

DR. LISE ALSCHULER AND KAROLYN A. GAZELLA PRESENT

# FIVETO THRIVE

SUSTAINABLE  
**HEALTH TIPS**  
TO TRANSFORM YOUR  
**INTERNAL  
LANDSCAPE**

\$5.95

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## TRANSFORMING OUR VITALITY

**TO TRANSFORM MEANS** to change. But we may be tempted to think of this as a one-time event or a lofty goal. The fact is, transformation is continual, a part of our everyday existence just like breathing or thinking.

On a deep cellular level, transformation takes place constantly. Cells die as more cells are born. Consider this: we have an entirely new skeleton every 10 years. The life span of the cells in our liver is only about 150 days. Your taste bud cells are transformed every 10 to 14 days. The tiny villi cells that line your intestines turnover every two to three days!



We are quite literally a bundle of transformative energy and this energy influences our ability to thrive in our day-to-day lives. On a very deep level we do, in fact, have the ability to influence these ongoing transformative processes. We are not dictated solely by our DNA's destiny. We have far more control along this journey than ever thought possible.

We are on a mission to help you positively influence how your internal landscape is transformed so you can experience your external world with more exuberance. That's why we created the Five to Thrive® Plan. This booklet gives you a colorful and vibrant snapshot of the information provided in our Five to Thrive Plan. We hope you feel informed and inspired by the articles we have written, as well as those written by experts we've invited to join us.

While the process of transformation is continual and often viewed as a positive experience, it's not always easy. One of our favorite poets, the late Maya Angelou reminds us:

*"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."*

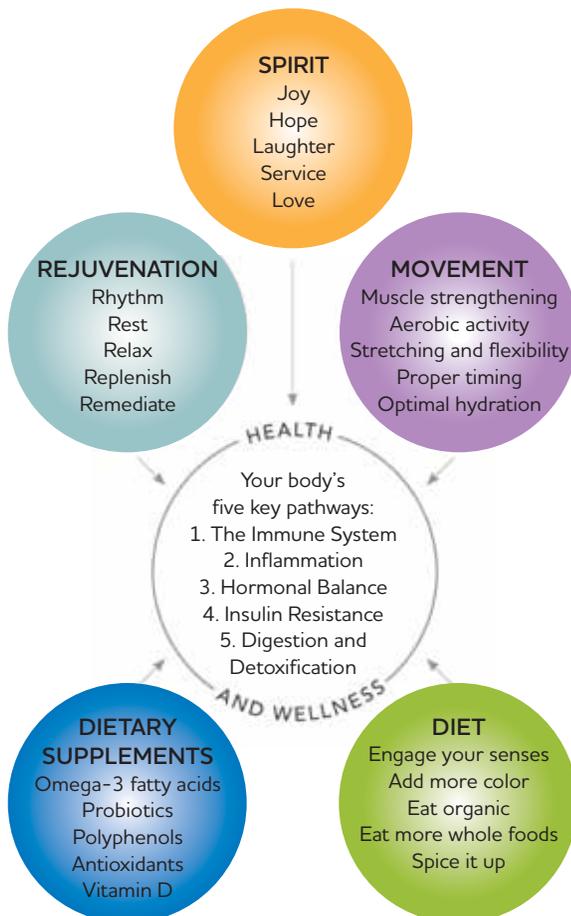
Beauty is within our reach every moment of every day. Some moments are more difficult than others, but even during those challenging times we can take comfort in the fact that there is a moment waiting for us that holds wondrous transformation. We hope that this booklet will help you embrace the process of transformation that life's wonderful journey provides.

It's time to thrive!

—Dr. Lise Alschuler and Karolyn Gazella

### THE FIVE TO THRIVE PLAN

Positively influence your pathways with these core strategies and action steps.



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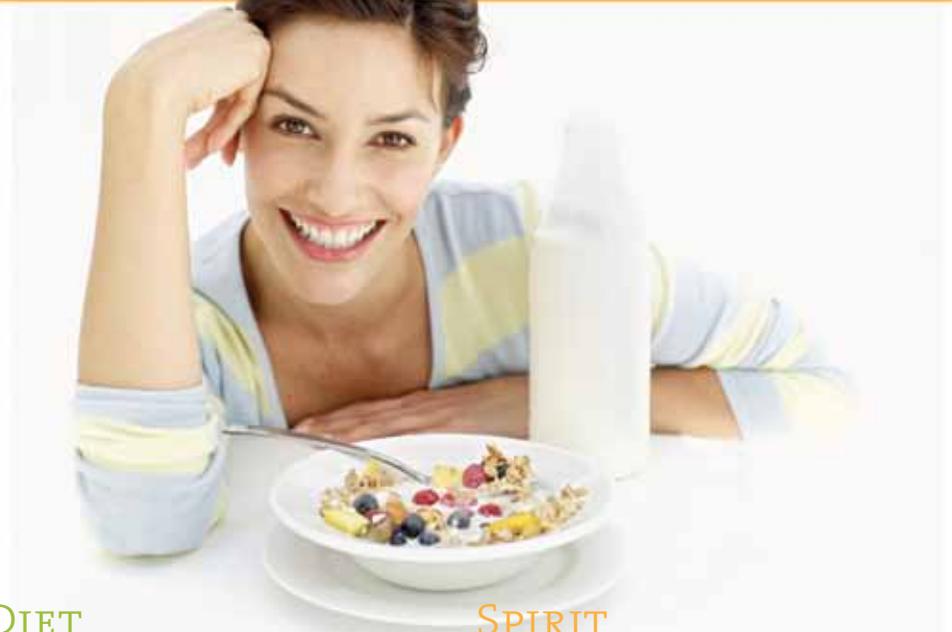
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Dr. Lise Alschuler and Karolyn A. Gazella are the creators of the Five to Thrive multimedia initiative to help educate people about all facets of health and wellness. They are also the authors of three books on the topic of cancer, and they cohost the Five to Thrive Live! Internet radio show on show on the Cancer Support Network at w4cs.com. Their show is also available on iHeart-Radio Talk. For more information visit [FivetoThrivePlan.com](http://FivetoThrivePlan.com).



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# HOW DOES COLOR KILL CANCER?

**ONE OF THE KEY DIETARY TENETS** of the Five to Thrive Plan is to eat more color. That's because colorful fruits and vegetables contain potent cancer-killing compounds called polyphenols. In fact, more than 200 large population studies have shown that people who eat colorful fruits and vegetables are less likely to develop serious illnesses.

The pigmented compounds found in various fruits and vegetables have powerful antioxidant activity. Antioxidants neutralize reactive oxidative free radicals that can harm our health. If our cells lack sufficient antioxidants, these reactive compounds can cause extensive cell and organ damage and ultimately lead to diseases like cancer. Our bodies produce some antioxidants; however, we can obtain an abundant amount of antioxidants from foods—particularly fruits, vegetables, and spices.

The polyphenols found in fruits and vegetables also have important anti-inflammatory activity and protect cellular DNA from damage. What's more, polyphenols have also been shown to improve the health of insulin receptors, which reduces the risk of insulin resistance, a key contributor to cancer and other health problems. Some polyphenol compounds also positively influence hormonal balance and help our bodies cope with stress.



## ADD A RAINBOW OF COLOR TO YOUR PLATE

RED	ORANGE	YELLOW	LIGHT GREEN	DARK GREEN	BLUE	PURPLE
Tomato	Carrot	Garlic	Lettuce	Brussels sprout	Collard	Eggplant
Red pepper	Sweet potato	Onion	Celery	Avocado	Chard	Purple cabbage
Red onion	Yam	Yellow pepper	Okra	Cauliflower	Kale	Purple asparagus
Strawberry	Squash	Yellow tomato	Green onion	Cabbage	Broccoli	Grape
Raspberry	Orange pepper	Corn	Leek	Lime	Spinach	Blackberry
Apple	Orange tomato	Lemon	Lima bean	Green apple	Green pepper	
Watermelon	Orange	Banana	Pea		Green bean	
Cherry	Mango	Pineapple				
Cranberry	Papaya					
Pomegranate	Cantaloupe					



There are thousands of polyphenols in fruits, vegetables and spices. These are some of the most important therapeutic polyphenols.

- Curcumin from turmeric
- Resveratrol from grapes
- Carnosol from rosemary
- Quercetin from citrus fruits and onions
- Sulforaphane from broccoli
- Cacao from dark chocolate

In general, the more colorful the food the better. But with every rule there can be exceptions. Here are three non-colorful foods that are equally impressive and health-promoting. Eat these foods often.

- Garlic
- White fish
- Mushrooms

And remember to always spice up your food. Spices will not only enhance the taste of your food, they'll also enhance your health.

When we eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables, we are more likely to take in the wonderful variety of nutritional compounds they contain.

### THRIVE THOUGHT

At each meal, or as many as you can remember, look down at your plate. What are the colors that you see? You should see the colors of the rainbow. Make an effort to add more color to your meals, because color kills cancer!

# THE HEALTHY AGING DIET

**OUR ABILITY TO AGE HEALTHFULLY** comes down to the health of each of our cells. Over our lifetime, every cell has the capacity to divide into two daughter cells. These daughter cells divide into two more daughter cells, and then those divide, and so on. This repetitive process of cell division is limited to a specific number of divisions, determined by the length of a cap on the end of each chromosome (where we house our DNA). This cap is called a telomere. With each cell division, the telomere shortens, eventually disappearing completely. When this happens, the end of our chromosomes fray, and the cell is no longer capable of replicating itself. Without the capacity to replicate, the lifespan of the cell comes to an end. In essence, this is the biological process of aging, and ultimately of death.

While there's no getting around getting older, how we age is anything but certain. Various components of our lifestyle and environment affect the length of our telomeres. How much we exercise, what kinds of food we eat, how much stress we have, and our exposures to environmental toxins all influence the length of our telomeres. By taking a proactive approach to aging, we can experience healthy aging instead of disease-related decline.

## CALORIE COUNTERS

What—and just as importantly, how much—we eat influences how long and how well we live. Cutting cal-



ories slows the aging process. It also prevents a number of health problems, including diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and age-related neurodegenerative diseases.

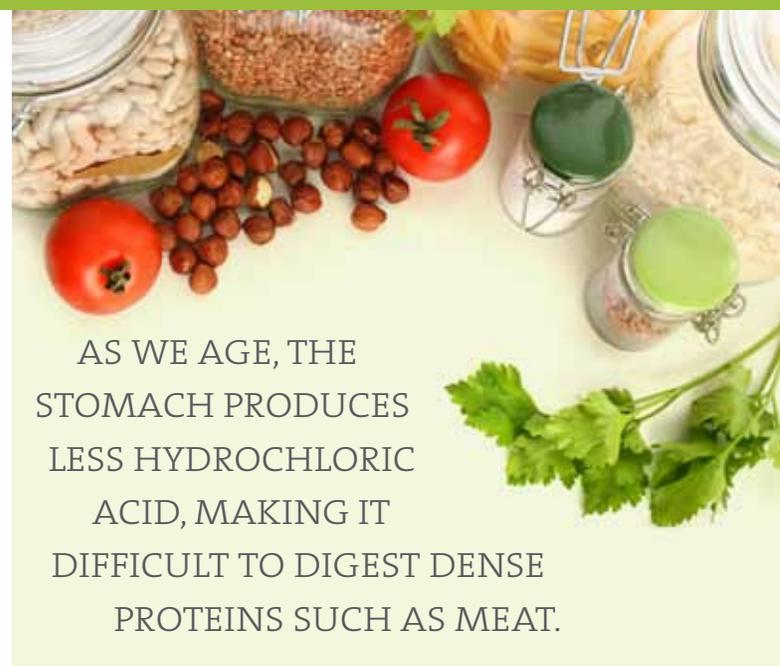
A randomized, controlled trial of healthy, sedentary, non-obese men and women demonstrated that six months of calorie restriction (a 25 percent decrease from baseline calorie requirements) lowered fasting insulin and body temperature, which are both associated with slowed aging. The reduced body weight, cholesterol, blood sugar, and blood pressure that result from calorie restriction have their own benefits. Those include lower rates of heart disease, dementia, diabetes, and cancer—as well as an increased active life expectancy.

An average person needs to consume 13.5 calories per pound of body weight to maintain their weight.

Thus a person who weighs 150 pounds would need to consume 2,025 calories each day. For people who are overweight, even a 5 percent caloric restriction would support slowed and healthier aging. That still allows for an ample amount of calories—1,923 calories per day for that same 150-pound person, for instance.

## THE RIGHT FOOD CHOICES

What we eat is also tremendously important. An interesting example of this is Okinawa, Japan. This region used to enjoy the highest longevity in all of Japan. However, after 2000, the incidence of heart disease and cerebrovascular disease increased, and life expectancy dropped below the national average. What happened? Investigators found out that until 1988, people in Okinawa consumed 50 percent more green and yellow vegetables than the national average and had a daily intake of meat about 20 percent above the national average. By 1998, the daily intake of green and yellow vegetables declined to



AS WE AGE, THE STOMACH PRODUCES LESS HYDROCHLORIC ACID, MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO DIGEST DENSE PROTEINS SUCH AS MEAT.

the same level as the national average, while meat intake increased another 10 percent. These dietary changes—more meat and fewer vegetables—correlated with the drop in life expectancy.

The reason? As we age, the stomach produces less hydrochloric acid. This decrease makes it difficult to digest dense proteins such as meat, but it does not affect how we digest plant-based foods. One could argue that as we age, our physiology naturally lends itself toward a diet that is comprised primarily of fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, and seeds and less reliant on dense proteins such as meat and dairy. This type of diet, also known as an anti-inflammatory diet, will reduce the incidence and severity of inflammatory diseases such as cardiovascular disease, arthritis, diabetes, and even cancer.

## EATING FOR LONGEVITY

Diet is an important cornerstone of healthy aging. We all need to eat to live. How much we eat and what we eat will influence how we live and how we age. A healthy diet will improve our chances at increasing our active life expectancy and enjoying disease-free aging.

## ROASTED ASPARAGUS SALAD WITH ARUGULA AND GROUND HAZELNUTS

Serves 4

- 2 bunches asparagus, with the ends snapped off
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- 4 cups of fresh arugula leaves, washed and spun dry
- 1/3 cup hazelnuts, coarsely chopped

### Dressing

- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- A few grinds of freshly cracked pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place hazelnuts on a sheet pan and place in oven as it is preheating. Roast for 5–7 minutes until aromatic and browned. Transfer to a plate and reserve.

On the same sheet pan place the asparagus in a single layer, drizzle with olive oil, and add a generous sprinkle of salt. Toss the stalks around to ensure each is coated. Cook for 8 minutes until just al dente. Transfer from the oven and set aside.

In a small mixing bowl add lemon juice, olive oil, salt, and pepper for the dressing. Mix well with a small whisk.

In a large bowl, toss the arugula with half of the dressing. Place a one-cup mound on single plates or a platter, and arrange 5 stalks of asparagus on top. Drizzle with the remaining dressing, and sprinkle with the crushed hazelnuts. *Note:* Toasted walnuts will work beautifully as well.

**Prep Time: 15 minutes. Cook Time: 8 minutes.**  
**Store refrigerated in airtight container for 5 days.**

Culinary trick: If you're looking for an easy way to get rid of the skins on toasted hazelnuts, wrap them in a towel after they come out of the oven and give them a good rub. The majority of the skins will come right off.

