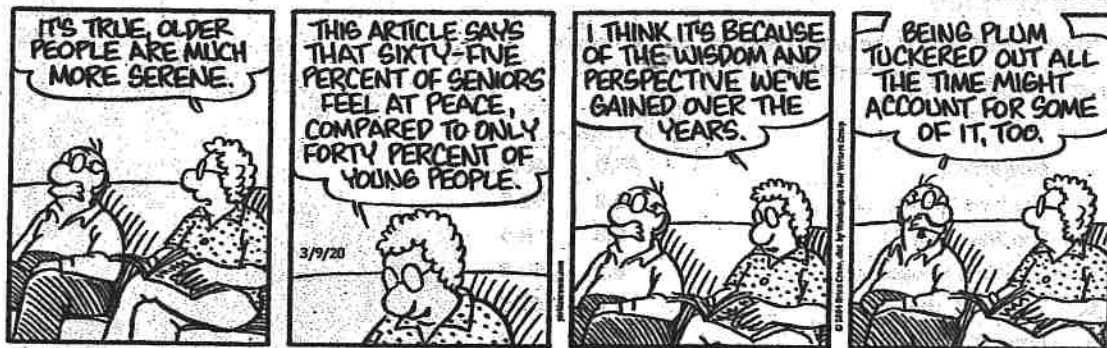


# LIVING HEALTHIER & HAPPIER IN RETIREMENT- ESSENTIAL STEPS

THE WASHINGTON POST • MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2020

PICKLES

BRIAN CRANE



**Study Group Leader: Brad Bickford, BCD, LCSW**

**OLLI FALL SEMESTER 2020  
CLASS #292**



## **FORWARD**

***“THIS CLASS IS ABOUT THE ESSENTIAL STEPS ONE NEEDS TO TAKE, IN ORDER TO DEVELOP A NEW RETIREMENT IDENTITY/PURPOSE AND LIVE A HEALTHIER & HAPPIER LIFE. THIS BECOMES EVEN MORE CHALLENGING AS WE FACE THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC.***

***WHEN I RETIRED IN 2013, I WONDERED HOW I WOULD FILL MY DAY, WOULD I GET BORED AFTER A WHILE OF JUST SLEEPING LATE, PLAYING SPORTS OR FISHING, WATCHING TV, OR VACATIONING? I ALSO BEGAN TO WORRY ABOUT SPENDING A DWINDLING INCOME?***

***WHAT I REALIZED IS -THAT THIS IS A TIME SIMULTANEOUSLY ABOUT FREEDOM & ANXIETY. WHAT AM I GOING TO DO TO FEEL FULFILLED? WHAT ABOUT ALL THAT INCOME I USE TO HAVE REGULARLY COMING IN? IN ADDITION, I REALIZED THAT MY BODY IS AGING AND DEVELOPING NEW AILMENTS.***

***RETIREMENT IS A DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE OF LIFE WHICH CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR SOME PEOPLE TO ADJUST TO EMOTIONALLY. IT'S LIKE WHEN OUR CHILDREN GO FROM SWEET LITTLE CUTIE PIES TO ADOLESCENTS, OR FOR SOME OF US WHEN OUR CHILDREN LEAVE THE NEST.”***

***Practically speaking, some people can't afford to retire and that's understandable with today's inflation and cost of living. Some people may want to slowly transition into retirement and work part-time. Try to free up your time as much as possible to take advantage of new opportunities and experiences.***

***What I began to experience is that RETIREMENT is simultaneously a challenging and wonderful time of life. There are a lot of positives. We don't have the usual constraints, demands, stressors on our time or energy. Most of us now have more time to feel relaxed, find laughter again and do what we want and when we want to do it.***

***We now have time to explore & experience all the beautiful aspects of life, different cultures, and the planet Earth. We now have time to discover our hidden gifts and creativity.***

*In order to pursue this time of life to its fullest, we have to simultaneously take care of the ourselves by paying attention to our bodies, brains and what we put into them. There are some essential steps I came to discover and want to share them with you. These steps relate to health areas involving our Body & Brain, Emotions, Diet, Personal Care, Family, Personal/Social Relationships, as well as Spirituality.*

*There are also three themes that run throughout this class & your booklet. First, is that there is a MIND/BODY CONNECTION(MBC). Whatever we do with our bodies directly impacts our minds/mood and vice versa. For example, if we get more sleep or exercise we feel happier, energized and better able to handle stress the next day. Or the opposite, if we get little sleep or an injury, we might feel irritable and temporarily depressed. The Pandemic impacts our moods and energy which we will address.*

*Another example of the Mind/Body connection comes through Humor. Laughter helps the brain to relax so we can absorb information better. It helps our circulatory system by lowering our blood pressure. In the chapter on EMOTIONAL Health, we will experience this connection and elaborate on how humor/laughter benefits us physically and emotionally. Keep an eye out for the initials "MBC" to identify this concept.*

*A second theme is that of NEUROPLASTICITY. It means in general biological terms that human beings are adaptable to changes in their environment, and when we do this we grow new nerve synapses in our brains. In simpler terms, you can teach an old dog new tricks. Our wonderful brains can still grow, and can develop new nerves as we can change our thinking & behavior over time with repetition and more healthy action. So our senior brain may seem to be slowing down, but it can still grow and learn new things.*

*The third theme is that everyone's BODY IS UNIQUE AND DIFFERENT. Not only does this apply to appearance externally, but also chemically internally. This is very noticeable with gender differences. Women and men for example respond differently to the same medication. Some people can drink alcohol and others can't. So don't assume everything works the same for you as others. You are unique. Your biochemistry is unique.*

*So if you follow most of these essential steps, Some of you may say its too late to change and I will say it's not and guarantee that you will experience happier & healthier living. So let's get started gradually with your essential steps towards a new Identity and Healthier and Happier Life.*

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*Forward by Brad Bickford*

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***PHYSICAL HEALTH***  
**STEP # 1**

**“Take care of your body-its the one thing that gets you  
around.”**

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

(Older adults should do at least 5-6 days per week for 40 minutes of moderate activity, work out earlier in day so body can have energy for day, eat protein foods after to replenish muscles-keep it up make it a TOP priority)

### WHY DO YOU/SHOULD YOU EXERCISE?

1. to prevent and slow down onset of mental disorders like Alzheimers
2. Prevent or slow onset of cancer, diabetes, heart problems, arthritis, body injuries
3. Improve looks/body appearance
4. Vanity issues
5. Have more strength to do things.-Adults over age 55 begin to lose muscle strength 3+ % /year

### GOALS OF EXERCISE

Strength, Endurance, Flexibility(as we age body gets less flexible leading to injury)

EXERCISE definition: *sustained stress on body (good stress).*

#### Goals when you work out:

1. Want to have Consistency-so your body muscle groups can rely on a tone up
2. Variety-mix up your exercises and try something new good for brain and other muscles that might get neglected.
3. Intensity-Vary the speed, amount, or weight of exercises to build strength/durability. Ex- when walking and see a hill take that.

**INJURIES-R.I.C.E=Rest** body, **Ice** it every 15 minutes for 2-5 minutes 4-6 times a day until swelling goes down; **Compress** it or wrap it in Ace bandage after swelling decreases; **Elevate** or support soft tissue part. If pain and swelling do not get better overnite seek professional medical advice. Take an Aleve or Advil also as an anti-inflammatory if you are medically ok to do so. I have gone to physical therapy which really helps. As healing progresses apply heat or cold(you decide) to make it feel better.

Our senior bodies to not bounce back like they use to. So some medical people may tell you a certain time frame, but if you find it takes longer then that's OK.

