

A neuroscientist explains how meditation may help treat children suffering from traumas, difficult diagnoses, or other stressors

HILARY A. MARUSAK

Children actively meditating experience lower activity in parts of the brain involved in rumination, mind-wandering, and depression, our team found in the first brain-imaging study of people younger than 18 years old. Over-activity in this collection of brain regions, known as the default mode network, is thought to be involved in the generation of negative self-directed thoughts—such as “I am such a failure”—that are prominent in mental disorders such as depression.

In our study, we compared a simple form of distraction—counting backward from 10—with two relatively simple forms of meditation: focused attention to the breath and mindful acceptance. Children in an MRI scanner had to use these techniques while watching distress-inducing video clips, such as a child receiving an injection.

We found that meditation techniques were more effective than distraction at quelling activity in that brain network. This reinforces

research from our lab and others showing that meditation techniques and martial arts-based meditation programs are effective for reducing pain and stress in children with cancer or other chronic illnesses—and in their siblings—as well as in schoolchildren during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study, led by medical student Aneesh Hehr, is important because meditation techniques such as focused attention on the breath or mindful acceptance are popular in school settings and are increasingly used to help children cope with stressful experiences. These might include exposure to trauma, medical treatments, or even COVID-19-related stress.

Why It Matters

Researchers know a lot about what’s happening in the brain and body in adults while they meditate, but comparable data for children has been lacking. Understanding what’s happening in children’s brains when they meditate is important because the developing brain is wired differently from the adult brain.

These findings are also important because caregivers and health care providers often use distraction methods such as iPads or toys to help children cope with pain and distress, such as medical procedures. However, those techniques may largely rely on the prefrontal cortex, which is underdeveloped in youth.

This means that stress and emotion regulation techniques that rely on the prefrontal cortex may work well for adults but are likely to be less accessible to children. Meditation techniques may not be dependent upon the prefrontal cortex and may therefore be more accessible and effective for helping children manage and cope with stress.

What’s Next

We still have a great deal to learn about how meditation affects brain development in children. This includes what types of meditation techniques are most effective, their ideal frequency and duration, and how they affect children differently.

Our study focused on a relatively small



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Many parents use iPads or toys as tools of distraction for their children during times of distress.

Meditation techniques and martial arts-based meditation programs are effective for reducing pain and stress in children with cancer or other chronic illnesses

sample of 12 children with active cancer, as well as survivors who may have experienced significant distress over the diagnosis, treatment, and uncertainty about the future. Future studies with larger sample sizes—including children with a wider diversity of diagnoses and exposures to early adversity or trauma—will help researchers to better understand how meditation affects the brains and bodies of children.

Our findings underscore the need to understand precisely how meditation techniques work. Exciting recent studies have begun to examine how participating in mindfulness and meditation-based programs can shape brain functioning in children.

Understanding how these techniques work is also essential for optimizing how they could be applied in health care settings, such as coping with needle-related procedures or helping children manage the negative effects of stress and trauma.

Hilary A. Marusak is an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral neurosciences at Wayne State University. This article was originally published by The Conversation.

Children actively meditating experience lower activity in parts of the brain involved in rumination, mind-wandering, and depression.



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