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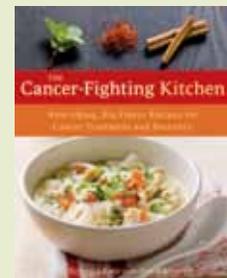
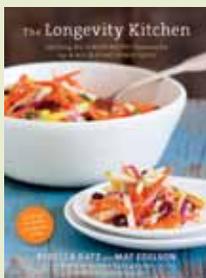
## SHREDDED CARROT AND BEET SALAD

- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice
- 2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon minced fresh ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 cup peeled and shredded carrot
- 1 cup peeled and shredded red beet
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint

Whisk the orange juice, lemon juice, olive oil, ginger, and salt together until thoroughly combined. Put the carrots in a mixing bowl, drizzle with half the dressing, and toss until evenly coated. Place the carrots on one side of a shallow serving bowl. Put the beets in the mixing bowl, drizzle with the remaining dressing, and toss until evenly coated. Place the beets in the serving bowl next to the carrots for a beautiful contrast of red and orange. Top with the chopped mint before serving.

**Prep time: 10 minutes.**  
**Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days.**

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## GAZPACHO WITH AVOCADO RELISH

A refreshing soup from Spain's sun-scorched south, gazpacho is packed with vegetables and offers a wide range of protective plant compounds. This dish may require a little prep time, but since none of it demands much precision—just a bit of coarse chopping and shredding—it's easily done. If you can't get hold of cilantro, you can replace it with basil, parsley, or chives, or a combination. *Serves 4.*

1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> lb/800g fresh, sun-ripened tomatoes, cubed	1/3 cup/75ml extra virgin olive oil
2 red bell peppers, chopped	3 Tbsp tomato paste
1 cucumber, cubed	1/4 cup/50ml sherry vinegar or red-wine vinegar
1 red onion, chopped	salt & freshly ground black pepper
3 Tbsp fresh chopped basil	
1-2 cloves garlic, crushed	

### AVOCADO RELISH

1 ripe avocado, peeled, pitted and cubed	1 Tbsp cilantro, chopped
1 tomato, finely chopped	1 Tbsp olive oil
1 spring onion, chopped	1 Tbsp lemon juice
	salt & freshly ground black pepper

Combine tomatoes, peppers, cucumber, onion and basil in a large salad bowl and squeeze the garlic into the vegetables with a garlic press; add olive oil, tomato paste, and vinegar and toss to combine.

If you have time, cover the bowl and refrigerate for up to 6 hours to allow the flavors to infuse and the vegetable fibers to soften.

Tip about half the mixture into a blender and liquefy. Transfer to a serving bowl, passing the soup through a sieve if you want it to be very smooth. Blend the second batch and combine with the first. Season with salt and pepper.

Just before serving, prepare relish: combine cubed avocados, spring onion, tomato, cilantro, and lemon juice in a bowl, toss lightly and season to taste with salt and pepper. To serve, place an ice cube or two in each serving bowl or glass, ladle soup over, and top with avocado garnish.

### VARIATION

Garnishing gazpacho with hard-boiled, chopped egg boosts the protein content of this dish and makes it suitable for a stand-alone meal.



Recipes and photographs provided by Conner Middelman-Whitney, author of *Zest for Life*. For more information, visit [www.modernmediterranean.com](http://www.modernmediterranean.com).



## ROASTED SWEET PEPPERS IN A GARLIC AND OLIVE MARINADE

A delicious Provençal side dish that can be enjoyed on its own, as a starter, or as an accompaniment to pretty much anything: grilled fish, meat, or eggs. The olives and capers are optional, but they add a depth of flavor and visual appeal to the peppers. You can double the quantity and keep some on stand-by; in the fridge and well covered with olive oil, they keep for at least a week; in fact, they get better as the flavors infuse. *Serves 4.*

4 red, yellow or green peppers (or a mix of all three)	16 black olives, sliced
4 Tbsp best-quality olive oil	1 tsp capers, rinsed
6-8 cloves garlic, in their skins	A squeeze of lemon juice
	Salt and freshly ground pepper

Pre-heat grill on high setting (about 475°F). Line a baking tray with baking parchment.

Place whole peppers and garlic cloves (in their skins) on baking tray and place under hot grill. Grill until the skin starts to discolour (about 5-7 minutes). Then, with a pair of kitchen tongs, rotate the peppers slightly to expose a fresh patch of skin to the heat. Continue like this for about 20 minutes, until the peppers' skin is evenly roasted and darkened. Turn over the garlic cloves once during this time.

Meanwhile, chop olives and drain and rinse capers. Remove peppers from grill, immediately tip them into a container with a tight-fitting lid, and close. (The steam coming off the hot peppers will soften the skins and make them easier to remove.) After 10-15 minutes, peel the burnt skins off the peppers and remove seedy cores.

Squeeze garlic cloves out of their skins and place in serving dish along with peeled peppers. Drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice and season with salt and pepper. Garnish with sliced olives and capers and leave to marinate in the fridge for at least 1 hour before serving.

This is delicious sprinkled with summer herbs—such as basil or oregano—and lightly toasted pine nuts.

# SET YOUR SENSES FREE



**WOULD YOU LIKE TO FEEL HAPPIER?** More trusting? More loving? More connected to others? Less fearful? Sure, who wouldn't? Good news: Your brain needs more of just one thing to make that happen—oxytocin, one of the most amazing chemicals produced in the brain. Secreted by the pituitary gland, oxytocin influences key parts of the brain, such as the amygdala, to create a specific pattern of brain activity. This pattern turns off our anxiety and turns on feelings of trust, gratitude, love, and a desire to be connected with others.

How do we make more oxytocin? It's not hard at all. It's almost as if the brain is just waiting for the slightest nudge to let the floodgates open. And some nudges work better than others. Perhaps the most effective nudge of all is human touch—any touch. A hand shake, hug, or kiss will instantly release oxytocin. Human touch is so effective for two reasons: First, the brain secretes oxytocin in response to feeling connected to others, and touch creates that feeling. Second, touch activates our sensory nerves, which in turn trigger the release oxytocin.

Here is where it gets interesting. As it turns out, our brain releases oxytocin when we consciously activate any of our five senses—touch, sight, smell, taste, or hearing. When our five senses are activated, our sense of connectedness is also activated and guided for the most part by oxytocin. We can activate our senses in many ways, but there is one way that happens several times a day—eating.

## EATING WITH ALL THE SENSES

If we transform the act of eating into a truly sensory experience, not only will we enjoy our food more, but also each meal will turn a trickle of oxytocin into a gush of feel-goodness.

How do we eat with our senses? Let's start with our **vision**. Our food should look beautiful. A plate of colorful foods with different textures and shapes can be a festival for the eyes. Imagine how our brain would react to seeing a turkey sandwich on white bread, encased in plastic wrap. Now contrast that with a bowl full of leafy green lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, celery, radishes, orange peppers, snap peas, and sunflower seeds. The salad will certainly stimulate the release of more oxytocin.

In addition to how our meal looks, the **smell** of our food can captivate the brain as well. Aromas from freshly cooked, sliced, or grated food can be intoxicatingly delicious. And with that heady scent comes more oxytocin.

Then there's **touch**. If we take a moment to notice and appreciate the texture of food in our mouth as

we chew, we will stimulate our sense of touch and trigger oxytocin release.

Of course, while we are enjoying the texture of the food, we can savor the **taste** as messages are sent to our brain that results in more oxytocin.

Finally, even our **hearing** can get involved as we listen to either the sounds of our chewing, or perhaps more appealing, the sounds of the companions with whom we are dining. In fact, with all of the oxytocin that our brain is secreting, our desire to share our mealtime with others will increase. Our brain will literally crave the company of others—humans, animal companions, or, if none of those are on hand, time spent in gratitude thinking about the special people in our lives.

Sensory eating is a transformative experience. It elevates nutrition to nurturance. Engaging all our senses while eating releases oxytocin, which, in turn, elevates our mood, our feelings of belonging, and our sense of trust and relaxation. Enjoy time spent with loved ones around shared meals, engage your senses and experience eating in a marvelous new way.

SENSORY  
EATING IS A  
TRANSFORMATIVE  
EXPERIENCE.  
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# THREE CANCER- FIGHTING DIETARY TIPS TO REMEMBER



By Jessica Iannotta, RD, CSO

**DID YOU KNOW THAT 50 TO 80 PERCENT** of cancer patients experience nutritional issues that can not only affect their clinical outcomes, but also their quality of life? Cancer patients and survivors can manage their symptoms, improve their well-being, and reduce the risk of recurrence with proper nutrition. This can be difficult as persistent side effects such as fatigue can make it harder to invest the time and effort to plan, shop for, and prepare nutritious, healthy meals. Here are our favorite tips for getting more cancer-fighting foods into your meals:

**1 Practice supermarket smarts** and be a savvy shopper. Stick to the perimeter where you can find fresh produce and whole foods. Buy a wide variety of colors, experiment with seasonal produce, and try to avoid processed and convenience foods. Instead, look for healthy lean meats, fresh or frozen produce, beans, nuts, and whole grains.

Include more fish and plant-based proteins in your diet as well, and replace refined carbohydrates with whole grains such as brown rice, quinoa and barley. Select low-fat or fat-free dairy items and skinless lean poultry or white meats over higher fat dark meats.

**2 Get creative when cooking**—it doesn't have to be difficult! Experiment with easy stir-fries, steamed or roasted vegetables, quick cooking grains, and baked or broiled lean meats and fish. Use healthy oils like canola or olive, rather than butter. Bake, roast, broil, steam, sauté, or poach foods; avoid frying as this adds excess calories and saturated fat to your diet. You can also replace sour cream with plain low-fat yogurt, substitute two egg whites for each egg yolk, and use low-fat or fat-free versions of milk, yogurt, and cheese to reduce your fat intake. Avoid pre-packaged seasoning mixes because they often contain a lot of salt. Instead, use fresh or dried herbs and add vinegar or citrus juice at the last moment to enhance flavors.

**3 Be smart when dining out.** Of course we can't cook every day of our life—and many of us enjoy dining out with family and friends. Steer clear of restaurants that offer all-you-can-eat buffets because you're likely to eat more food than necessary. Practice portion control: eat a small, healthy snack beforehand to avoid overindulging and refrain from extras like cocktails, appetizers, and bread. Select healthier menu items, share entrées, or order smaller items (such as two appetizers or soup and salad). Look for the phrases: baked, boiled, braised, broiled, consommé, cooked in its own juices, flank, garden fresh, grilled, marinara, poached, roasted, seared or pan seared, steamed, or stir-fried. Remember to eat slowly and enjoy your food!

Healthy eating doesn't need to be difficult or time consuming if you follow these suggestions. For an individualized nutrition plan, seek advice from a Registered Dietitian (RD), preferably one that is a Certified Specialist in Oncology Nutrition (CSO). These credentialed nutrition professionals will be able to help you effectively plan a cancer-fighting diet that works for you and meets your nutritional needs.

**JESSICA IANNOTTA, MS, RD, CSO, CDN,** is the Chief Operating Officer of Meals to Heal ([www.meals-to-heal.com](http://www.meals-to-heal.com)), a complete solution to the needs of cancer patients. In addition to being a registered dietician, she is a certified specialist in oncology nutrition.



# TOTALLY TOXIC

## IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH BY AVOIDING THESE FOODS

**WE ALL KNOW THE PERILS** of supersized sodas and not-so Happy Meals. But even the foods we think are good for us may actually pack a powerful and toxic one-two punch. First, genetically modified seeds (aka GMOs) are planted and then *bam!*, they're sprayed with potent chemicals. The food industry asserts that this commonly used two-step process is minimally toxic; however, many studies and prestigious health and environmental groups, including the World Health Organization, adamantly disagree.

A very comprehensive 2013 review published in the journal *Entropy* demonstrated that glyphosate, the active ingredient in the world's most commonly used herbicide, Roundup, is a "textbook example" of how an environmental toxin can harm our health. The researchers found that liberally spraying this toxic chemical over planted GMO seeds could contribute to a wide variety of health problems, including obesity, diabetes, depression, autism, infertility, heart disease, cancer, and more.



We've done a pretty thorough search on the GMO-herbicide combo and, frankly, it's upsetting. But the Five to Thrive philosophy is all about taking action. So first, it's important to recognize that whether we want to believe it or not, even seemingly "good-for-you" foods can actually be toxic to our health. And second, there are ways to avoid these harmful foods. Here are our top five tips in this area:

- ➔ **Choose organic fruits, vegetables, grains, and oils whenever possible.** We know we sound like a broken record about organics, but the reality is that the only way to minimize your exposure to most of these toxins is to buy products that carry the U.S. Department of Agriculture's organic seal. This ensures that the food is grown without GMOs and chemical herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers.
- ➔ **Organic is important with meat and dairy as well.** Try to eat only certified organic beef, poultry, eggs, cheese, and other dairy products. Studies clearly indicate that we ingest harmful chemicals when we eat foods that come from animals fed GMO crops or crops that are sprayed with chemical herbicides and pesticides.
- ➔ **Reduce the amount of corn and soy products you consume.** Almost all foods that contain corn and soy are now made from crops grown from genetically modified seeds. If a product has corn or soy as an ingredient, either make sure it's organic or avoid it.
- ➔ **Avoid eating soups, beans, fruits, and other foods packaged in cans.** Many cans are lined with plastic that contains



**AVOID CANNED FOODS.  
MANY CANS ARE LINED WITH  
PLASTIC THAT CONTAINS BPA.**



■ Safest choice ■ Use with caution ■ Steer clear! (avoid)

BPA, a chemical that has been definitely shown to harm health by disrupting the delicate balance of our endocrine systems. There are some cans that are BPA free, or you can choose soups and soy or nut milks that come in a BPA-free cardboard carton known as a Tetra Pak.

- ➔ **Avoid plastics that are numbered 3 and 6,** and use plastics numbered 1 and 7 with caution. Numbers 2, 4, and 5 are safer choices but still should only be used once. Never microwave plastic or reuse plastic bottles that are not BPA free. Better yet, eat and drink out of glass, ceramic, or stainless steel containers whenever possible.

Rather than becoming overwhelmed by the magnitude of the toxic chemicals found in our food supply, we can become proactive. Sometimes there can be a tendency to say: "There's nothing I can do about it anyway, so I will do nothing at all." That's not the case when it comes to the food choices we make. In fact, several studies have demonstrated that by avoiding products that contain BPA, we can reduce the level of the chemical in our blood in just a few days. The key in all of our food choices is to be aware of the toxin one-two punch and opt for foods on an ongoing basis that have been proven to be safe and powerful nutrition knockouts.

SOUNDS LIKE PEARLS

Sounds

Like pearls

Roll off your tongue

To grace this eager ebon ear.

Doubt and fear,

Ungainly things,

With blushings

Disappear.