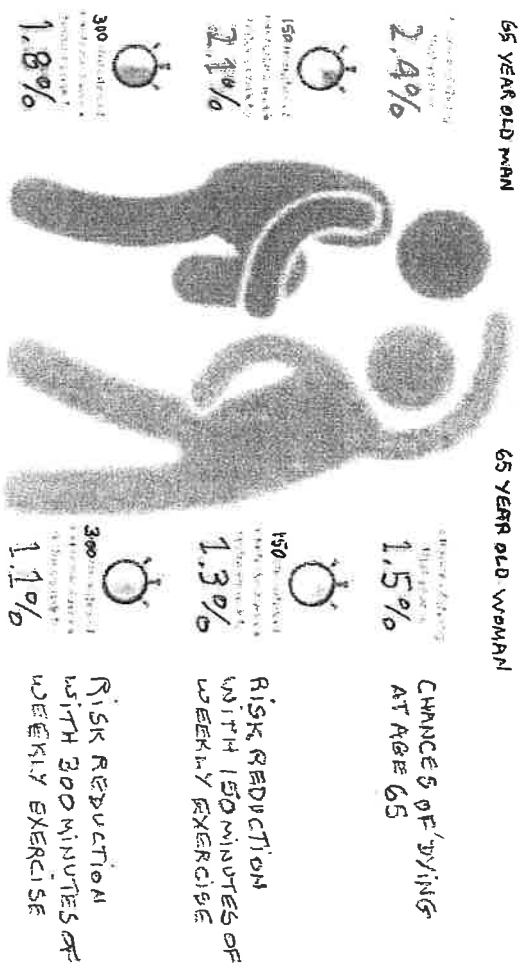
"You have three relationships:  
 the **first** is to the **body** that envelopes you,  
 the **second** is to the **divine cause** from which all things come;  
 and the **third** is to **those who live with you.**"

Marcus Aurelius (121-180 C.E.) Roman Emperor & Stoic Philosopher

"Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth, whenever it is a damp, drizzly November of the soul...I account it high time to get to [exercising!] as soon as I can."

Ishmael in the opening scene of Moby-Dick

# TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY. IT'S THE ONLY PLACE YOU HAVE TO LIVE IN.



## **How TO KEEP YOUR BRAIN HEALTHY**

**The human brain weighs about 3 pounds and like any of our organs there are things we can do to keep it healthy and slow down the onset of dementia etc.**

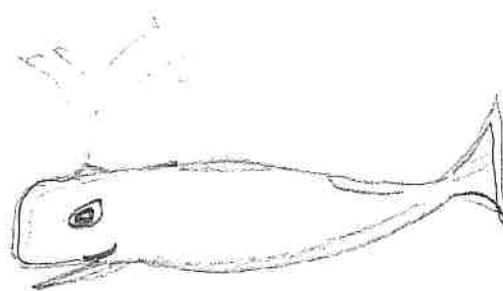
**Here are some things you can do to keep it healthy:**

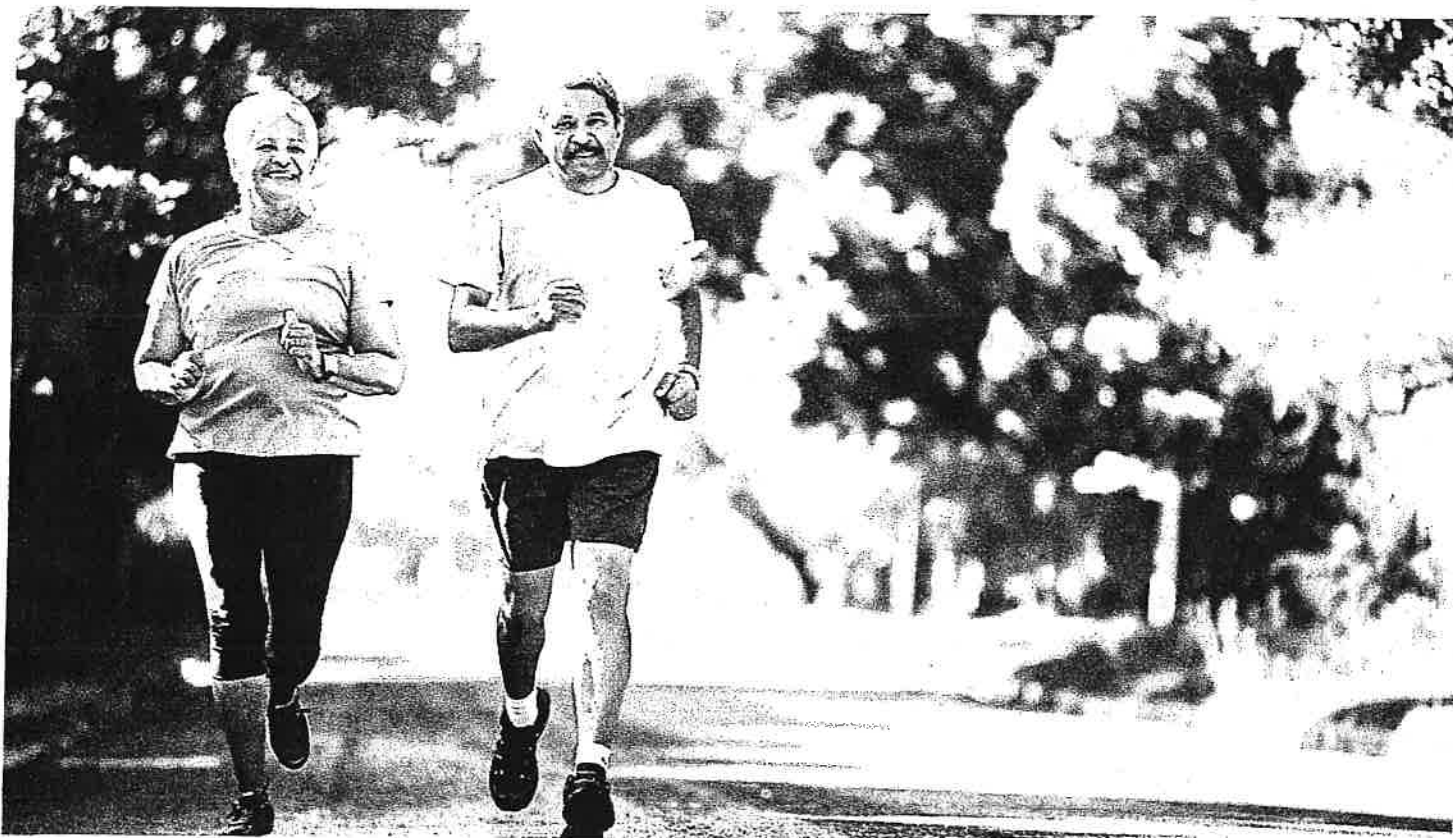
- 1. USE IT-or lose it. By reading books, attending OLLI classes and learning new things, learn a language, try new things you've never experienced.**
- 2. MIX THINGS UP-try using your opposite hand to eat, write, brush your teeth comb your hair or try closing your eyes when you eat something, or take a new route to get somewhere like Mapquest offers.**
- 3. STAY ACTIVE & EXERCISE-this increases blood flow to the brain.**
- 4. EAT A HEALTHY DIET- eat more omega 3 fish, dark veges, obese people in middle age are twice as likely to develop dementia.**
- 5. LIMIT ALCOHOL DRINKS- NIAAA recommends 2 drinks/day for men and 1 for women(also helps manage diets).**
- 6. LEARN TO PLAY AN INSTRUMENT-or practice the one you know(boosts memory, hand coordination, hearing etc).**
- 7. SOCIALIZE-volunteer, talk with someone daily(builds emotional health).**



8. **STAY CALM**-stress hurts & stresses our gray matter cells which control muscles, hearing, senses, memory etc.
9. **GET SLEEP**- our brains need to rest also. Sleep deprivation causes mood irritability, poor judgment, more risk taking etc.
10. **PLAY MEMORY GAMES**-like bridge, poker, SUDOKU, cross words puzzles, puzzles etc.
11. **READ**-improves concentration, increases vocabulary, stimulates imagination part of brain, helps you gain more control over environment/daily life.

**( The Sperm whales' brain weighs about 18 pounds)=fun fact acquired from reading.**





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Keep your brain healthy by exercising daily.

## WHAT HELPS

### Exercise

Aerobic exercise is especially beneficial for brain health, and even better when combined with strength training. Exercising for longer periods — at least 30 minutes or more at a time — appears to be better for brain health than shorter sessions. And it's never too late to start. People older than 65 showed more benefits than those 55 to 65.

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### Staying socially and intellectually active

Activities that challenge your brain — including reading books, writing letters and learning a new language — all help preserve brain function, as do social activities such as volunteering, [playing cards \(/health/brain-health/info-2015/bridge-for-brain-health.html\)](#), attending worship services and talking with friends.

### Eating a healthy diet

Not only can daily [stress](/health/healthy-living/info-2014/stress-and-disease.html) cause memory problems, but long-term stress is connected with faster rates of decline in brain health, too. Methods to reduce stress — such as [meditation](/health/healthy-living/info-2015/meditation-cure.html) and mindfulness — may help, but their effectiveness requires further study.

## Air pollution

It may be that pollution increases [heart disease](/health/conditions-treatments/info-01-2013/high-tech-heart-treatments.html), [stroke](/health/conditions-treatments/info-04-2011/are-you-having-a-stroke.html) and lung problems — which in turn cause problems with brain health — or that small particles in the pollution directly harm the brain. One new study found that long-term exposure to air pollution is linked with brain shrinkage, brain damage and impaired function.

## Buyer beware

[Brain games](/health/brain-health/brain_games/) and other cognitive training: Although research shows brain training can improve attention and memory as they relate to the games, few studies demonstrate that those skills transfer to real life. The report recommends that consumers carefully evaluate claims of companies selling brain games. "People may fall prey to using products that have not been proven to be effective and think they will help them in all areas of their lives," Blazer says.

## Supplements

"There just is no good, consistent evidence that [vitamins](/health/drugs-supplements/info-2015/must-have-supplements.html) provide value in improving brain health," Blazer says. In particular, vitamins E, B6 and B12 provide no clear benefit. And while vitamin D deficiency has been linked to a decline in brain health, taking vitamin D supplements has not been shown to improve memory. Similarly, ginkgo biloba "is not considered effective in preventing cognitive decline," the report found.

**[How does your brain score? Find out at Staying Sharp \(https://stayingsharp.aarp.org/assessments?intcmp=AE-SSS-HEA-BH-IL-SAMP\)](https://stayingsharp.aarp.org/assessments?intcmp=AE-SSS-HEA-BH-IL-SAMP)**

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# Keeping your brain in tiptop shape

9

**M**any assume that, like crow's feet and love handles, memory loss is inevitable as we get older. But recent research published in the journal *Cell Stem Cell* suggests that older adults generate as many new brain cells as younger ones.

"It's good news because it proves that we can keep making memories and boost our health, no matter our age, especially if we embrace a healthy lifestyle," says Zaldy Tan, medical director of the UCLA Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Program.

The study did find that older adults' brains had less blood-vessel growth, which means a 70-year-old's brain probably doesn't function the same way as a 20-year-old's, says Tan, who was not involved with the study.

Still, "as people move into their 60s and beyond, if they are proactive about their health — they exercise, eat right, manage their heart health and, in general, keep their brain active — there's a good chance they can keep their brain sharp for decades," he says.

Consider this expert advice on how to give your brain a boost.

## Control medical conditions

Some medical concerns associated with aging can affect the brain as well as the body. For instance, high blood pressure, especially in middle age, is linked to a higher risk of dementia later in life, according to a 2016 American Heart Association statement.

And a study published this past June in the journal *Nature Chemistry* suggests that high cholesterol can trigger the formation of amyloid-beta protein, a key player in Alzheimer's disease. Atrial fibrillation (A-fib), a heart-rhythm disorder common in older adults, has also been associated with dementia.

So work with your doctor to control blood pressure and cholesterol.

Sleep apnea has also been shown to increase amyloid-beta protein. If you snore loudly, frequently wake up with morning headaches or find yourself nodding off during the day, see a sleep specialist, says Thomas Wisniewski, director of the Center for Cognitive Neurology at NYU Langone Health. Other conditions that could affect the brain include hearing loss and depression.

## Get a move on



ISTOCK

blood flow to your brain and helps maintain the size of the brain's hippocampus, which is involved in memory and learning, Tan says. A 2016 study that Tan was involved in found that the more active older adults were, the larger their hippocampus.

"The protective effects were highest in those over age 75, which suggests that it's never too late to start," Tan adds.

To get exercise's protective effects, you need 30 minutes of aerobic activity most days of the week, says Ronan Factora, program director for the Geriatric Medicine Fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic. That means working out at a level where you can say words such as "yes" or "no" but are unable to hold a conversation.

It's also important to limit sitting, even if you get regular physical activity. Research published last April in *PLOS One* found that adults who sat for three to seven hours a day had substantial thinning of their medial temporal lobes, which can be an early sign of impending dementia, says a co-author of the study, Gary Small, director of the UCLA Longevity Center.

## Choose the right diet

Eating plans that are rich in produce, whole grains, legumes and healthy fats (such as nuts), and low in high-fat proteins and processed foods appear to benefit the brain.

For instance, a study by the University of California at San Francisco published last year in the *Journal of the American Geri-*

*atric Diet* — which focuses on fruits, vegetables, healthy fats (such as olive oil and fish), legumes and whole grains — to a 35 percent lower risk of cognitive impairment in older adults.

And a study published in 2015 in the journal *Alzheimer's & Dementia* found that those who followed the plan most rigorously saw significantly slower cognitive decline than those who were less diligent.

## Be mindful

Several studies have found that regularly practicing mindfulness techniques such as meditation and yoga helps reduce risk of dementia.

For instance, a study published in 2016 in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* found that people 55 and older who took a one-hour weekly meditative yoga class and meditated at home for 12 minutes a day for three months had significant improvements in memory capabilities.

These practices "help reduce stress, which is toxic to the brain," Wisniewski says. But they may also help enhance the production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor, a protein that helps with the growth and maintenance of brain neurons.

Your brain can benefit from daily meditation, even if you do it for just five or 10 minutes, Small says.

## Check your meds

Older adults take an average of 14 different medications a year, according to the National Academy of Sciences. But some meds,

anti-anxiety drugs and narcotics, may impair memory.

So review the medications you're taking — over-the-counter and prescription, along with dietary supplements — with your primary-care physician each year.

## Know when to seek help

It's normal to occasionally be forgetful, especially if you're under stress, Small says. And as you age, you may find that it takes longer to learn new information.

But see your doctor if you (or others) notice that you're doing one or more of the following: asking the same questions repeatedly; forgetting or mixing up common words, such as "radio" and "TV," when speaking; taking longer to complete familiar tasks; putting items in inappropriate places (such as car keys in the refrigerator); getting lost driving to familiar places; and experiencing unexplained mood changes.

## Does brain training help?

You may have heard that computerized "brain training" games can help stave off cognitive decline. But a number of studies haven't found them to be useful.