— Maya Angelou

*The Complete Collected Poems*

# THE STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF YOGA

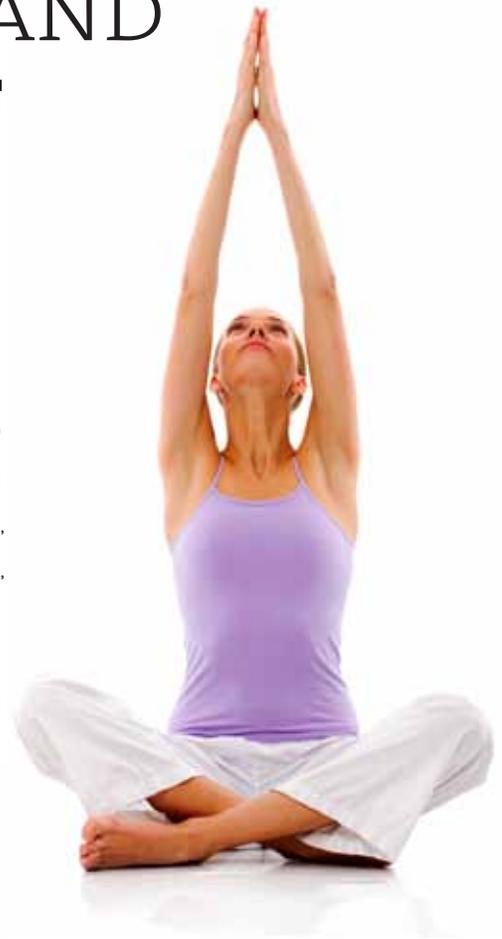
**NUMEROUS STUDIES HAVE DESCRIBED AND CONFIRMED** the many benefits of yoga. Those who consistently practice yoga will tell you that it's more than movement; it is a uniting of mind, body, and spirit. In fact, in Sanskrit (the ancient language of India, where yoga originated), yoga means "union."

Yoga is the practice of performing physical postures and poses while focusing on breath, movement, and being present.

## STRENGTHS

From a physical perspective, the various yoga poses stretch muscles and improve blood flow, balance, flexibility, and strength. Studies also show that yoga can help reduce anxiety, enhance energy, ease insomnia, and improve mood. Yoga is often combined with meditation and deep breathing, which can enhance its effects.

There are several different types of yoga, and it's accessible to people of all fitness levels. Even people who are not very flexible or strong can still benefit, because yoga creates



an individualized experience. Yoga is not about competing or achieving certain results; it is about getting in touch with mind, body, and spirit.

## LIMITATIONS

If one of your primary goals is to lose weight, yoga alone may not cut it. Many people who practice yoga also do some other form of exercise for cardiovascular benefits and to burn more calories. However, some forms of yoga can provide you with a solid weight loss cardio workout in addition to all its other benefits. The key is to know which type of yoga is best for you.



Here's how different types of yoga compare to other cardiovascular activities, from a calorie-burning perspective.

**HATHA YOGA**, the most familiar form, and often taught at the beginner level, burns 175 calories per hour (equivalent to walking two miles in one hour).

**ASHTANGA YOGA**, a little more intense than Hatha, burns 300 calories per hour (equivalent to walking four miles in one hour).

**VINYASA YOGA**, typically combined with Ashtanga, burns 445 calories per hour (equivalent to jogging slowly for one hour).

**POWER YOGA**, consisting of quick movements designed to increase heart rate, burns 600 calories per hour (equivalent to walking eight miles in one hour).

**BIKRAM YOGA**, performed in a room heated to 105 degrees, burns 630 calories per hour (equivalent to swimming the butterfly stroke for one hour).

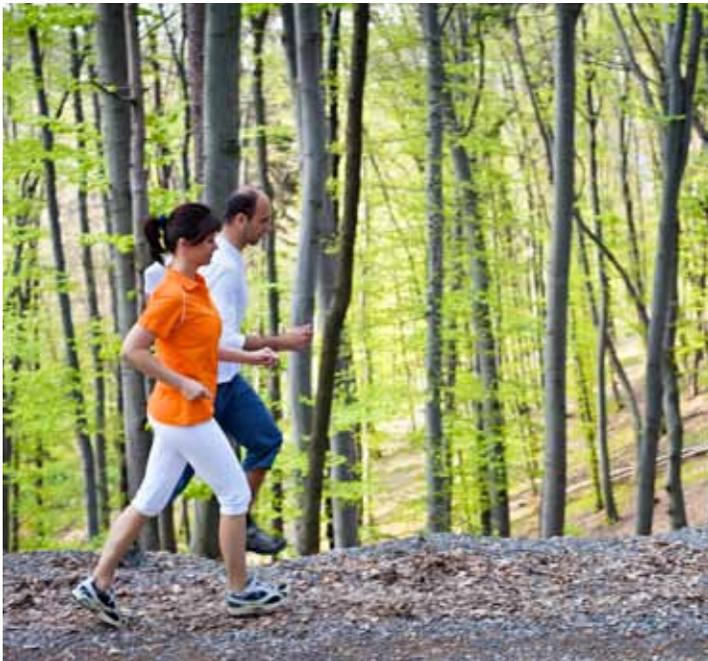
## THRIVE THOUGHT

Several studies have confirmed that Hatha yoga only burns about 2 to 3 calories per minute, which is equivalent to walking at a slow pace. So if weight loss is your objective, try a different type of yoga or complement your Hatha yoga with a more intense cardio workout.

# A GREAT WAY TO ENHANCE EXERCISE

**WHAT IF THERE WERE AN EASY WAY** to get even more benefit from movement? Would you be interested? Well luckily, there is — and it's simple. Just go green to boost your workout.

There is a field of scientific study known as green exercise that has caught our attention. Researchers first began looking at the enhanced benefits of being active in nature in early 2000. The body of research has grown since then, and more recent research continues to confirm the health-promoting effects of green exercise.



## AND THE RESEARCH SAYS...

Much of the research in this area comes from the United Kingdom, with most of the emphasis on enhanced mental health benefits. While we all know that being active helps us feel better physically, we may not realize it also helps us feel happier. But can we really get more benefit from being physically active outside versus inside? Research says:

In a 2011 study published in *Perspectives in Public Health*, a group of people who walked outside in nature was compared to two other groups — one exercising in a health club and the other in an indoor swimming club. The results? Self-esteem and mood were the highest in the nature group.

A literature review published in 2011 in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology* looked at 11 different studies on the effects of green exercise. Like the previous study, this paper also demonstrated significantly higher self-reported mental wellbeing with the green exercisers versus indoor exercisers. The researchers wrote, "Compared with exercising indoors, exercising in natural environments was associated with greater feelings of revitalization and positive engagement, decreases in tension, confusion, anger, and depression, and increased energy." The research says yes.



But realistically, it's not always feasible to exercise outside every day. That's why we were excited to read a study in which participants looked at pictures of beautiful natural scenery while exercising indoors. In this study published by those same UK researchers in 2005 in the *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, five groups of 20 people were shown a sequence of 30 scenes projected on the wall while exercising on a treadmill. Blood pressure, self-esteem and mood were measured. Exercise in general had a positive effect on all three parameters; however, the exercisers who looked at the pleasant outdoor scenes had a significantly greater feeling of self-esteem than the exercisers who were not looking at those pictures. What's more, exercis-

Even if you can't get outside to exercise, there are benefits to having a pleasant view out a window or bringing in plants.

ers who viewed unpleasant urban scenes actually experienced a negative effect on mood.

This gives new meaning to being mindful of your surroundings. So, if you can't get outside, bring the outside in by having plants in your workout area and pictures of beautiful outdoor scenery. Be careful not to watch the news or negative television while working out, because it may actually reduce some of the wonderful benefits of your exercise.

## GET OUT!

Exercise is great but exercising outdoors is even better. Keep in mind that you don't have to be a jogger or a cyclist to experience the benefits of outdoor exercising. Many of these studies on green exercise involve walking in nature. There is also evidence showing that gardening, yard work, and other outdoor activities have incredible health and mood benefits. The researchers agree that something special happens to us physically, mentally, and emotionally when we combine movement with nature.



## GET THAT GLOW FOR GOOD HEALTH

**“DON’T SWEAT IT” MAY BE A GOOD IDEA** when you’re overstressed, but not when you’re detoxing. Sweating is a simple yet key way to cleanse your body of pollutants, chemicals, and other dangerous substances. In fact, it’s been estimated that more than 120 different toxic compounds—everything from heavy metals to steroids to the body’s own inflammatory molecules—can be eliminated through perspiration.

The skin is the largest organ in the body, so it makes sense that it’s one of the most important organs involved in detoxification and elimination. Not only does our skin serve as an actual barrier against some environmental toxins, but it also has a

concentrated source of antioxidants that protects it from toxic oxidative compounds. In addition, our skin is home to a whopping 3 million to 4 million sweat glands, many of which are concentrated in our armpits, groin, palms of our hands, and soles of our feet. The primary role of our sweat glands is to regulate temperature—as our perspiration evaporates, it removes heat from the body, cooling body temperature. But our sweat glands are also key routes of toxin elimination.

When foreign chemical compounds known as xenobiotics enter our bodies through environmental pollutants, drugs, food, personal care products, and more, they’re detoxified by phase I and phase II

## THE BEST WAYS TO INCREASE SWEAT ARE THROUGH VIGOROUS EXERCISE AND EXPOSURE TO HOT ENVIRONMENTS SUCH AS SAUNAS.

enzymes. These enzymes are found throughout the body, but are heavily concentrated in the liver and skin. Once the enzymes finish their detoxification tasks, the leftover compounds need to be flushed from our bodies. Some are eliminated in urine or feces, others are exhaled through our lungs, and some are sweated out through our skin.

However, some of the chemical compounds that our bodies sweat out don't always need to be detoxified by phase I and II enzymes first. This is not true for compounds that are eliminated through the urine or feces, which suggests that sweating is an extremely efficient way to rapidly clear toxins out of our bodies.

Sweating also helps ensure that our urinary, respiratory, and fecal routes of elimination don't become overburdened, allowing toxins to build up internally and cause oxidative damage. This can in turn harm cells, cause DNA mutations, and contribute to the development of chronic diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and dementia. In fact, one theory as to why a sedentary lifestyle is linked to increased risk of developing serious chronic diseases is because sedentary people don't sweat very much.

The best ways to increase sweat are through vigorous exercise and exposure to hot environ-



ments such as saunas. Daily sweating can be a very effective way to maintain gentle and continuous detoxification. Even sweating for as little as 15 minutes a day can significantly reduce our bodies' toxic burden. Of course, as sweat contains toxic compounds, it's important to wash our skin after perspiring so we don't inadvertently reabsorb the toxins we have just eliminated.

Sweat is critical to our long-term health and vitality, so next time you are glistening or even dripping with perspiration, smile and think about all of the toxins that are leaving your body.

# FITNESS AND FRIENDSHIP A GREAT COMBINATION!

**THE MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS** of exercise are undisputed. We've been writing about that specific mind-body connection for years. But research indicates that regular exercise combined with a strong social network is even more powerful.

Researchers from the University of Minnesota surveyed nearly 15,000 college students from 94 different schools throughout the United States. The students were asked about mood and physical activity levels. They published the results of their

study in the September 2013 issue of the *American Journal of Health Promotion*. They found that students who exercised vigorously for 20 minutes at least three days a week and spent more than two hours a day with others had less depression, anxiety and perceived stress compared to those who were physically active but did not have the social network.

The researchers also reported that the students who fared the best from a mental health stand-





point also had five or more close friends. This is consistent with previous research showing that social isolation can elevate chronic inflammation and weaken the immune system. Social connectivity is such a significant part of the Five to Thrive Plan that we often recommend that if people don't have a strong support system, they consider joining a group or taking a class. And taking an exercise class is the perfect partnership!

In 2009, researchers from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine found that people who had a work out pal lost more weight than those who did not. Even if you don't have a person to work out with, it also helps to have friends or family who are encouraging and cheering you on as you embark on your exercise program.

Movement is powerful cancer prevention. Studies demonstrate that exercise can positively impact all five key pathways: immune, inflammation, hormonal balance, insulin resistance, and digestion/detoxification. And when it's combined with social support, it can be even more health-enhancing.

Keep in mind, exercise classes or working out with a fitness friend isn't ideal for everyone. We are all individuals and need to recognize and respect our individuality. The same is true for being social. Being an introvert (recharging your mind/body/spirit "battery" alone), for example, may mean that you relish your alone time and are more selective when you incorporate social times into your week. The key is to find what works for you and to honor that.

# STRETCH YOURSELF BY FOCUSING ON FLEXIBILITY

**WHEN WE THINK OF MOVEMENT**, we often think of building muscle or increasing our aerobic capacity; however, we can sometimes underestimate the power of stretching. Stretching as a part of a regular exercise program is absolutely critical. One of the things we like best about stretching is that it can be done frequently in short bouts throughout the day. This will not only enhance your overall flexibility, it will do wonders for your general health and well-being.

Being more physically flexible can make everyday tasks easier. Stretching can improve balance, range of motion, and circulation. Stretching will keep your

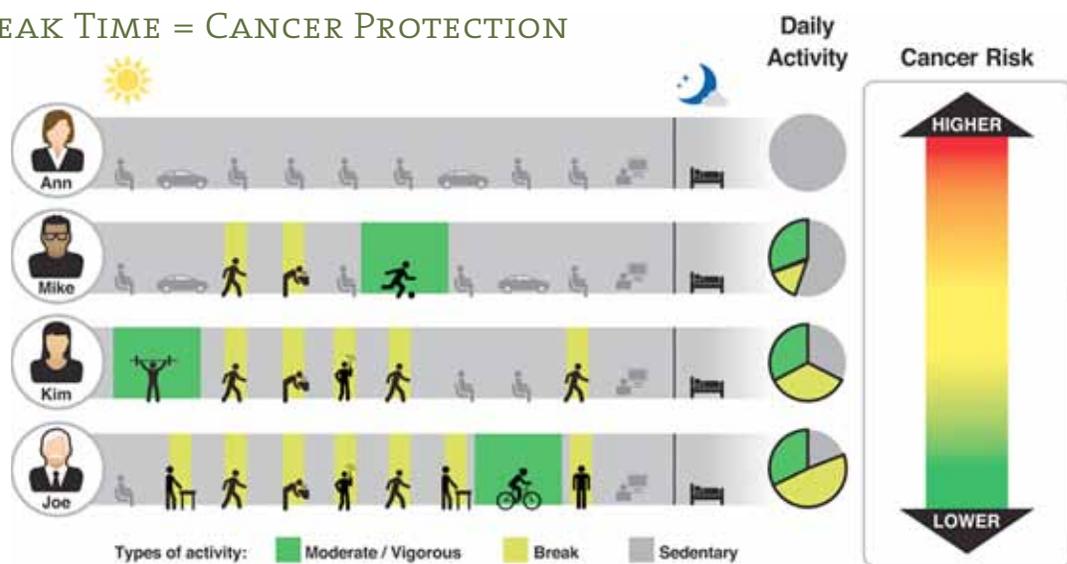
joints limber and your muscles loose. Being flexible can also help prevent injury. Perhaps one of the most important aspects of stretching is that it can help relieve stress.

## STRETCHING TIPS TO REMEMBER

Stretching is a critical part of healthy daily living, and it is important that your stretching routine is safe. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- 1 Stretching should not be painful, so don't force yourself while stretching. You should only feel mild tension.
- 2 Stretching should be fluid and gentle. Don't bounce or throw your body into a stretch.

## MAKE TIME + BREAK TIME = CANCER PROTECTION





- 3 Don't hold your breath while stretching. Use this as an opportunity to breathe freely and deeply.
- 4 Stretch frequently. In addition to stretching associated with exercise, you should periodically stretch throughout the day and before you go to bed at night.
- 5 When stretching with exercise, gently stretch after your muscles are warmed up and then after you are done exercising.
- 6 Drink plenty of fresh water before, during, and after your stretches. Water keeps all body systems hydrated and can help you get the most out of your stretching routine.

Remember, sitting without movement throughout the day can be problematic and can increase the risk of many different illnesses including cancer. In fact, according to the American Institute of Cancer Research, it only takes brief one to two minute breaks throughout the day to help lower cancer risk (see graphic "Make Time + Break Time = Cancer Protection" on page 26). Stretching is a great way to break up your day and add more movement into your daily routine. For easy ways to include stretching into a busy work day, check out the "Office Stretches" side bar on this page presented by Exercise for Life.