Instead, participate in intellectually challenging activities that are new and interesting to you, such as learning to paint. "Whenever we learn something that's completely novel to us, we form new brain connections," Tan says.

Even inconsequential activities can bring real benefits. A large Chinese study of people 65 and older, published in *JAMA Psychiatry* this past May, found that those who regularly participated in intellectual activities such as reading books or newspapers, and playing board games, card games or mah-jongg, had a significantly lower risk of dementia over seven years of follow-up.

Keep up social activities, too. Older adults who do so have a lower risk of dementia, according to a study published last year in *PLOS One*.

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## Chapter 5. Active Older Adults



The benefits of regular physical activity occur throughout life and are essential for healthy aging. Adults ages 65 years and older gain substantial health benefits from regular physical activity. However, it is never too late to start being physically active. Being physically active makes it easier to perform activities of daily living, including eating, bathing, toileting, dressing, getting into or out of a bed or chair, and moving around the house or neighborhood. Physically active older adults are less likely to experience falls, and if they do fall, they are less likely to be seriously injured. Physical activity can also preserve physical function and mobility, which may help maintain independence longer and delay the onset of major disability. Research shows that physical activity can improve physical function in adults of any age, adults with overweight or obesity, and even those who are frail. Promoting physical activity and reducing sedentary behavior for older adults is especially important because this population is the least physically active of any age group, and most older adults spend a significant proportion of their day being sedentary.

Older adults are a varied group. Most, but not all, have one or more chronic conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, osteoarthritis, or cancer, and these conditions vary in type and severity. Nevertheless, being physically active has significant benefits for all older adults. Physical activity is key to preventing and managing chronic disease. Other benefits include a lower risk of dementia, better perceived quality of life, and reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression. Additionally, doing physical activity with others can provide opportunities for social engagement and interaction. All older adults experience a loss of physical fitness and function with age, but some experience this more than others. This diversity means that some older adults can run several miles, while others struggle to walk a few blocks.

**Learn More**



See [Chapter 6. Additional Considerations for Some Adults](#) for a discussion of physical activity for older adults with chronic conditions.

This chapter provides guidance about physical activity for adults ages 65 years and older. The Guidelines seeks to help older adults select the types and amounts of physical activity appropriate for their own abilities.

For adults ages 65 years and older who have good fitness and no chronic conditions, the guidance in this chapter is essentially the same as that provided in [Chapter 4. Active Adults](#).





## Key Guidelines for Older Adults

These guidelines are the same for adults and older adults:

- ✓ Adults should move more and sit less throughout the day. Some physical activity is better than none. Adults who sit less and do any amount of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity gain some health benefits.
- ✓ For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) to 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Preferably, aerobic activity should be spread throughout the week.
- ✓ Additional health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond the equivalent of 300 minutes (5 hours) of moderate-intensity physical activity a week.
- ✓ Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities of moderate or greater intensity and that involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week, as these activities provide additional health benefits.

**Guidelines just for older adults:**

- ✓ As part of their weekly physical activity, older adults should do multicomponent physical activity that includes balance training as well as aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities.
- ✓ Older adults should determine their level of effort for physical activity relative to their level of fitness.
- ✓ Older adults with chronic conditions should understand whether and how their conditions affect their ability to do regular physical activity safely.
- ✓ When older adults cannot do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week because of chronic conditions, they should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow.

(A)

# Why exercise? Six surprising health benefits.

BY ROBERT J. DAVIS

Periodically, we see reports that scientists are closer to developing a pill that would mimic the benefits of exercise. The truth is that no medication or supplement even comes close to exercise for being able to do so much for so many people — or probably ever will. Although we've all heard that regular exercise can improve heart health, strengthen muscles and help protect bones, it can also enhance the quality of your life in a number of ways.

Here are six benefits that may surprise you.

## Better sex

In men, regular exercise appears to be a natural Viagra: It's associated with a lower risk of erectile problems. In one study, sedentary middle-aged men assigned to participate in a vigorous exercise program for nine months reported more-frequent sexual activity, improved

EXERCISE CONTINUED ON E6

duration and quality.

Researchers aren't sure why, but they suspect physical activity may help by affecting body temperature, metabolic rate, heart rate or anxiety levels, among other things, in a way that helps us fall asleep and stay asleep.

Because exercise also revs up your body, conventional wisdom has it that exercising in the evening can interfere with sleep. But overall, research has failed to support this assertion. For example, a small study of young adults found that doing vigorous aerobic exercise two hours before bedtime did not impair their ability to fall asleep or sleep soundly. Likewise, a small study of a group of older men and women showed that low-impact aerobic workouts done between 7 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. were just as effective as morning workouts at improving their self-reported sleep quality. And a larger 2013 National Sleep Foundation Sleep in America poll found that while responders who exercised in the morning reported the most favorable sleep quality, those who vigorously exercised in the evening said they slept just as well, if not better, on days they exercised than on those that they did not.

Of course, everyone is different, so it's possible that nighttime exercise may make it harder for you to sleep. But the only way to

suppress immunity by increasing levels of the stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline. That perhaps explains why, in one study, runners who participated in a Los Angeles marathon were nearly six times as likely to get sick in the week after the race as runners who did not participate.

Although this is a potential issue for elite athletes or people who do marathons or triathlons, the level of activity among most exercisers — even if it's vigorous — is far more likely to keep colds at bay than bring them on.

## Healthier eyes

When you hear about a connection between exercise and eyesight, maybe you picture those eye exercise programs that promise to sharpen your vision. But that's not what we're talking about. Instead of moving your eyes, the idea is to move your feet.

Research shows that people who are physically active have a lower risk of cataracts. For example, a study of nearly 50,000 runners and walkers found that those who exercised most vigorously were 42 percent less likely to develop cataracts than those who exercised least vigorously. Exercisers who fell in the middle in terms of intensity were also at reduced risk, though to a lesser degree.

The same researcher found a similar benefit regarding

morning routine leaves them feeling more energized and productive during the day.

But if you are not a morning person and shudder at the thought of getting out of bed for a 6 a.m. workout, there's good news: People tend to perform best at exercise (especially high-intensity exercise) later in the day.

Research shows that strength and flexibility are greatest in the late afternoon and that perceived exertion (meaning how hard you feel that your body is working) is lowest. Scientists attribute these effects to our circadian rhythm, the body's 24-hour clock, which causes body temperature to rise slightly

age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a leading cause of vision loss, in a study of nearly 42,000 runners. The more that people ran, the more their risk of AMD appeared to decline. A different study, which followed roughly 4,000 people for 15 years, showed that participants who were physically active were less likely to develop AMD than those who weren't active.

Scientists aren't sure why exercise protects against cataracts and AMD. One possibility is that it reduces inflammation, which is

according to research, which shows that athletes who train in the morning improve their performance to levels seen in the afternoon. That's worth keeping in mind if you're planning to run, say, a 5K with a 7 a.m. start time. Your performance will be best if you train at that hour.

Some people do aerobic exercise first thing, before they've eaten, because they think it will help them burn more fat. There is some evidence that this practice, sometimes called "fasted cardio," may boost fat burning — but only fleetingly. Over the course of days or weeks (which is what counts), research shows that it doesn't seem to

associated with both conditions. Cataracts and AMD have also been linked to risk factors of cardiovascular disease, including elevated blood sugar and triglycerides, which regular exercise can improve. Further, some research suggests that people who are overweight or obese are more prone to cataracts and AMD, so physical activity may help by preventing weight gain.

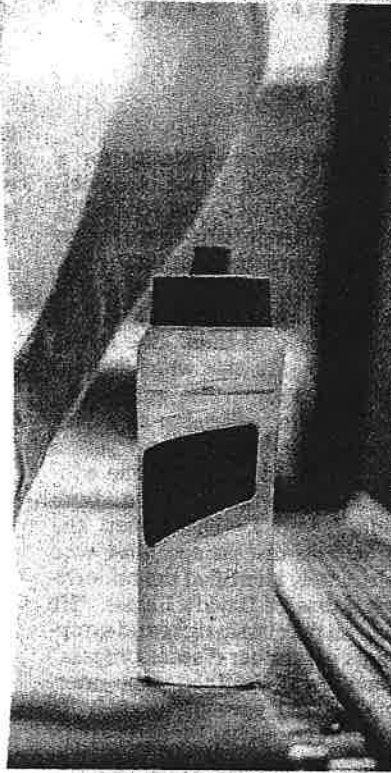
## Protection against hearing loss

You heard it here first: Exercise

B



# Muscles and the heart



ISTOCKPHOTO

offer any advantages. For example, in a four-week trial that randomly assigned young women to either fast or drink a 250-calorie shake before their aerobic workouts (while otherwise eating a low-calorie diet), both groups lost the same amount of fat and weight. Similarly, a study involving overweight women who did high-intensity interval workouts for six weeks after either fasting or eating found no differences in fat loss.

All in all, the best time to work out is whenever you can. If you exercise at different times of the day, be sure to note the hour as you're tracking your progress. That way, you'll know when your body clock may be to blame for a less-than-optimal workout.

— Robert J. Davis

Adapted from "Fitter Faster: The Smart Way to Get in Shape in Just Minutes a Day."

may be good for your hearing. A study of more than 68,000 female nurses who were followed for 20

vent the loss of neurotransmitters, which carry those signals between nerve cells. Exercise may also help by reducing the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, both of which are linked to hearing loss.

Of course, blasting music into your ears while you exercise could have the opposite effect and do damage to your hearing. Noise-canceling headphones are a good option because they reduce the need to turn up your music as much. But don't use them while exercising in isolated spots or on a busy road, where you might not notice approaching traffic.

## Better bathroom habits

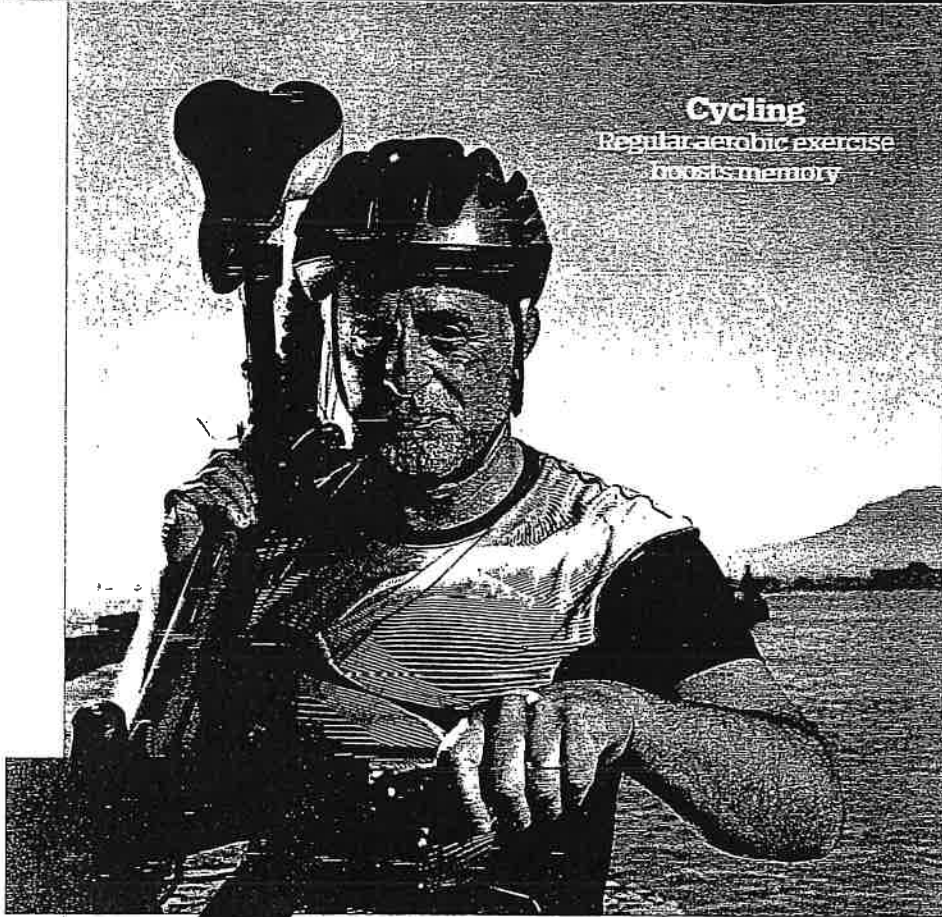
Although high-impact activities such as jumping or running can cause women to leak urine, research shows that moderate exercise may decrease the risk. For example, a study of middle-aged female nurses found that those who were physically active had lower rates of urinary incontinence than women who were inactive. A study of older nurses by the same team of researchers yielded similar findings.

A urinary problem familiar to many middle-aged and older men is nocturia, the need to get up more than once a night to pee. Often the cause is an enlarged prostate, a condition known as benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH. Exercise can help prevent nocturia or reduce its severity. In a large study of men with BPH, for example, those who were physically active for an hour or more per week were less likely to report nocturia than those who were sedentary. Likewise, a study of sedentary older men found that after eight weeks of daily walking, they urinated less frequently during the night.

Another common bathroom-related problem for both men and women is constipation, which exercise can help improve as well. In a study of 62,000 women, those who reported daily physical activity were nearly half as likely to experience constipation as women who exercised less than once a week. A randomized trial involving inactive, middle-aged men and women with chronic constipation found that those assigned to a 12-week exercise program were able to poop more easily.

Exercise helps by decreasing what is referred to as "transit time." That's how long it takes food to move through the digestive tract — not, as it sounds, the

(a)



**Cycling**  
Regular aerobic exercise  
boosts memory

## Reasons to Get Off the Couch Already!

You probably know that exercise is good for you. You might even know that regular physical activity can reduce your risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and some forms of cancer. In the past few years, though, researchers have discovered that people who exercise regularly reap even greater health benefits. For instance, did you know that exercise can actually *decrease* pain in people with arthritis? Or that women who exercise experience far fewer hot flashes than those who don't? (Sweat now so you don't sweat later is the idea.)

"If you could put exercise in a pill, you'd be able to treat so many chronic

conditions and diseases," says Roger Fielding, Ph.D., director of the nutrition and exercise physiology lab at Tufts University.

Basically, physical activity can be broken into two types: aerobic exercise and strength training. Aerobic exercise stimulates the cardiovascular system, boosting blood flow to the heart and the rest of the body. Researchers believe many of the health benefits attributed to aerobic exercise stem from this increased blood flow.

The second type of exercise, and one that becomes much more important as we get older, is strength training. Numerous studies have shown that

strength training can reduce and even reverse some of the body's natural age-related declines in bone and muscle mass, even in people who begin a strength-training program late in life.

Ideally, you should shoot for 30 minutes of aerobic exercise most days of the week and 20 minutes of strength training two or three times a week. But you could do less and still benefit. "It's important to realize that even small changes people make in their lives can have important health outcomes," Fielding says. "We don't want people to look at the guidelines and say, 'I can't do that so I'm not even going to try.' The message should be to try to do some physical activity every day—gardening, walking to get the mail, walking around the grocery store. It all counts."