Stretching is one of those great forms of movement that doesn't cost a thing and is easy to do throughout the day. No excuses Thrivers, let's stretch!



## OFFICE STRETCHES



### Shoulder Stretch

**FRONT:** interlock fingers in front of body, turn palms away from body. Gently straighten elbows and reach forward. Hold stretch for 15 seconds



### Shoulder Stretch

**BACK:** interlock fingers behind your back, palms facing upwards. Gently straighten elbows while reaching up and back. Hold stretch for 15 seconds

### Shoulder Pull

Grab under your right upper arm and pull the arm at shoulder height across your chest. Repeat for other shoulder. Hold stretch for 15 seconds



### Triceps and Shoulder Stretch

Reach behind your head with elbow bent. Use opposite hand to push downwards on elbow so that your hand moves further down your back. Repeat for other arm. Hold stretch for 15 seconds



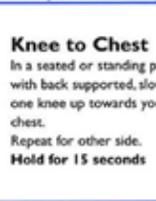
### Neck Stretch

Reach with right hand over your head and shrug your left shoulder. Slowly pull your head away from left shoulder then drop your left shoulder down. Repeat for other side. Hold for 10 seconds



### Neck Flexion

Interlock hands and place hands on back of head. Pull chin down towards chest. Hold for 10 seconds



### Knee to Chest

In a seated or standing position with back supported, slowly pull one knee up towards your chest. Repeat for other side. Hold for 15 seconds



### Back Rotation

Sitting on a chair with left leg crossed over your right leg. Place right hand on left thigh just above knee and pull leg towards right. At the same time turn your body towards the left looking over left shoulder. Repeat for other side. Hold for 15 seconds



### Side Stretch

While standing, slide right hand down right leg as far as possible, ensuring you are facing straight ahead. Repeat for opposite side. Hold for 15 seconds

### Chest Stretch

Bend elbows and place hands and forearms on each edge of a doorway at elbow height. With feet shoulder width apart, lean body forward through doorway. Hold for 15 seconds



### Quadriceps Stretch

Support yourself with left hand on a wall. Grasp left foot with right hand and gently pull heel towards buttocks. Repeat for right side. Hold for 20 seconds



### Hamstring Stretch

Place one foot on a stable chair or similar height surface. Whilst keeping leg and back straight and pelvis square, lean forwards towards your foot until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh. Repeat for other leg. Hold for 15 seconds



### Buttocks Stretch

Sitting on a chair, position right ankle on left knee. Place hands on right lower leg and slowly bend forwards towards legs. Keep back straight. Repeat for other side. Hold for 15 seconds

### Wrist/Forearm Stretch

With a straight elbow and palm facing upwards, pull hand downwards to stretch the front of your forearm and wrist. Then turn hand over so that your palm is facing downwards and pull hand downwards to stretch the back of your forearm and wrist. Repeat for other arm. Hold both for 10 seconds



### Biceps Stretch

Hold onto a door frame at arms length, thumb down. Turn the body away from arm and allow your shoulder to roll in. Repeat for other side. Hold for 15 seconds



# MENTAL HEALTH CLEANSE

A **KEY PATHWAY** in the Five to Thrive plan is detoxification. When we write about detoxifying, we focus on cleansing the body. But what about cleansing the mind? If you're interested in this type of "detoxification," we suggest you try our **CREAM** cleanse. We like this acronym because it represents rising to the top—and that's what we hope this cleanse will help you do.



## OUR PSYCHOLOGICAL DETOX

The five steps of this gentle cleansing plan will help enhance emotional, mental, and spiritual health.

### 1 CAPITULATE

To capitulate is to surrender. We learned about the art of capitulation several years ago and have been enamored with this concept ever since. The idea is that at the end of the day before you go to sleep, you recall your activities, the people you interacted with, and how you felt. It's supposed to be a fairly quick process—the philosophy being that when you capitulate, you are better able to let go of anything negative that may have happened and pause to celebrate the good things. You can then surrender into the night with the vision of starting fresh in the morning. The act of surrender can be very cleansing.

### 2 REMEDIATE

To remediate is to make right, correct, or remedy a situation or relationship. Remediation works best when it is combined with authenticity, compassion, and kindness toward yourself and others. You can remediate small things like the number of hours you work each day or big things like confronting a loved one or friend. You can remediate

monthly, daily, or in any moment it is needed. The process of remediation can be very cleansing if you are clearing out toxic feelings, actions, and even relationships.

### 3 EXUBERATE

To exuberate is to express great joy. There is nothing more cleansing to one's mind, body, and spirit than the feeling of joy. In her wonderful book *Awakening Loving Kindness*, Pema Chödrön writes, "Joy is like a soft spring rain that allows us to lighten up, to enjoy ourselves, and therefore it's a whole new way of looking at suffering." Joy can also be a whole new way of looking at cleansing our soul and nurturing our spirit.

### 4 AFFIRM

Affirmations are statements that can make an imprint on the subconscious mind to create a positive self-image. It is most effective to make these statements using present tense while imagining yourself really experiencing what you are affirming. To transform negative thoughts and words into positive statements can be truly cleansing. Anytime we can enhance our self-image, we are renewing our spirit and opening our hearts to experiencing more joy and happiness.



### 5 MEDITATE

This action may conjure images of crossing the legs, shutting the eyes, and chanting "om." And while that's a great way for some people to meditate, it certainly isn't the only way. In Buddhist tradition, to meditate is to empty the mind. Meditation is a form of prayer and reflection. Because of this, it is extremely individualized and can be performed in many different ways. Taking a few deep breaths after a stressful meeting can be a form of meditation. Numerous scientific studies have confirmed the many health-promoting benefits of meditation, both emotionally and physically. Meditation can be a great way to cleanse the mind while quieting the spirit.

Keep in mind that cleansing does not mean deprivation. Rather than thinking of ridding yourself of something negative, think of it as clearing space for the positive. This type of daily cleanse can be an integral part of any health and healing program.

# CLEANSE YOUR BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT



By Isaac Eliaz, MD

**BEGINNING A DETOXIFYING CLEANSE CAN** seem novel, exciting, and nurturing. But as the days progress, staying committed to the cleanse can become an issue. Fortunately, there's a path you can follow that not only leads to increased motivation and discipline, but also shows you how to

call on your inner, or spiritual, core during and after your cleanse. Ultimately, this path, which includes simple breathing practices and meditation, helps you deepen your cleanse and overall health program.

A well-planned seasonal cleanse, whether it's for three days, ten days, or longer, can do much more than detoxify your body. Cleansing can balance and

harmonize the many layers of your being: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. The primary connection between these layers is the breath. Breathing brings nourishment and information from the universe in the form of oxygen, and releases old toxins in the form of carbon dioxide.

In your body, oxygen helps rejuvenate new tissue, replace old tissue, dispose of waste materials, and create vital life energy. Because the many layers of your being are interconnected, releasing toxins from your body can also help to release toxic emotions and thoughts. This is why people undergoing a cleanse often report feelings of euphoria and clarity during and after the process. By paying attention to the release of these emotions, you are likely to feel more rejuvenated after your cleanse.

This process also works in the opposite way: Releasing negative emotions and mental states can help remove physical toxins from your body. This is where focused breathing comes in. When we exhale, we can feel and visualize our toxins and toxic emotions leaving our bodies. Exhaling also prepares our lungs for receiving vital, fresh information and healing energy as we inhale. Simply through slowing down and becoming aware of our breathing and this cyclical exchange of energy, we can significantly enhance our cleansing and healing processes to create greater vitality and lightness of being.

Isaac Eliaz, MD, has practiced integrative medicine since the early 1980s and is considered a pioneer in the field. He is a respected author, lecturer, researcher, product formulator, and clinical practitioner. For more information about Dr. Eliaz, visit [DrEliaz.org](http://DrEliaz.org).



## A SIMPLE MEDITATION

Here's a simple meditation and breathing practice to get you started:

- ❖ Sit comfortably in a quiet spot, and think about the things you're ready to shed during your cleanse. They can be physical health issues, emotional problems, thought patterns, cluttered personal space—anything at all.
- ❖ Imagine focusing your breath onto a specific object, such as a rock. When you exhale, visualize all that you're letting go of being released into the rock. When you breathe in, visualize pure healing energy entering your body and filling your entire being with light.
- ❖ Repeat this process, allowing any emotions, thoughts, and feelings to arise and slip away as you bring your focus back to your breathing.

This simple meditation practice can be a profound vehicle for healing your mind, body, and spirit. Many scientific studies have confirmed the powerful benefits of meditation. Give it a try during your next cleanse and see how many different types of toxins you can release.



# POWER OF THE PEOPLE

**WE LIKE TO TALK ABOUT GRATITUDE** and the act of being and feeling grateful. Robert Emmons, PhD, director of the Emmons Lab at University of California, Davis, is a world-renowned expert on the health benefits of gratitude. Emmons reminds us that there are two aspects of being grateful—the second of which is often overlooked, but perhaps the more important than the better-known first.

The first aspect of gratitude, Emmons says, is the “affirmation of goodness”—in other words, feeling thankful for the gifts and benefits we receive. But the real power of gratitude, according to Emmons, is when we recognize that these gifts come from others. Acknowledging that there is goodness outside of ourselves, he says, is what helps us experience happiness, joy, and optimism.

We couldn't agree more. And the scientific literature agrees with us as well.

## IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

In this day of Facebook, Twitter, and iEverything, we often need to be reminded that effective, authentic interaction only requires one thing—your heart. It reminds us of this joke: One way to double the battery life of your phone is to put it away. (Of course, some people are so attached to their phone they don't get the joke.)

Kidding aside, we know that feelings of isolation activate our body's stress response system, which over time can negatively impact our health. While we agree that technology saves us a lot of time and is useful on so many levels, it can also contribute to feelings of isolation—especially when we start spending more time with our phone than we do with our friends and family face to face.

Having a strong social network is linked with higher perceived well-being and happiness. We are actually physically, emotionally, and spiritually designed to be in community with others. Some research even indicates we can change brain chemistry via positive social interactions. In 2007, researchers from the University of Michigan found that socializing even boosted brain function. In fact, the researchers found that socializing was just as effective at enhancing memory and

**RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT  
SOCIALIZING WAS JUST AS  
EFFECTIVE AT ENHANCING  
MEMORY AND TEST PERFORMANCE  
AS TRADITIONAL KINDS OF  
BRAIN-BOOSTING EXERCISES**



test performance as traditional kinds of brain-boosting exercises.

On the flip side, social isolation also “re-wires” brain activity. In a study conducted by the University of Chicago, researchers found that lonely participants had far less activity in the ventral striatum part of the brain (a part of the brain involved in learning) compared to the non-lonely participants.

The bottom line is that we are social beings, and we thrive on time spent in connection with others. And, of course, you want those relationships to be as authentic, respectful, compassionate, and kind as possible. We innately mirror each other, so our gestures, emotions, and neurochemistry are affected by the attitude and behaviors of the people we are communicating with. So, Thrivers, take a deep breath, put the phone down—just for a bit—and start sharing some smiles with others. You will feel the difference in myriad ways.

As it turns out, that famous Barbara Streisand song is true: “People who need people are the luckiest people in the world!”

# MAKE VACATIONS A PRIORITY

## YOUR HEALTH DEPENDS ON IT!

**TO MANY AMERICANS**, vacations have become a luxury when they really should be a necessity. According to a 2014 annual study conducted by Expedia, more people than ever are not using their vacation days. The report revealed that more than 500 million vacation days a year go unused! And how many of those days are yours? A whopping 35% of Americans say they don't take their vacation days because of work. What's

worse, 76% of the American survey respondents said they check work email and voicemail while on vacation.

According to the report, we could learn a lot from the French. In France, people receive 30 days of vacation a year and guess what? They actually take all 30 days per year. Good for them! Can you imagine, six weeks?!





There are so many great reasons why we should take a vacation but one of the best is that your overall health depends on it. Numerous studies have demonstrated that taking vacations can help us live longer. A 2010 study published in the journal *Applied Research in Quality of Life* also found that there is a significant boost in happiness during the planning phase of the vacation as well—vacation planning boosted happiness for eight weeks prior! A small study featured in the journal *Occupational Medicine* demonstrated that there is also a lasting physical effect when we take vacations. In that study, sleep quality and mood was improved following the vacation and that lasted for five weeks after. So let's do the math: we receive physical health benefits for eight weeks prior to a one week vacation and for five weeks after so that's a total of three and a half months worth of benefit from just one week of relaxation!

One of the reasons vacationing is so important is that it takes us out of the “fight or flight” mode that a hectic work and home life can create. When we are in constant overdrive, stress hormones are released and remain elevated causing an ongoing cascade of hyper activation. In the body, it's as if there is a fire alarm going off all the time (imagine how stressful it would feel if your home fire alarm was constantly going off!). In this state, key body systems are understandably negatively impacted, which can set us up for all kinds of health problems and even put us at risk of developing cancer. The only way to correct this imbalance is with relaxation. And one of the best ways to re-charge and unplug fully is while we are on vacation.

# GOOD NEWS ABOUT BAD HABITS

**WE ALL HAVE A FEW BAD HABITS;** there's no shame in admitting it. Any one of us could confess to doing things habitually that are just not good for us. Admitting these behaviors is the first step to beating them. It paves the way for us to step back and examine our habits. What do we gain from them? Why do we retain these habits, particularly if we know they're bad for us? Let's start there and unravel the perplexing problem of "bad" habits.

The word bad suggests that the habit in question has consequences that we do not appreciate or desire. In the case of our health, bad habits tend to be those that we believe will impair our health. We tend to view health as good, so anything that impedes it is therefore bad. However, there may be a more health-promoting way to look at this. What if we dropped the judgment about these behaviors? What if we stepped back from berating ourselves about what we are or aren't doing, and instead started from a place of acceptance?

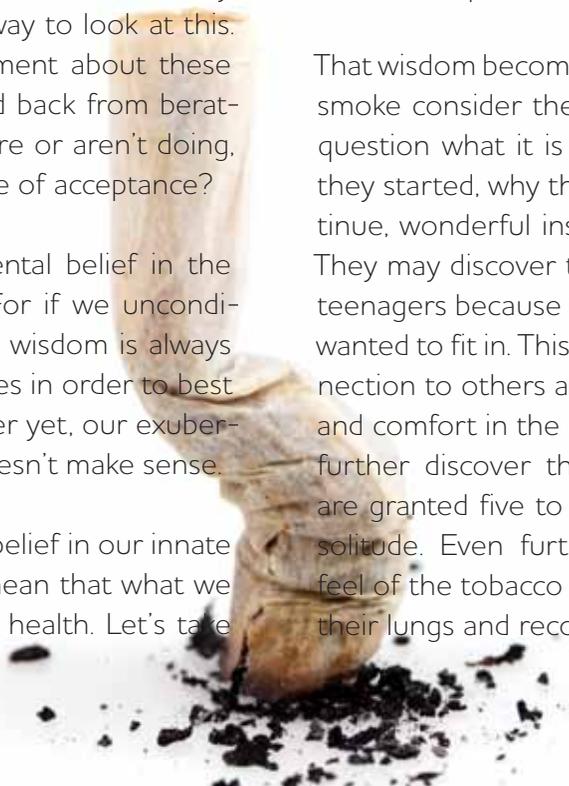
To do this requires a fundamental belief in the inherent wisdom of the self. For if we unconditionally believe that our innate wisdom is always responding to our circumstances in order to best secure our survival—and, better yet, our exuberant vitality—then judgment doesn't make sense.