What also counts are the tremendous benefits from making just a few simple changes in your daily routine. Here, then, are seven life-enhancing benefits of regular exercise.

### 1 Live longer

A landmark study of more than 17,000 middle-age Harvard graduates found that those who exercised on a regular basis reduced their risk of dying prematurely by 25 percent. Much of that gain can be attributed to the fact that people who exercise have a lower risk of heart attack and stroke. But according to a recent study of people 50 and over, those who exercise live between 1.3 and 3.7 years longer than those who are sedentary, independent of the cardiovascular-risk factor. The more vigorously you exercise, the longer you'll live. "Our bodies should last us 120 years," says Kenneth Cooper, M.D., executive director of the Cooper Institute of Aerobic Research in Dallas. "We don't live that long not because of the way we're made but because we don't take care of ourselves."

### 2 Remember where the car keys are

As we age, our short-term memory of details in the immediate past—what we ate for breakfast, where we put

## Smart Fitness

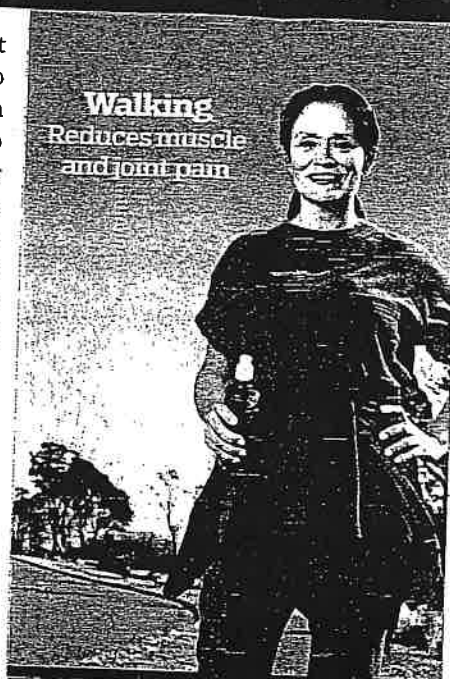
our glasses—decreases. A recent study, however, found that mice who exercised regularly not only learned a new task more quickly but also retained what they learned better and actually developed new brain cells in the memory section of the brain. The most exciting part of the study, though, was that the mice were about the equivalent of 70 in human years, and they developed increased memory skills after exercising for only one month.

### 3 Heal faster

It's no secret that as we get older, it takes longer for our bodies to heal. But now researchers have found that regular exercise can dramatically speed the healing process. Scientists at Ohio State University divided subjects ages 55 to 77 into two groups—one group attended supervised exercise sessions three days a week and the other didn't. At the end of one month, researchers inflicted wounds on the arms of both groups of volunteers, then monitored the wounds to see how quickly they healed. The result? The exercisers' wounds healed about 25 percent more quickly (29 days versus 39 days in the nonexercising group).

### 4 Increase sexual function

By age 50 one-third of American men suffer from some form of impotence. Newer drugs such as Viagra help treat erectile dysfunction (ED)—notably by increasing blood flow to the penis—yet none of these medications works quite as well in the long run as regular exercise. Men who participated in frequent vigorous exercise, the equivalent of running three hours a week or playing singles tennis for five hours a week, were almost a third less likely to suffer from ED, according to a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. You don't have to exercise that hard to maintain a healthy sex life, though. Another study of men between the ages of 40 and 70 found



that those who burned at least 200 calories a day exercising—the equivalent of a brisk two-mile walk—were less likely to suffer from impotence.

### 5 Have fewer hot flashes

About 75 percent of women in the United States experience hot flashes during menopause, and some 25 percent still get them ten or more years later. In the past, doctors treated these women with hormone replacement therapy (HRT), which provides supplemental estrogen and progesterone

and is highly effective in reducing hot flashes as well as other symptoms of menopause. But in 2002, millions of women discontinued taking HRT after becoming concerned about side effects. Exercise may be a better alternative anyway. In 1998 a Swedish study of almost 800 women ages 55 and 56 found that those who exercised at least two hours a week were much less likely than their nonexercising counterparts to experience severe hot flashes. Researchers suspect that the release of endorphins during exercise may counter the hormonal imbalances that are thought to produce these menopausal symptoms.

### 6 Be pain free

Well, okay, exercise may not be able to eliminate all the aches and pains of getting older, but it can reduce muscle and joint pain. Researchers at Stanford University compared a group of 60-plus runners with a group of nonexercisers and found that after adjusting for age, weight, gender, and health status, the runners experienced far less musculoskeletal pain over 14 years than did the nonexercisers, even though the runners were more likely to suffer from the occasional fracture. Other studies have noted that people who suffer from osteoarthritis report less pain and better function after starting an aerobic-exercise program.

### 7 Save money

Chronic diseases cost the United States billions of dollars in health care and lost productivity every year. But a study conducted by the Health Partners Research Foundation has found that people 50 and older who exercised for at least 30 minutes three or more days a week actually saved \$2,200 a year on medical bills, including doctors' visits. Now that's a benefit everyone can appreciate. ☐

*Gabrielle deGroot Redford is a features editor for AARP THE MAGAZINE. She cycles, swims, and runs after her kids (almost every day).*

# Exercise doesn't only protect bones, m

## EXERCISE FROM EI

sexual function and greater satisfaction. Those whose fitness levels increased most saw the biggest improvements in their sex lives. Research in women has found that those who are physically active report greater sexual desire, arousal and satisfaction than women who are sedentary.

Increased blood flow helps explain these findings. An enhanced self-image from exercise may play a role, too. Men and women who exercise may be more likely to feel sexually desirable, which can lead to better sex. So can the greater strength, flexibility and stamina that result from exercise.

In addition, physical activity — especially strength training — can increase levels of testosterone, which may boost sex drive in both men and women. It's worth noting that overtraining can have the opposite effect: A recent study found that men who do very vigorous exercise on a regular basis tend to have lower libidos. Although this is a potential concern for elite athletes or others who push themselves to the max without adequate recovery, it's not something that most of us need to worry about.

### Sounder sleep

A review of 66 studies on exercise and sleep concluded that regular exercise is comparable to sleep medication or behavioral therapy in improving the ability to fall asleep, as well as sleep duration and quality.

Researchers aren't sure why, but they suspect physical activity may help by affecting body temperature, metabolic rate, heart rate or anxiety levels, among other things, in a way that helps us fall asleep and stay asleep.

Because exercise also revs up your body, conventional wisdom has it that exercising in the evening can interfere with sleep. But overall, research has failed to support this assertion. For example, a small study of young adults found that doing vigorous aerobic exercise two hours before bedtime did not impair their ability to fall asleep or sleep soundly. Likewise, a small study of a group of older men and women showed that low-impact aerobic workouts done between 7 p.m. and

know for sure is to try. You may be pleasantly surprised at what a little pre-bedtime sweat can do for your sleep.

### Fewer colds

You may have heard fitness buffs claim that they never get sick. Although this may seem like baseless — not to mention annoying — boasting, there is scientific truth to it. Numerous studies have linked regular exercise to a lower risk of colds. For example, a study that followed about 1,000 adults for three months found that those who did aerobic exercise at least five days a week were about half as likely to develop colds as those who didn't exercise. And when exercisers did catch colds, they had fewer and less-severe symptoms than their couch-potato peers.