Let us be clear that an implicit belief in our innate wisdom does not necessarily mean that what we do is always supportive of our health. Let's take

the king of bad habits—cigarette smoking—and see how this works.

By all accounts, cigarette smoking is bad for our health. Regular and long-term smokers are at increased risk for developing cancer, heart disease, dementia, arthritis, and complications from other chronic diseases. Cigarette smokers tend to have bad breath and undesirable body odor, so the habit can be hard on our social life, and therefore psychological health. Despite all of these effects, if we gently lay aside our judgment, an entirely new perspective opens up. We can dispassionately view our smoking habit, and we can open ourselves up to learning about how even this is an expression of our innate wisdom.

That wisdom becomes apparent when people who smoke consider their smoking habit. When they question what it is that they gain from it, when they started, why they started, and why they continue, wonderful insight unfurls in front of them. They may discover that they started to smoke as teenagers because their friends smoked and they wanted to fit in. This reflects a deep desire for connection to others and a willingness to share time and comfort in the company of others. They may further discover that with each cigarette, they are granted five to 10 minutes of uninterrupted solitude. Even further, perhaps they relish the feel of the tobacco in their hand and its smoke in their lungs and recognize this as a yearning to be



close to nature and the plant kingdom. This insight could extend to many other levels and into many other directions—but it is only when the habit is examined with nonjudgmental curiosity that these insights will reveal themselves.

By better understanding the reasons they smoke, smokers give themselves the opportunity to accomplish all those critically important ends via different means. In the example above, the smoker could recognize the need for companionship and, as a result, prioritize relationship and joining in activities with others. This person also may determine his need for taking breaks outside in nature every few hours. Finally, this person may recognize his affinity for plants and dedicate time to tending a garden. As these new habits answer their inner call, the person will be better able to release the habit of smoking. All those deeply held needs are still met, and in new ways that are more conducive to physical health.

In recognizing the underlying needs that our “bad” habits are fulfilling, we are able to see the inherent wisdom of the body at work. The self knows what it needs and has found a way to meet those needs. If we further accept that the self is, by its very nature, imperfect, we understand that our solutions may not always represent the most optimal ones, and that there is opportunity to make adjustments.

We all talk about our “bad habits”—and while we each have our own unique blend of so-called bad habits, there are a few habits that may not be so bad after all. Here is a closer look at some good news about some common bad habits.

## COFFEE

Many people express guilty pleasure about their morning cup of coffee, assuming that it must be bad

for them. Actually, the scientific data tells us a different story. Two to three cups of coffee each day is actually associated with a decreased risk of premature death—10 percent reduced risk for men and 13 percent for women. Coffee consumption reduces the risk of liver diseases such as autoimmune liver disorders and liver cancer. And speaking of cancer, coffee consumption is also associated with reduced risk of several other cancers including oral/pharyngeal, lung, and breast cancer. What’s more, coffee consumption is neutral—meaning it has no effect, good or bad—in cases of colon and prostate cancer. Regarding cardiovascular disease, coffee intake reduces the risk of heart failure and appears to lower the risk of coronary heart disease in women. People who drink two to four cups of coffee daily also lower their risk of type 2 diabetes. The negative health effects of regular coffee drinking are limited but they include worsening of anxiety in anxiety-prone individuals, prolongation of the stress response, reduction of mineral content in bones, and diarrhea in some people. Taking all of this data together, it would seem that coffee drinking does not qualify as a bad habit for most people.

## ALCOHOL

Regular alcohol consumption has been subjected to significant scientific scrutiny over the years. There have been several studies that have warned us of the dangers associated with regular consumption of alcohol. While these studies gain the eye of the media, an equally impressive body of data has found that alcohol consumption contributes to healthy longevity. On balance, here are a few of the conclusions that we can make. High levels of regular alcohol intake, which is more than one daily drink for women and more than two drinks for men, does qualify as a bad habit. This level of alcohol intake is correlated with an increased risk of various cancers including breast, prostate, colon, head and neck, esophageal,

and liver. A lower intake—specifically less than an average of one daily drink for women and two daily drinks for men—however, shows a protective effect. One such study found that the risk of breast cancer mortality was 15 percent lower in women who drank three to five drinks per week. Additionally, these women had a 25 percent lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease. Death from any cause among moderate drinkers was 20 percent lower than in nondrinkers. The bottom line? If you don't drink now, there is no reason to start. Even if modest amounts of alcohol exert preventive effects on cancer and cardiovascular disease risk, there are a multitude of other strategies available to lower the risk of these diseases. However, if you do drink, keeping consumption to less than three to six drinks per week for women and less than six to 12 drinks for men appears to be safe and perhaps beneficial to healthy longevity.



## STRESS

Of course too much stress is a bad habit... or is it? Placing stress in the bad habit category actually may be unfair. For one thing, research has found that the type of stress makes a difference. For instance, work related stress is *not* a risk factor for certain cancers such as colon, lung, breast, or prostate. Work-related stress is also *not* correlated with increased risk of heart disease. On the other hand the stress that comes from depression, social isolation and lack of quality social support is linked to increased risk of heart disease. Pessimism, feelings of social isolation, and major stressful life events are linked with increased risk of cancer progression. So the fact is, different kinds of stress affect our health differently. Even more importantly, how we perceive stress has a huge impact on its effects on our health and wellbeing. A wonderful example of this was a study published in 2012 in the journal *Personality and Social Psychology*. In this study, Yale University researchers evaluated the stress attitudes of 400 employees at an international financial institution. Those employees who viewed stress as debilitating had worse work performance, unhappiness, and poorer health. Those who viewed stress as beneficial had greater life satisfaction, better health, and superior work performance. So, stress may be harmful to our health in some cases, but that depends upon its source and how it is perceived. It actually may not be so bad after all.

Bad habits tend to be those that we believe will impair our health. However, when we drop the judgment and look at our habits differently, we may be able to see some value. Clearly there are some habits that are bad for us, such as being sedentary, eating excess refined sugar, and not getting enough sleep. But there may be other “bad” habits that aren’t as bad as we previously thought. And that’s some good news for Thrivers!

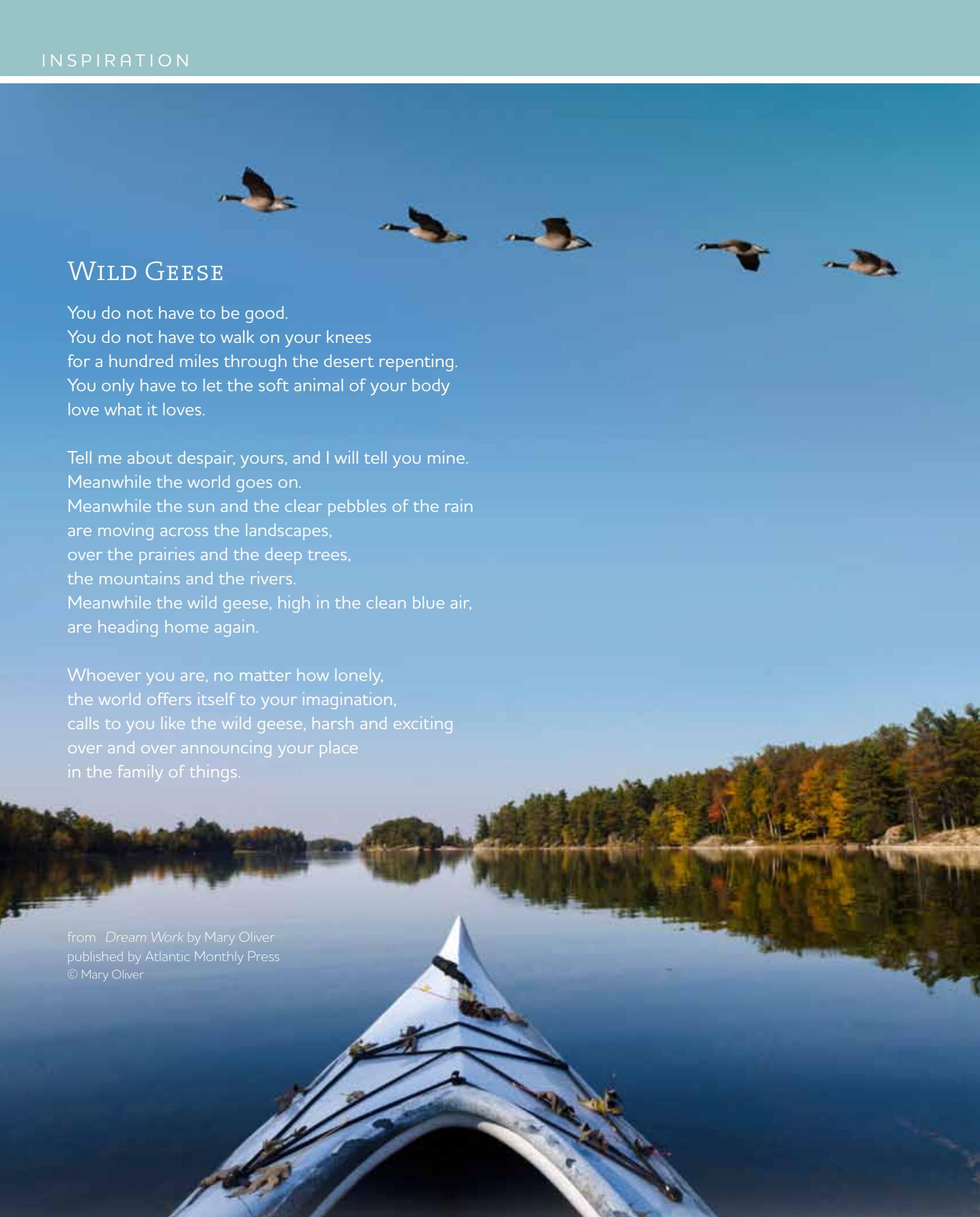
## WILD GEESE

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

from *Dream Work* by Mary Oliver  
published by Atlantic Monthly Press  
© Mary Oliver





# FILL UP ON GRATITUDE

**IT'S ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA** to give thanks and reflect. While we love anything that encourages gratitude, we also propose that we can make gratitude a way of life—a part of each and every day of the year. And one way to do that is to combine two of our favorite activities—practicing gratitude and movement. But first, let's look at why gratitude is so important.

## THE HEALING POWER OF GRATITUDE

The scientific research associated with the health-promoting benefits of gratitude is expanding, along with our appreciation of this positive trait. But what exactly is gratitude? As a noun, it is simply the state of being thankful. But it is when this is put into action that it's of utmost importance—*being grateful* means showing appreciation.

Hundreds of studies have now shown that being grateful and expressing gratitude can provide an impressive list of health benefits including:

- Increased feelings of happiness, life satisfaction, and positive emotions
- Increased immunity
- Better pain management
- Enhanced heart health
- More energy
- Better sleep
- More fulfilling relationships with others

Of note, however, is that practicing gratitude is like putting gas in your car. You need to continually fill the tank if you are going to keep driving. Scientists have discovered that positive emotions wear off because we are designed to respond to novelty and change. To ensure that our emotional health

continues to adapt to novelty, we need to keep reminding ourselves of positive things. We can use gratitude as a way to keep this positive outlook fresh and strong. Making gratitude a way of life keeps our appreciation tank full, which motivates us to keep moving forward and to thrive. The key is to find creative and impactful ways to encourage gratitude on a daily basis. Movement is so critical to our health, so why not combine the two?

## THE COMBINATION COUNTS

Here are a few ways to incorporate gratitude into your daily movement plan.

**THE GRATITUDE STANCE.** You can create your own gratitude stance based on your physical comfort level. In yoga there is a series of movements called Sun Salutations. While the exact movements can vary, the Sanskrit name for the Sun Salutations, *namaskar*, means “to adore.” The movements often begin and end with hands joined together touching the heart. Another gratitude gesture that we like is to have arms extended above the head, palms wide, head tilted toward the sky, showing an openness to gratitude. You can stand and stretch this way many times throughout the day.

**EXERCISE APPRECIATION.** Before and after you begin your exercise routine, you can pause, take three long, deep breaths, and feel grateful that you are physically capable, emotionally willing, and spiritually engaged in your exercise routine. You can also end by thinking about the people in your life whom you most appreciate that day and say their name(s) as you do your final stretches (either quietly in your head or out loud) sending them strength and appreciation.

**THE GRATEFUL WALK.** As you walk outside, think of people, things, and experiences you are most

thankful for. Breathe deeply and pay attention to the beauty that surrounds you. As you walk, think and feel deep gratitude toward someone or something and, at the same time, revel in your moment of being physically active.

There are many ways to be grateful. Just remember that it requires action and repetition to get the full thriving benefits.



WHILE THE EXACT MOVEMENTS CAN VARY, THE SANSKRIT NAME FOR THE SUN SALUTATIONS, *NAMASKAR*, MEANS “TO ADORE.” THE MOVEMENTS OFTEN BEGIN AND END WITH HANDS JOINED TOGETHER TOUCHING THE HEART.

# 6 SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP YOUR SPIRIT SING

**RECONNECTING WITH YOUR SPIRITUAL SELF** and living life from the heart can certainly be transformative. And, as with most transformations, it will take time and effort. Try out a few of these simple steps in your daily life to move forward—they will make a difference!



## 1 ENCOURAGE GRATITUDE

Being grateful for others fills your heart with appreciation. You can encourage gratitude in your life by starting your day with thoughts of gratefulness. Before you even get out of bed, think of at least one thing, one situation, or one being that you are grateful for. Let yourself appreciate this focus of gratitude for a few moments. Smile while you are having these thoughts of appreciation. You could also keep a gratitude journal and each night before bed jot down the things you were grateful for that day. Find ways to cultivate gratitude for the infinite blessings we are presented with each day.

## 2 GIVE YOURSELF A GLANCE OF LOVING-KINDNESS

When you catch a glimpse of yourself in a mirror, smile at your reflection. Throughout the day acknowledge yourself, even if just for a brief moment, with genuine loving-kindness. We cannot say it better than inspired Buddhist teacher Pema Chodron: “When you begin to touch your heart or let your heart be touched, you begin to discover that it is bottomless, that it doesn’t have any resolution, that this heart is huge, vast and limitless. You begin to discover how much warmth and gentleness there is, as well as how much space.” Bathe yourself and those you love in kindness and compassion.

### 3 SPEAK FROM THE HEART

Think about someone you love and why you love them. Create some time to communicate with this person—tell them either in person or in writing about your love and appreciation. It doesn't have to be a big, drawn-out event—just a simple act of speaking the truth of your experience of love, and gratitude for the opportunity to share it. Be authentic in your expression. Remember that in every day there exist opportunities to feel and express love. Search out those moments and soon they will become a part of the fabric of your life.

### 4 EMBRACE FAVORITE PASTIMES

What are some of the top things you love to do? Can you find at least one of these activities in every day? Yesterday? Today? Relish the moments that you do get to enjoy these cherished activities, and if you can, insert at least one of them in each day. Make a list of your favorite pastimes and post the list where you can see it. Tell others what you love to do so they can encourage you to find time to do it.

### 5 SEEK OUT SOCIAL SUPPORT

Don't underestimate the dangers of isolation. If you don't have a strong support system with family and friends, consider joining a mutual-interest group, like a book club. Take a class or begin volunteering with others. And if you do have a strong support system, make time for them and include them in your spirit-filled life.