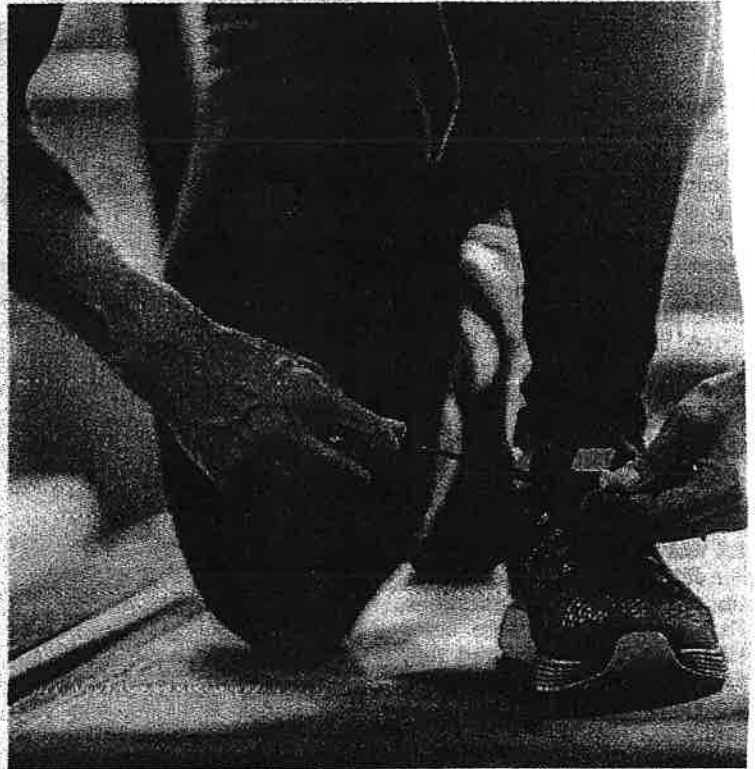
These studies, which show associations but not cause and effect, are corroborated by randomized trials on exercise and colds. In one such experiment involving sedentary postmenopausal women, participants were assigned to either moderately intense exercise (such as brisk walking) five days a week or once-a-week stretching. By the final three months of the 12-month study, those doing the regular exercise reported having substantially fewer colds than the stretchers.

Research in animals and humans suggests that exercise chases away colds by boosting the immune system. At the same time, very intense activities may suppress immunity by increasing levels of the stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline. That perhaps explains why, in one study, runners who participated in a Los Angeles marathon were nearly six times as likely to get sick in the week after the race as runners who did not participate.

Although this is a potential issue for elite athletes or people who do marathons or triathlons, the level of activity among most exercisers — even if it's vigorous — is far more likely to keep colds at bay than bring them on.

### Healthier eyes

When you hear about a connection between exercise and eyesight, maybe you picture those eye exercise programs that promise to sharpen your vision. But that's not what we're talking



## What is the best time to work out?

Some fitness gurus recommend working out first thing in the morning because that's when you're least likely to have scheduling conflicts and therefore more likely to exercise regularly. Plus, early exercisers often say that a morning routine leaves them feeling more energized and productive during the day.

But if you are not a morning person and shudder at the thought of getting out of bed for a 6 a.m. workout, there's good news: People tend to perform best at exercise (especially high-intensity exercise) later in the day.

Research shows that strength and flexibility are greatest in the late afternoon and that perceived exertion (meaning how hard you feel that your body is working) is lowest. Scientists attribute these effects to our circadian rhythm, the body's 24-hour clock, which causes body temperature to rise slightly

throughout the day and peak in late afternoon.

Of course, none of this means that you're doomed to a subpar workout if you exercise in the morning. By doing so consistently, you can eliminate the morning performance gap, according to research, which shows that athletes who train in the morning improve their performance to levels seen in the afternoon. That's worth keeping in mind if you're planning to run, say, a 5K with a 7 a.m. start time. Your performance will be best if you train at that hour.

Some people do aerobic exercise first thing, before they've eaten, because they think it will help them burn more fat. There is some evidence that this practice, sometimes called "fasted cardio," may boost fat burning — but only fleetingly. Over the course of days or weeks (which is what counts), research shows that it doesn't seem to

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2020 • THE WASHINGTON POST

THE BIG NUMBER

**15**  
percent

More than 15 percent of the American adult population is physically inactive, according to a new joint survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state health departments. People classified as inactive said they had not participated in leisure-time physical activity in the past month: No running or walking for exercise. No gardening. No golf. The most inactive state is Mississippi, with 33 percent of its adult residents labeled inactive. The state with the fewest inactive adults is Colorado, at 17.3 percent. (It is one of only four states — plus the District, at 19.8 percent — with less than 20 percent of their residents classified as inactive. The other three states are Oregon, Utah and Washington.) The South is the region with the most inactive residents — 28 percent — compared with 25.6 percent in the Northeast, 25 percent in the Midwest and 20.5 percent in the West. Besides Mississippi, six other states — Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Tennessee — had 30 percent or more of their adult residents reporting no leisure-time physical activity. Research has shown that lack of physical activity makes you more likely to develop high blood pressure and high cholesterol and raises your risk for Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and certain cancers. On the other hand, being active has many benefits, including improving mood, boosting energy, promoting better sleep, controlling or losing weight, building strong bones and muscles and reducing the risk for an array of chronic diseases. It can also help you live longer.

— Linda Searing

THE EXHAUSTION BREAKTHROUGH, HOLLY PHILLIPS

Holly Phillips, a New York internist and frequent talk-show guest, begins her new book with the premise that almost all women are exhausted pretty much all the time. Motherhood is tiring, work is draining, having it all is uber-exhausting. "We're so accustomed to this shared weariness that we dismiss it like a run-of-the-mill windy day," she writes. "I'm intimately familiar with this phenomenon, not just as a physician, but because I was tired for 20 years straight. . . . I'd have about 2½ hours of good energy first thing in the morning, then it would wane for the rest of the day, and it had nothing to do with how long I had slept the night before."

Been there? In a new book, "The Exhaustion Breakthrough," Phillips writes about why women are so fatigued and what they can do about it. Some bits of advice on how to stay energized:

- Eat every three to five hours: "Whether you opt for three square meals and two small snacks or five mini-meals . . . is up to you. Either pattern will help keep your blood sugar steady and your energy level on a more even keel."

- Exercise in the morning: As opposed to those who hit the gym after work, studies show that people who exercise in the morning "have the best sleep patterns . . . including better quality sleep and a lower likelihood of awakening feeling unrefreshed." (They are also "considerably less likely to cancel than those who save their routine for later in the day.")

- Try natural sleep aids: "I frequently use a product called Natural Calm, which contains calcium and magnesium in powder form. . . . These minerals ease stress in the body and promote the release of calming neurotransmitters in the brain, a combination that sets the stage for better sleep."

- Cut or at least manage your alcohol consumption: One of Phillips's patients is a 28-year-old fashion executive who leads what she calls a "Sex in the City" life, and she wasn't sleeping well. As the doctor tells her, alcohol acts as a stimulant a few hours after you stop drinking, so it wakes you up at night. Ideally, the young woman should limit herself to one Cosmopolitan per evening. But, "Because she didn't want to give up her lifestyle, she decided to cut back on the frequency, rather than the quantity, of her drinking so she could have several nights of 'good sleep' per week — a change that improved her energy level overall."

- Breathe smart: How you breathe affects your energy level, Phillips says. During yoga or mild exercise, breathe steadily, in through the nose and out through the mouth. Running: Breathe deeply (use your diaphragm!) through the mouth. Weightlifting: Take a few deep breaths to start, then exhale through your mouth as you lift and inhale through the nose as you lower.

- Be aware that some medications — antibiotics, antihistamines, blood-pressure or cholesterol medications, proton-pump inhibitors and others — can contribute to fatigue and lethargy. If you need these drugs, don't stop taking them, but talk to your doctor about how to counteract their tiring effects.