### 6 CULTIVATE LAUGHTER

Watch funny movies, hang out with funny friends, start laughing even if nothing is funny, and do whatever it takes to laugh frequently. The comedian Milton Berle once said, "Laughter is an instant vacation." Take one today! Laughter is physically, emotionally, and spiritually healing. And it's not just laughter that is healing; it's also the physical act of smiling. How many times do you smile throughout the day? Make smiling a part of your daily routine.

# JOY IN AWARENESS



**BUDDHA TEACHES THAT** the path to enlightenment is created through mindfulness. Mindfulness, or paying attention to all things in the present moment, is also being used as a psychological tool and even as a therapy to heal mental and physical conditions. For everyone, a heightened sense of awareness brings us more joy, happiness, and appreciation in our day-to-day lives.

## THE MUNDANE BECOMES MARVELOUS

Paying attention can serve many valuable purposes. It can keep us safe as we walk down the street. It can prevent a car accident or a mishap at work. It can make us better parents, partners, and friends. But what if this heightened awareness could also help us thrive? We believe it can.

Let's start by looking at how you start your day. As you wake in the morning, do you appreciate the smell of the coffee or the cool breeze coming in the window? Do you stop to smell the fresh flowers or give the dog a well-deserved scratch behind the ear? Do you take "appreciation pauses" as you get ready for your day, soaking in the goodness that surrounds you? There are numerous opportunities to be aware well before punching the time clock.

And all this awareness does more than put a smile on your face. Studies have also shown that mindfulness will help control cortisol (stress hormone) levels



and keep anxiety and depression at bay. The body reacts positively when we pause, take a deep breath, and notice our surroundings.

## AWARENESS REQUIRED HERE

Even if it's difficult to be aware in every moment of every day, we suggest you start by enhancing your awareness during these three daily activities:

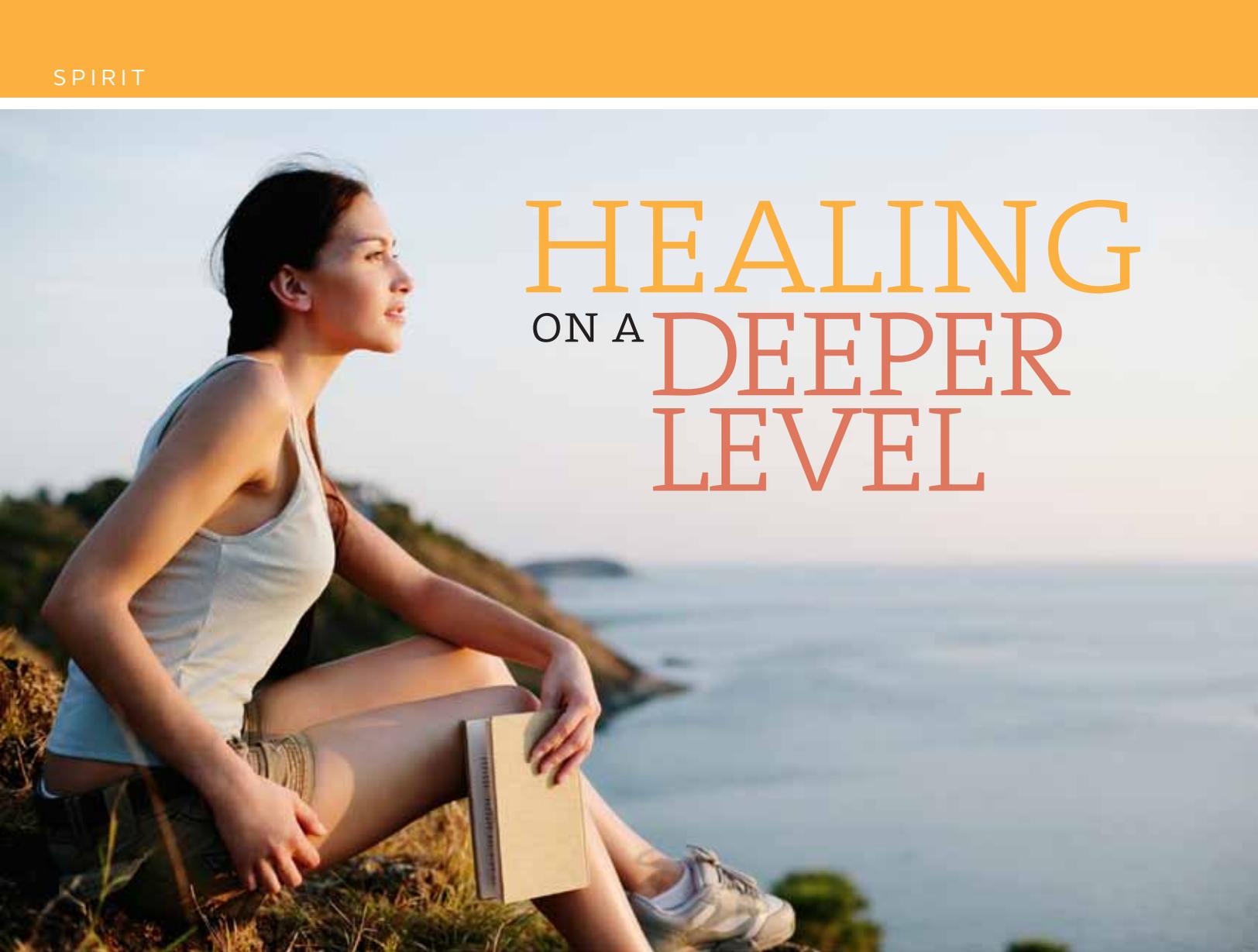
- **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.** Whenever possible, take your exercise outside. Exercising outside gives us the opportunity to observe the wonderful sights, sounds, and experiences of Mother Nature. And, while you are exercising, really pay attention to how your body feels. Focus your awareness on the sensations of your muscles straining, your lungs expanding, your temperature rising. These are all signs that your body is getting stronger and more vital with each movement. By being aware of this, you can connect positively to your exercise in a deeper and more satisfying way.
- **MEALTIME.** The scientific literature tells us that if we slow down and pay attention to our cooking and eating experience, we will experience many health benefits. We digest better, eat less, and feel

happier. Being mindful at mealtime is absolutely critical if we are to experience the full enjoyment that our food is meant to impart.

- **COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS.** Being present with the people we interact with is a gift that we give ourselves on a continual basis. We experience, learn, and appreciate so much more from our interactions with others when we are fully aware and engaged in the present moment. Being present reminds us that there is more to life than our little corner of the world and that we are all sharing in this experience together. Being present with others takes the loneliness out of living.

Try enhancing your awareness in these three areas of your life. From there, work to incorporate a mindfulness mentality in even the little things you do each day. You'll be aware of how great that fresh-cut lawn smells, how wonderful it feels to wash the dirt off your hands after being in the garden, or maybe even how relieved you feel to lay your head on your pillow after a long day. Even in those small moments, when you are fully aware of their impact, you will relish and enjoy them much more than if you moved through them mindlessly.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a white tank top and shorts, is sitting on a grassy cliff overlooking the ocean. She is holding a book in her lap and looking out towards the horizon. The background shows a vast expanse of water and a clear sky.

# HEALING ON A DEEPER LEVEL

**CRANKINESS, EUPHORIA, DEEP SATISFACTION.** What do these diverse emotions have in common? They all can become spiritual outcomes of doing a physical detoxifying cleanse.

One of the benefits of physical detoxification is the impact it can have on our emotional and spiritual wellness. Not only is it quite common to experience significant emotional changes during a detoxifying cleanse, but it's not unusual for those changes to affect other areas of our lives.

There are many different cleanses we can use to eliminate chemical toxins from our bodies. The most safe and effective cleansing programs are overseen

by an experienced integrative healthcare practitioner. Typically, a detox cleanse includes dietary changes; extra dietary supplement and botanical intake; and increased toxin elimination through sweating, urination, and/or bowel movements.

Cleanses also have a lesser-known component. Almost universally, people who are detoxing experience profound shifts in their emotions and perspectives. In the beginning of a cleanse, it's common to feel irritable and moody. These emotions parallel the time when we're beginning to change habits, forgo commonly eaten foods, and ingest new and often not-very-tasty detox-support supplements. All of that is more than enough

to make us feel prickly, but there are alternative explanations as well.

One explanation is that as a cleanse shifts our biochemistry, transitory inflammation ensues in our bodies, which produces various chemicals that “irritate” our brains and change neurotransmitter patterns to produce correspondingly irritable moods. Another explanation is that the conscious intent to detoxify activates our deeper motivations to free ourselves of all that inflames and irritates us—at every level. As a first step toward this deeper release, a certain degree of agitation is necessary in order to shake loose our attachments, hang-ups, and negativities.

As our detox cleanse progresses on a physical level, our emotional and spiritual transformation evolves as well. Commonly, we shift from feeling irritable to experiencing a sense of contentedness, even euphoria. Typically, this is accompanied by a desire for quiet reflection. We often use this contemplative time to better understand our priorities and aspirations, and this can translate into new understandings of how we want to live our lives.

It is amazing how many spring cleanings happen during this phase of detoxification. It’s as if while we are gaining clarity in our emotional and spiritual lives, we are finding it important to clear the physical clutter from our lives as well. It’s also startling how common it is to make significant, life-changing decisions during this phase of detoxification. We may finally decide to leave unsatisfactory jobs, end dysfunctional relationships, commit to new relationships, begin new hobbies, or start new spiritual practices. These changes are often lasting ones, perhaps due to the clarity we feel during this phase of detoxification. This clarity lends itself to greater insight, which makes resolutions seem self-evident.



It is amazing how many spring cleanings happen during detoxification, as if we are finding it important to remove physical clutter from our lives as well.

Another consistent result of a detox cleanse is emotional and spiritual healing. As our bodies release physical toxins, our minds and spirits release toxic emotions like anger, regret, and guilt. A cleanse can also be a tremendously helpful way to move through grief after the loss of a loved one, or to re-emerge into a sense of integrated wholeness after being devastated by an illness.

Detoxification is a powerful way to support physical health, but be sure to consider the ramifications it can have on your emotional and spiritual health before deciding to undergo a detox cleanse. Don’t be surprised if at the end of the cleanse you find yourself in a new state of mind with new desires for a better life. Ultimately, the changes you undergo during detoxification will lead to wellness on every level of your being.

# THE HEALING POWER OF CANINE COMPANIONS

**WHILE ALL DOMESTICATED ANIMALS** provide innumerable pleasures, dogs have helped us understand the health benefits of animal companionship the most. What is it about canines that comfort us so? Some would say it's their unconditional love, while others would remind us of their authenticity and that unassuming, perfectly-timed tail wag. Whatever it is, one thing is sure—it's undeniably, scientifically substantiated.

## CANINES AND CORTISOL

It's true, being around dogs can be pretty darned healing. Turns out there's more to that cute little canine than meets the eye.

Scientific studies have shown that the simple act of petting a dog decreases the stress hormone cortisol in people (and probably in the dog too!). In 2012, a literature review in the journal *Frontiers of Psy-*



*chology* reminded us about the many well-documented health effects that are created when humans interact with animals. From a psychological and psychophysiological standpoint, animals have been shown to:

- lower a variety of stress-related parameters in addition to cortisol;
- enhance immune function;
- decrease aggressiveness;
- improve learning and mood;
- reduce anxiety and depression;
- control blood pressure and heart rate; and
- improve pain management.

The researchers, who analyzed 69 different studies, report that our interactions with our animal companions produce a plethora of biological changes in us. While our cortisol levels decrease, oxytocin and dopamine—two of the most powerful feel-good brain chemicals—increase. This change in brain chemistry causes us to feel happier, less anxious, more loving, and safer. Of course with all of these emotions, it's no wonder we love petting our pups—it physically calms us down and makes us feel better.

This review is consistent with many studies which have shown that animals help people who have

been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, autism, ADHD, schizophrenia, and other serious conditions. Dogs have even been shown to reduce workplace stress. In a 2012 study featured in the *Journal of Workplace Health Management*, researchers found that stress levels were much higher on days when employees could not bring their dogs to work. The researchers also noted that having a dog at work provided other health benefits. For example, workers took their dogs out for exercise during their breaks. This also gave the employees some exercise and fresh air. Additionally, co-workers offered to help other coworkers with their dogs, building greater community in the workplace.





## ULTIMATE EMPATHY

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of our non-verbal canine communications is that researchers have found it enhances empathy. Sometimes our interactions with other humans can be challenging on deep emotional levels. After all, with humans, there may be expectations or judgments that come with affection. The complexity of our interactions with others can make feeling empathy more difficult. But with a dog, the interaction has no agenda, consequences, or complications. A dog's empathy is pure and, in that interaction, researchers tell us that *our* empathy can become equally as pure.

But are dogs really able to be empathetic? According to increasing scientific data, the answer is yes. A few years ago, London researchers asked volunteers to either pretend to cry or just hum. Guess what? The dogs noticed the difference. The dogs paid little attention to the humming but nearly all of them came over to the crying person to nuzzle or lick, offering them comfort during their time of need.

In an August 2013 study which was published in the journal *PlosONE*, Japanese researchers showed that dogs yawned in response to their

owners but not in response to strangers. Yawning is a well-accepted sign of empathy and is most notably known as “contagious yawning,” which is when we yawn after seeing someone else yawn. This is because we are empathizing with the feeling of stress, anxiety, boredom, or fatigue that is indicated by the yawn.

It is believed that if we witness the empathy of a dog, perhaps we can be more empathetic as humans. And it may be that the most powerful combination of all is empathy combined with unconditional love.

## UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

It is thought that most of the widely accepted spiritual practices of our time embrace one common goal: unconditional love of oneself and others. It is in this realm where our canine companions really shine. To love unconditionally is to eliminate boundaries that prevent us from loving another. Famed poet Maya Angelou once wrote “Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.” Now that is a great description of our wonderful canine companions—our four-legged Thrivers!

A large, mature tree with a thick, dark trunk and a dense canopy of bright yellow and orange autumn leaves. The tree is the central focus, with its branches spreading across the upper half of the frame. The ground is covered in fallen leaves of various colors, including red, orange, and yellow. In the background, a green lawn and other trees are visible under a soft, warm light.

Oh, the enchantment when, waking from  
deep sleep, we open up the house to the  
sounds of the world!

How the morning air invigorates, caressing  
the senses and penetrating our whole being!

The tang of it, the welcome it draws from us  
— they take us by surprise.

What joy this breath that recreates  
and gives life!

Every breath is a new birth of mankind,  
begetting and begotten to infinity.

— Irénée Guilane Dioh

# WHAT'S THE **BOTTOM LINE** ABOUT **ANTIOXIDANTS** DURING **CANCER TREATMENT?**

## **CONTROVERSY CONTINUES REGARDING**

the use of antioxidant supplements during cancer treatment. To understand the controversy is to first understand how antioxidants work in the body.

Antioxidants bind to toxins so they can be safely eliminated. When an oxidative reactive molecule, called a free radical, encounters an antioxidant in the body, it is neutralized. Antioxidants also trigger defensive mechanisms inside damaged cells. If a cell has undergone extensive oxidative damage, particularly to its DNA, the cell must either repair itself or, if the damage is too great, undergo apoptosis or cell suicide. Many antioxidants stimulate cell repair and apoptosis.

## **NO EASY ANSWERS**

So far so good. So what's the problem with that? Well, some chemotherapy agents and radiation create oxidation as a primary means to kill cancer cells. Because of this, it is believed that antioxidants could interfere with the therapy's cancer-killing potential. Keep in mind this is based on a theoretical interaction. In fact, there have been thousands of published trials of combination and individual antioxidants that have looked for this interference but have failed to confirm it. While most of these studies are not the best-designed studies, the collective body of research does not support the contention



that antioxidants taken along with chemotherapy reduce the effectiveness of the chemotherapy. These same studies do demonstrate a reduction of side effects from the addition of antioxidants. The data on radiation is more mixed, and high doses of some antioxidants, particularly fat-soluble antioxidants such as vitamin E, should be avoided during radiation therapy.

Understanding the role of antioxidants and chemotherapy is not as simple as saying antioxidants should be avoided during treatment, because we consume antioxidants through our diet. A healthy diet that contains generous amounts of vegetables, fruits, and spices provides a significant amount of antioxidants on a daily basis. We would never want to stop eating fruits and vegetables during cancer treatment, in part because eating these

foods improves tolerance to treatment and, in many studies, improves long-term cancer-free survival. It's also complex because some antioxidants have been clinically proven to not only reduce the side effects of chemotherapy and radiation, but also enhance the effectiveness of some of those treatments. One reason for this is that chemotherapy and radiation work, at least in part, by triggering apoptosis. While chemotherapy and radiation can initiate apoptosis, if the cells are lacking sufficient antioxidant capacity, they will not be able to complete the apoptosis process. The more chemotherapy and/or radiation a person receives, the more antioxidant-depleted she becomes. Maintaining adequate antioxidants throughout treatment can counter this depletion and support the intended cell-killing effects of chemotherapy and radiation. Clearly, making a blanket statement to avoid antioxidant supplements during treatment is inaccurate at best, and may be doing patients a disservice at worst.

## YOU HAVE OPTIONS

Of course, better studies need to be done. In the meantime, there are at least three very reasonable ways to proceed during conventional treatment. It is reasonable to use selected antioxidants concurrent with conventional treatment, ideally with the supervision of a qualified integrative healthcare practitioner and your oncologist. It is also reasonable to avoid this combination if your doctors recommend it. Another option is to avoid antioxidant supplements the day before, the day of, and for at least two days after each chemotherapy treatment and only take them between treatments. In all of these scenarios, you will benefit from the guidance of a naturopathic oncologist or other qualified integrative healthcare practitioner.



### ANTIOXIDANTS THAT MAY HELP

- Melatonin improves the survival benefits of radiation therapy and many chemotherapies.
- Vitamin E may reduce the risk of nerve damage from cisplatin chemotherapy.
- Green tea may reduce the risk of heart and liver toxicity from Adriamycin and doxorubicin chemotherapy.

### ANTIOXIDANTS THAT MAY INTERACT

- Avoid beta-carotene and vitamin E with radiation—especially if you are a smoker.
- Avoid n-acetyl-cysteine, glutathione, and alpha lipoic acid with carboplatin, cisplatin, and oxaliplatin.
- Avoid turmeric extract (curcumin) with camptothecin, mechlorethamine, cyclophosphamide, and doxorubicin.

# STRESS RELIEF WITH L-THEANINE

**THERE SEEMS TO BE NO END** to the health benefits found in a cup of green tea. One of them is the sense of calm it can bring—not just because of the act of slowing down and sipping, but also because it contains a soothing amino acid, L-theanine. In supplement form, L-theanine is even more powerful, making it a popular stress-reliever. One of the most studied forms of L-theanine is a branded ingredient known as Suntheanine®.

In several human clinical trials, L-theanine has promoted relaxation by increasing alpha brain waves

and decreasing beta brain waves. Alpha brain waves are associated with relaxed, yet alert brain activity. Beta brain waves, on the other hand, are markers of a more excited state.

## STRESS-INDUCED ANXIETY AND ELEVATED BLOOD PRESSURE

Stress isn't just a state of mind—it has real physical effects in the body. When we experience stress, our nervous system produces more hormones that increase blood pressure and feelings of tension. In a randomized, placebo-controlled



study published in 2012 in *Psychological Anthropology*, 16 healthy adults took either 200 mg of L-theanine (Suntheanine) with placebo, 100 mg caffeine with placebo, or placebo only. This was a crossover study, meaning participants serve as their own control. That's a way of strengthening a study even with a small number of participants.

Each subject participated in various computer and arithmetic tasks that caused mental strain. In addition, the participants underwent physical stress by submerging a hand in ice water for one minute. Their blood pressure was recorded throughout all of the tasks, and the participants completed questionnaires to assess their feelings of stress. L-theanine is absorbed and active within 30 minutes of taking it, with a peak activity in one hour, and it lasts for 1 to 1½ hours. Caffeine has a similar, if somewhat more rapid and more prolonged absorption profile. Based on this, the researchers provided the supplements 36 minutes before the end of the mental tasks so that the supplements' maximal effect would match the peak of stress caused by the tasks.

This study found that taking the oral supplement of L-theanine significantly reduced rises in blood pressure in participants who experienced stress as a result of the mental tasks. This is particularly important for adults who show a large blood pressure response to psychological stress, because these individuals are at greater risk of developing high blood pressure as they age. L-theanine also reduced feelings of stress and anxiety caused by the stressful tasks. Interestingly, the L-theanine did reduce the rise in blood pressure caused by physical stress as well. The caffeine and placebo did not result in decreased blood pressure or tension.



This study suggests that L-theanine decreases anxiety and reduces rises in blood pressure that can accompany mental and emotional stress. Given this, L-theanine may be a good part of an overall wellness and heart disease prevention plan—particularly in people who are under increased mental and emotional stress.

## L-THEANINE SAFETY AND AVAILABILITY

Unlike other stress-reducing and sleep-enhancing supplements or drugs, Suntheanine does not cause drowsiness. Suntheanine has also been affirmed as GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) with Letter of No Objection from the FDA (GRN 000209). Suntheanine is made using a special patented fermentation process that ensures consistency and effectiveness. It is an ingredient in many dietary supplements that promote relaxation.

# BOOST BRAIN POWER WITH CITICOLINE

**WE'VE ALL EXPERIENCED THOSE** frustrating moments when we can't remember the simplest thing – something we know as well as we know our name or something we know is somewhere in our brain, but we just can't retrieve it on command. It's that moment when we walk into a room and we think, "Hmmm, now why did I come in this room?" Unfortunately, these momentary lapses occur more frequently as we get older, and in about 15 percent of Americans, they progressively worsen.

Scientists have not yet been able to explain why this happens, but it is probably linked to a variety

of age-related changes in the brain. We know that the physical size of the brain decreases, and with it the number of nerve cells or neurons.

Often there is decreased blood flow to the brain due to fatty deposits that accumulate on the walls of blood vessels over time for a variety of reasons. The brain is a very active organ and requires a continuous supply of nutrients and oxygen, so when blood flow is impaired, some neurons literally starve to death.

Another important change is a decline in the production of neurotransmitters—chemical mes-



sengers that brain cells use to communicate across microscopic gaps called synapses. Scientific research shows that one neurotransmitter in particular is critical for storing and retrieving memories. That neurotransmitter is acetylcholine (*ah-see-tel-KOH-leen*) or ACh, which is especially abundant in the hippocampus—the area of the brain where memorization takes place.

The raw materials for ACh include the nutrient choline, a B vitamin-like compound found in the diet. Choline is converted to ACh in the brain with the help of a particular enzyme. With age, levels of this key enzyme decline, and therefore, the supply of ACh in the brain also diminishes. Deficits of ACh have been linked to many neurological conditions characterized by loss of memory, loss of the ability to store new memories, and emotional disturbances. In addition to an overt ACh deficiency, the neurons' ability to utilize Ach may be compromised. Membranes surround every cell in the body—including those in the brain—and play critical functions in regulating nutrients and other compounds that flow in and out of the cell. When brain cell membranes function optimally, the cells are more able to take up ACh. However, when the membrane is impaired, ACh uptake is compromised and this can create a functional deficiency.

Thanks to advances in nutritional science, it is now possible to raise brain levels of ACh through the use of specific dietary supplements. One of these is a substance called citicoline. Citicoline—which is often sold under the brand name Cognizin®—has been shown to improve memory by enhancing two vital components of brain function.

- 1 It restores levels of ACh so that neurons are better able to communicate with one another.
- 2 It stabilizes the membranes of neurons.



**Since citicoline is found naturally in the body, it is considered a very safe substance.**

Research has found that Citicoline helps maintain memory and cognitive performance, as well as focus and attention, in healthy individuals. Some preliminary evidence suggests it may even help reverse age-related changes in people with mild memory problems. For example, in studies of patients with chronic cerebrovascular disease (reduced blood flow to the brain), supplementation with citicoline has significantly and consistently improved memory and behavioral control.

Health conscious individuals who want to preserve their ability to think and remember well into their senior years may want to pair a dietary supplement that contains citicoline with other health-promoting habits like exercise and a balanced diet. Citicoline can't stop time, but it just may help you remember where you put your keys or why you entered that room in the first place!

# ADAPTOGENS

## SUPPLEMENTS FOR SUPREME BALANCE

**ONE OF THE MOST FASCINATING** categories of medicinal plants is adaptogens. Just as you might guess from the word, plants in this group help us to adapt to our environment—and most notably to the stress in our environment. Adaptogens enhance our resistance to stress and, in so doing, create greater mental, emotional, and physical endurance. In order for a plant to be characterized as an adaptogen it must meet certain criteria. The plant must:

- Be harmless
- Improve our response to stress
- Create a normalizing effect regardless of whether the current state is hyper-excitabile or under-responsive
- Normalize our stress response axis (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal neuroendocrine response system)

Plant adaptogens work by bringing our reactive state closer to our optimal, balanced state of being. This means that regular use of adaptogenic herbs will facilitate our innate healing processes and help us achieve a sense of balance, repose, and readiness. While a good night's rest, a big belly laugh, a relaxing shoulder rub, or a moment spent in a quiet grove of trees will each create a more relaxed and balanced state, adaptogens take this one step further. Adaptogens reset the communication network between the organs that respond to stress—namely, our hypothalamus, pituitary, and adrenal glands. This means that our stress response system is recalibrated through the use of adaptogens. Once recalibrated, our stress response system facilitates our



holy basil



ginseng



turmeric

ability to respond to stress dynamically, but also to return to a resting state of relaxed readiness more easily. At the same time, adaptogens reduce fatigue, improve immunity, reduce depression, and support sleep.

Not only are adaptogens unique to medicinal herbs, each adaptogen is unique unto itself. Many herbal adaptogens exist.

One of the most popular is **ginseng**. There are actually several different types of ginseng, including American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*), Siberian ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*), and Asian ginseng (*Panax ginseng*). Each ginseng has a slightly different character, with Asian ginseng being the most stimulating, followed by Siberian ginseng and then American ginseng.

Another important adaptogen is **turmeric root** (*Curcuma longa*), which has the additional benefit of being strongly anti-inflammatory.

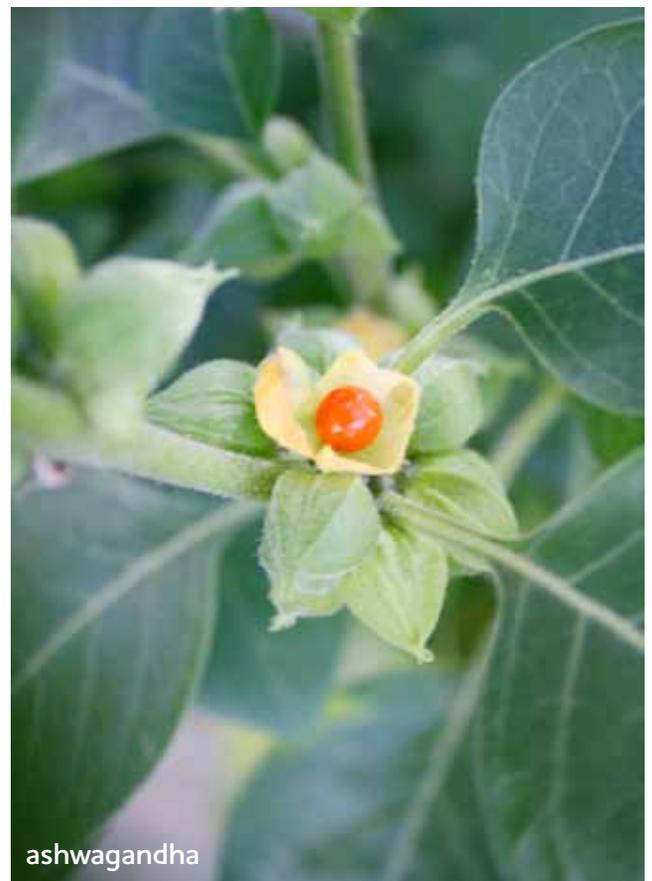
**Golden root** (*Rhodiola rosea*) is noteworthy because it is particularly effective in preventing mental and physical fatigue and uplifting mood.



**Holy basil** (*Ocimum sanctum*) is an adaptogen that has additional immune supportive actions.

**Ashwagandha** (*Withania somnifera*) is an adaptogen that also provides gentle sedative effects and supports healthy sleep.

Nothing else does what an adaptogen does. And given all of the stress that most of us are contending with on a daily basis, adaptogens have a unique and powerful role to play in maintaining our resilience. As we gain greater mental, emotional, and physical stamina, we have the opportunity to regain our vitality, or life force. With this renewed vitality, we can more easily experience joyful and exuberant living. Adaptogens are truly gifts from the plant kingdom!



# LOVE YOUR LIVER!

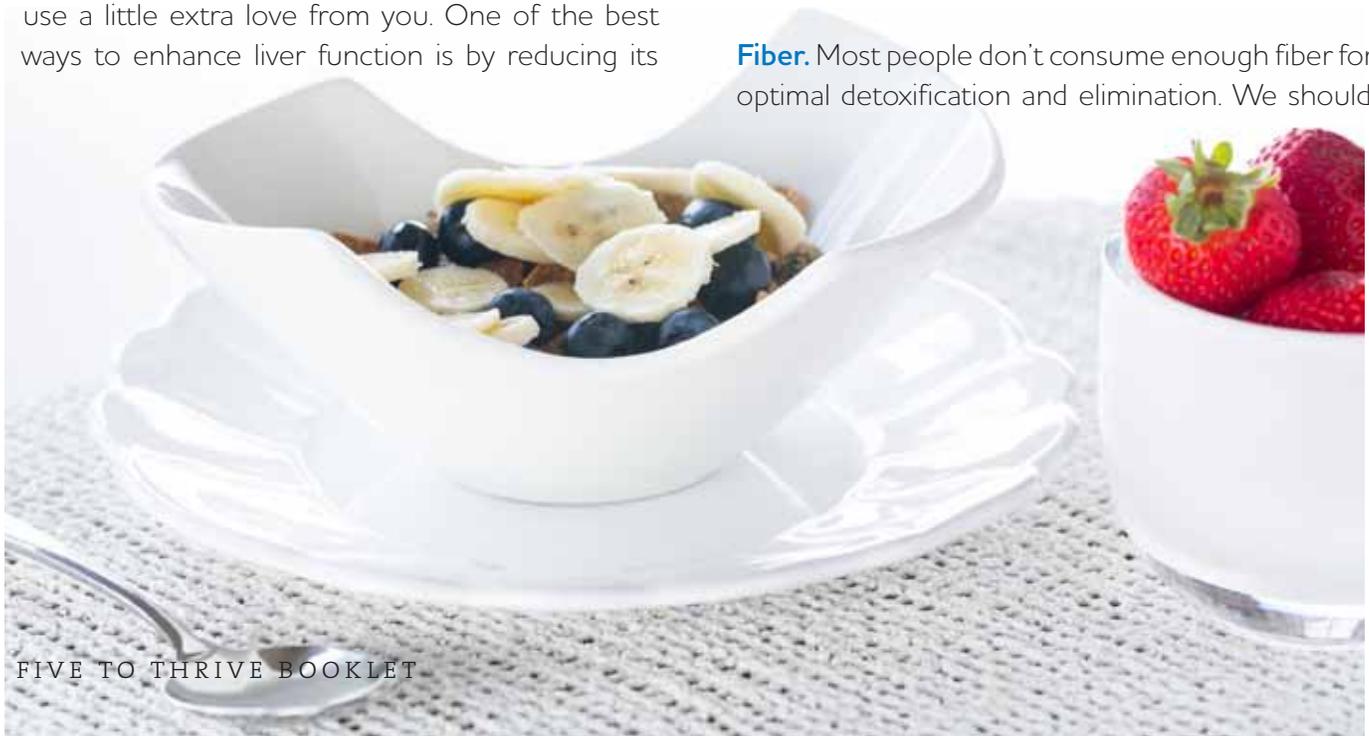
**THE LIVER IS NOT ONLY** the largest organ in our bodies, but it's likely the hardest-working one as well. The liver is the master organ of detoxification, breaking down harmful substances so they can be safely eliminated from the body. Whether it's toxins from secondhand smoke, a few too many happy-hour cocktails, or byproducts from the body's cells doing their jobs, our livers work 24/7 to eliminate substances that keep our bodies from functioning at their very best.

And that's not all the liver does. It also stores important nutrients that the body's systems can access when needed. And even more amazing, the liver can actually regenerate itself if part of it gets damaged. But that doesn't mean it couldn't use a little extra love from you. One of the best ways to enhance liver function is by reducing its

toxic burden. Eat organic foods whenever possible to avoid pesticides and other harmful substances, drink alcohol in moderation, use organic or natural body care products to avoid added chemicals, and take these top five herbs and nutrients to support liver function and effective detoxification.

**B vitamins.** When we are exposed to environmental toxins, we can become deficient in certain B vitamins, specifically B1, B2, and B6. In addition, when we are under stress, we can deplete our bodies' B vitamin reserves. These energy-enhancing nutrients are essential to many body functions, including digestion and detoxification, so it's a good idea to supplement with a B complex that includes all of the B vitamins.

**Fiber.** Most people don't consume enough fiber for optimal detoxification and elimination. We should



be ingesting at least 30 grams of this crucial nutrient each day. In addition to eating high-fiber foods such as fruits and vegetables, beans, and lentils, we can also take a daily fiber supplement like guar gum.

**Glutathione.** This important nutrient is considered the master antioxidant and is critical for detoxification, especially if you're exposed to a lot of environmental pollutants. Because our glutathione levels are lowest in the morning, consider supplementing your breakfast with a 250 to 500 mg dose of this key nutrient.

**Green Tea.** Epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) is a compound in green tea that has been shown to decrease the activation of cancer-causing substances in our bodies by stimulating key detoxification pathways. Scientists have mainly researched green tea as a beverage, but more studies are now being done on green tea supplements. For optimum detoxification, researchers recommend drinking five to ten small cups of green tea daily or supplementing with 300 to 600 mg twice a day.

**Milk Thistle.** Also known as silymarin, this potent botanical has been used for centuries to treat serious liver conditions such as hepatitis or cirrhosis. Research backs up this traditional usage, showing that milk thistle is the supreme liver antioxidant. For best effects, choose a milk thistle extract standardized to 80 mg silymarin and take 250 mg three times daily with food.



# SIMPLE DIETARY ADVICE

## 1 BRUISE CRUISE

Pineapple is a rich source of the important and health-promoting enzyme bromelain. Bromelain exerts significant anti-inflammatory effects. The next time you sustain a minor sports injury, bruise, or are suffering from back or neck strain, try eating more pineapple.



## 3 CRAZY FOR COCOA

Drinking cocoa has more flavonoids and antioxidant potential per serving than red wine or green tea. Yum-yum!



## 4 FRUIT IS FABULOUS!

We are often asked if people should avoid fruit because of the sugar content. Our advice: *Absolutely not!* Fruits contain powerful polyphenols and fiber that are critical for enhancing health and preventing disease. In fact, a new study confirms that fruit, specifically berries and apples, can actually *reduce* the risk of type 2 diabetes. In this study and others, fruit *juice* increased risk. It's always best to eat whole fruit and not drink processed fruit juice that may also contain additional sugar.



## 2 BLUE FOR YOU

Eating a cup of blueberries decreases DNA damage and helps protect cells from oxidative stress. These effects are seen one hour after eating the berries but they do not last, so the secret is to eat blueberries every day! Tip: Be sure to buy organic blueberries because these thin-skinned berries are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of pesticides and other chemicals.



## 5 24-CARROT GOLD

Did you know that purple, red, yellow and white carrots were cultivated long before the appearance of the popular orange carrot? The first carrots were grown prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> century in the area around Afghanistan. Orange carrots were developed and stabilized by Dutch growers in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The antioxidant beta-carotene gives carrots its gorgeous orange hue. Antioxidants are known for their anti-cancer effects because they have been shown to reduce free radicals in the body. Carrots are an excellent source of vitamin A, providing 210% of the average adult's daily needs.



# MOVEMENT MAKES SENSE

## 1 LET'S MOVE

Not all of us grew up playing on sports teams or became professional athletes. We were however born to move and it is never too late to start an exercise routine. Researchers have found that those who are able to regularly work out at moderate or vigorous levels at least once a week were three to four times more likely to remain healthy while aging compared to those who didn't exercise at all. So, find that fitness friend and get your bodies movin' and groovin'.



## 3 EXERCISE

One reason exercise helps protect against hormonal cancers is its impact on the hormones estrogen, testosterone, and cortisol. Exercise influences the way our bodies break down these hormones, reducing our risk of developing hormonally driven cancers such as breast cancer and prostate cancer.

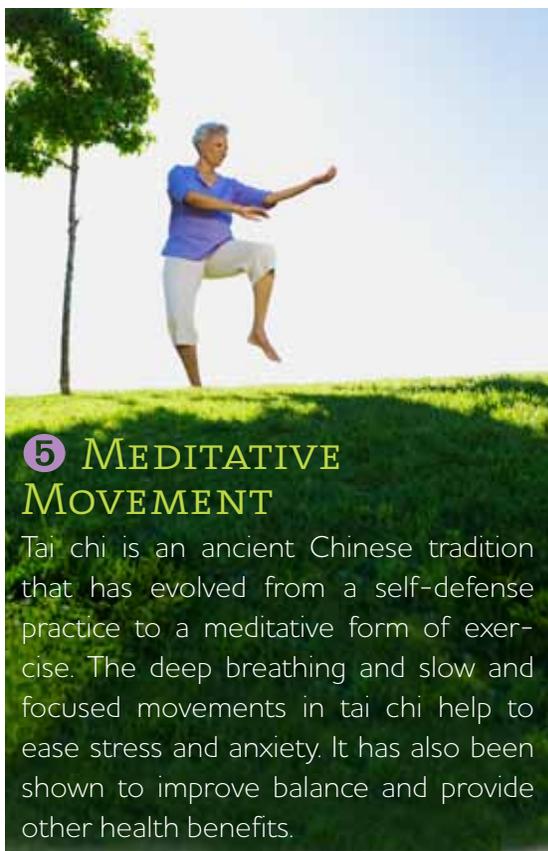


## 4 EXPLORE YOUR WINTER WONDERLAND

Don't have the energy to get out and exercise in the cold weather? Try playing instead! Fun activities like building a snowman or having a snowball fight can burn about 300 calories per hour! If you're in a snow-free zone, you still have options. Fall is the perfect time for walking or hiking. Trails are less crowded and you are welcomed by the colorful changing leaves and the crisp cool air.

## 2 TAKE A BREAK

Taking a two-minute mild-intensity exercise break every 20 minutes during prolonged sitting, like at work, improves blood sugar control while also reducing post-meal blood sugar and insulin levels by about 25 percent. Mild intensity is equivalent to two miles/hour walking pace.



## 5 MEDITATIVE MOVEMENT

Tai chi is an ancient Chinese tradition that has evolved from a self-defense practice to a meditative form of exercise. The deep breathing and slow and focused movements in tai chi help to ease stress and anxiety. It has also been shown to improve balance and provide other health benefits.

# REJUVENATE MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

## 1 REJUVENATION

We are made up of about 60 percent water—and every part of the body requires this essential liquid to function properly. In addition to drinking fresh filtered water, eating foods like watermelon (90% water!), oranges, and grapefruit is a great way to stay hydrated.

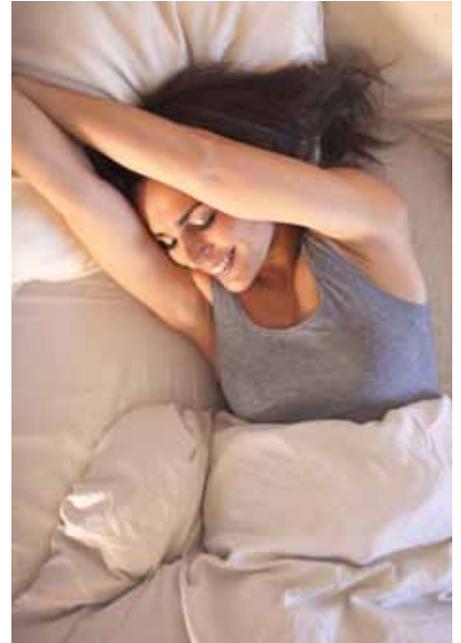


## 2 ENJOY SOME REST AND DOWN-TIME

Winter is the season that earth rests in order to prepare for spring. It is also a great time for reflection. A recent study looking at the brain at rest found that this doesn't necessarily mean idleness. In fact, reflection is very important for our well-being. The study concluded that rest and reflection are critical to learning and also help us see the value in our lives.

## 3 PLOTTING SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

Emotional forgiveness improves sleep quality, which in turn, positively affects every system in the body. Conversely, revenge has been shown to impair sleep quality.



## 4 CULTIVATE CREATIVITY

Researchers from the National Institutes of Health found that people diagnosed with cancer who participated in creative activities such as music and art therapy, dance, or writing had significantly less anxiety, depression, and pain.



## 5 KEEP YOUR BEDROOM COOL

Baby it's cold outside! When the leaves float from the trees and snow begins to fall, we turn up the thermostat and bundle up to keep warm. But remember, keeping your bedroom cool will help you sleep better. A study in the journal *Presse Médicale* found that the optimal temperature for sleep is around 60 to 68 degrees Fahrenheit. If your room is much cooler or warmer, you may experience restlessness.

# THE SPIRIT OF A THRIVER



## 1 POWER OF LOVE

Studies show that the presence of loving friends and family actually reduces stress hormones in the person who is ill, which then stimulates the healing process. This show of love and support can have significant impacts on recovery from serious illness.

## 2 GUIDED IMAGERY IS GOOD

Guided imagery lowers stress. In fact, in a study of women receiving radiation therapy for breast cancer, four out of five of the women found guided imagery helpful and all of the women said they would recommend it to others.



## 3 LAUGH MORE!

Have you ever heard the phrase, “Laughter is the best medicine”? It’s true, researchers have found that laughter has positive health-promoting effects on the body. Laughter increases blood flow and immune response, lowers blood sugar levels, increases relaxation and improves sleep. Create an opportunity to laugh today! Play with a pet, watch a movie, or visit the comedy section of your local bookstore. Super-charge the benefits of laughter by combining it with movement. Play catch outside. Pick up a match of ping-pong. Or go for a walk with a friend who has a sense of humor.



## 4 NOT NEGATIVE

It’s okay to feel not okay. Unpleasant feelings help us make sense of the environmental and relational challenges we face each day. Negative emotions can be a tool for adjusting our response to the issue at hand; they tell us that something in our current situation needs to change.

## 5 GOOD DEEDS FEEL GOOD

The feeling we get when we give has a positive impact our internal landscape. A study in the *Journal of Happiness Studies* found that spending time and money on other people and helping others actually makes you happier than spending time or money on yourself. Another recent study in the *International Journal of Happiness Development* noted that the benefits of generous behavior increase your life satisfaction even further when you have a social bond with the recipient of your gift.

# SUPPLEMENTING FOR GOOD HEALTH

## 1 DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

In addition to providing protection against oxidative stress, antioxidants like curcumin, vitamin E, zinc, CoQ10, N-acetyl-cysteine, and glutathione also have antidepressant activity. Bonus!



## 4 MORE GOOD NEWS ABOUT DHA

A recent study demonstrated that the omega-3 fatty acid DHA helped improve learning and behavior in healthy children ages 7 to 9 who were underperforming. The great thing about this study is that these children were perfectly healthy and had no signs of attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or other learning or concentration issues. The dosage of supplemental DHA used in the study was 600 mg daily.

## 2 COLD AND FLU RELIEF

There are many simple actions you can take to avoid catching this season's bug including washing your hands, getting enough sleep, and eating a healthy breakfast. Utilizing supplements can also make sure that your immune system is armed with the best defense. Most of us probably think of vitamin C as the go-to immunity booster and we may not have considered vitamin D. Taking a high-quality D vitamin can help your system fight off infection when you are not getting enough sunlight during the winter months. Power to the D!

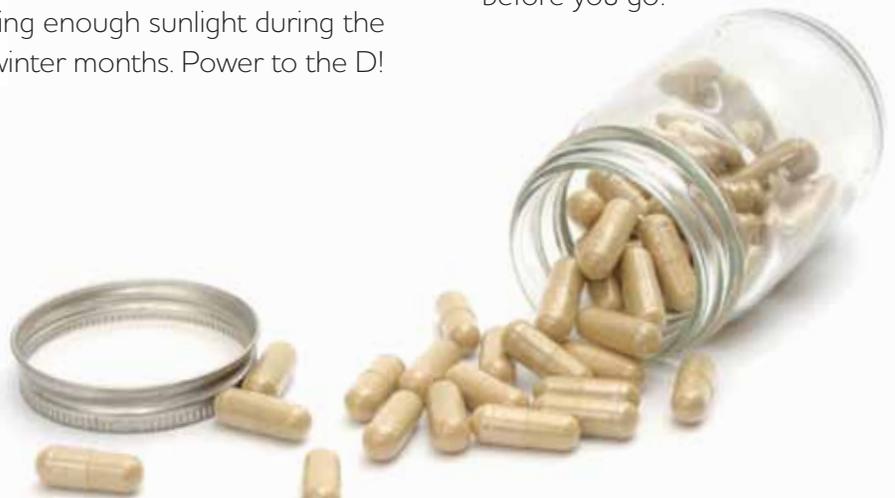
## 3 SKIN PROTECTION

Omega-3 supplements have been shown to be good for your heart, immune system, and brain. New research tells us they can also help protect against skin cancer. So when you are in the sun, grab your sunblock and your hat, and don't forget to take your fish oil before you go!



## 5 COENZYME Q10 (CoQ10)

Several studies have shown that CoQ10 supplements can help protect the heart during chemotherapy, specifically doxorubicin (Adriamycin). Preliminary studies also show that CoQ10 does not interfere with the effectiveness of this drug.



A CLEAR MIDNIGHT

THIS is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless,  
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done,  
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes  
thou lovest best.

Night, sleep, and the stars.

—Walt Whitman

# HEY THRIVERS

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It's Time to Thrive!