—Nancy Szokan



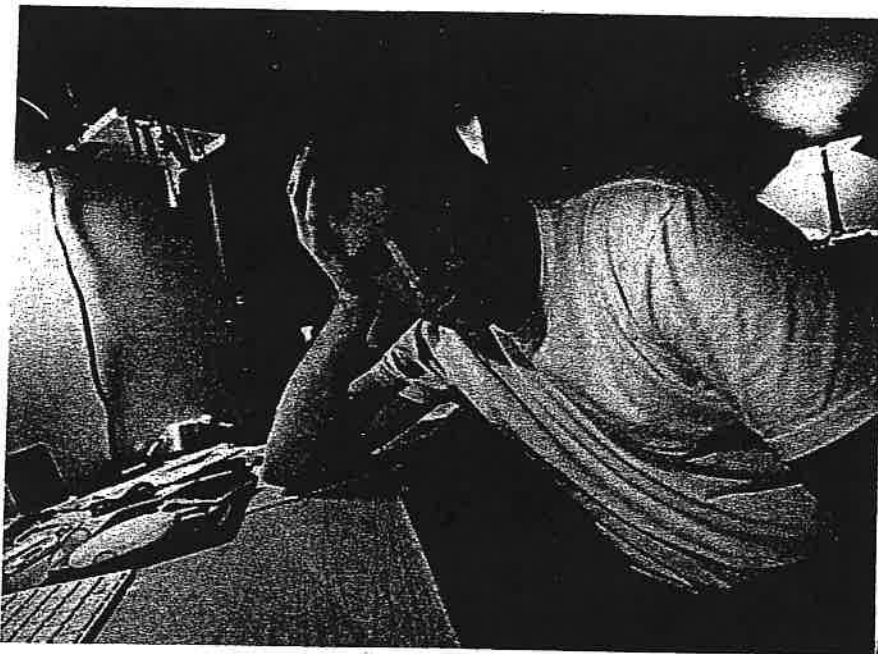
## BUSINESS INSIDER

# Even If You Work Out, Sitting Behind A Desk All Day Is Killing You



CHAI WOODHAM, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT  
MAY 3, 2012, 1:39 PM

Do you exercise every day—pounding the pavement, breaking a sweat, raising your heart rate—all in the name of good health? Well, recent studies suggest that when it comes to your risk of premature death, all that physical activity may not matter as much as you think.



Flickr/William Brawley

Prolonged periods of inactivity—best described as sitting a lot—is unhealthy. Deadly, even. In a survey of some 220,000 adults, those who sat for more than eight hours a day had a 15 percent greater risk of dying within three years than those who sat for fewer than four hours a day, found a March study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*. This risk still held true for those who spent part of their day exercising. The results were worse for those who sat for 11 hours or more a day. They had a 40 percent greater risk of early death compared to those who sat for under four hours. It should be noted,

WASH POST - Fitness JAN. 2019

HEALTH NEWS

## Middle-aged men's cardiorespiratory fitness important in avoiding strokes, study says

Low fitness levels have long been tied to higher risk for heart problems. Now researchers say men's cardiorespiratory fitness is tied to their risk for stroke, as well.

Researchers in Norway followed 2,014 middle-aged men for more than 20 years. Those who were unfit for the whole study period, or who started out fit but became less so, were twice as likely to have a stroke as those who stayed fit or became fit, they reported in the International Journal of Stroke.

"Stroke is a devastating condition that can be lethal and leaves most patients disabled or speech-impaired for life," said lead study author Erik Prestgaard, a doctor with Oslo University Hospital, in a phone interview. "Prevention is important," he added, "and patients can directly change their fitness."

The men in the study were enrolled in 1972-1975 at ages 40 to 59. At the start and again seven years later, their cardiorespiratory fitness was assessed with a bicycle test and with measurements of blood pressure and heart rate. Researchers then followed the men's health for about 24 years through medical records and national registries.

Based on the men's cardiorespiratory fitness trend between the initial assessments seven years apart, about 39 percent of them "remained fit" (which means they maintained an average fitness level throughout). Another 39 percent "remained unfit" (started out below average and stayed there). Eleven percent "became unfit" (dropped from above average), and another 11 percent "became

fit" (improved from below average to above average).

Overall, 199 men had strokes, with the highest risk seen among those who became unfit.

The average age of first stroke was 73 in both of the unfit groups, 75 in the "remained fit" and 77 in the "became fit" groups, the study team said.

Men who had higher fitness levels while younger and became unfit had twice the stroke risk as men who remained fit, the study also found. Similarly, those starting with low fitness levels who became fit cut their stroke risk in half compared with those who stayed unfit.

"You would expect that fitness would reduce the risk of stroke, but we were surprised by the large reduction," Prestgaard said. In further analyses, he said, "each small improvement in fitness helped."

Future studies should confirm these findings using better measures of cardiorespiratory fitness than were available in the 1970s, the authors said.

The recently updated "Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans" says adults should do at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week and muscle-strengthening activities at least two days per week.

"Fitness recognizes no age, and it's never too old to start exercising," said Peter Kokkinos of Veterans Affairs Medical Center of Washington, D.C. "This study shows that exercise benefits last for years, and you can see the difference all the way to 25 years," he said in a phone interview. "Early changes have lasting effects."

— Reuters



***DIETARY HEALTH***  
**STEP #2**

**“We Become What We Eat”**

## EATING HEALTH -STEP

**“We are what we Eat”**

We hear a lot today about healthy foods and healthy diets. There is a myriad of information and studies being published daily on these topics. There are weight loss diets and weight loss programs and healthier foods being served. As we age, we need to continue to eat well/healthy. Our bodies are changing and can't tolerate the eating abuses(junk food) of youth and middle age. As our bodies age, we become more susceptible to diseases like Diabetes Type 2 and cancer. The proper fuel that we now put into our engines becomes more important.

*But first an eating joke to get you in the mood to learn some more( this one will be quick promise).*

**“When do you go on red and stop on green?”**

**When eating a watermelon.8**

8-<https://www.rd.com/jokes/food-jokes/>

**WE consume food in order to obtain energy to live, repair body injuries, and stave off hunger. In addition, most of us are very conscious of “eating well” in order to avoid weight gain, maintain an attractive body appearance or have sufficient energy for our daily lives- so eating becomes a very conscious decision(sometimes unconscious-see step about emotional/psychological step) in our daily lives.**

**However, seniors' bodies are changing regardless of what we do and we have to change with them in order to remain healthy & happy. First of all, we need less calories(fuel) because our bodies are slowing down and we burn less fuel.**

**So let's address a few of these common inevitable “senior” body physical changes and what we need to do about them. But first what are fuels that we consume.**

**There are 5 main sources of food(fuel) that we consume, and within them we obtain our essential carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Try to have food from all 5 groups daily(more detail to come):**

**1-GRAINS-(cereals, whole grains etc.)**

**2-VEGETABLES-(carrots, broccoli, eggplant, tomatoes, onions etc.)**

**3-MEATS(poultry, fish, nuts, beans etc)=Proteins**

**4-DAIRY(reduced fat milk, cheese etc.)**

**5-FRUITS((apples, blueberries, bananas etc).**

*All of these should be consumed with daily intake of water starting first thing in the morning(after brushing teeth remember?).*

Now let's take a look at healthy eating and dieting. The United States Food and Drug Administration recommends that adults consume about 2000 calories a day.<sup>1</sup> This also applies to seniors who are sedentary. However, if you are an active male 70, it is recommended that you consume or need about 2600 calories a day(more muscle which consumes more calories). If you are female consume around 1600 calories if sedentary and 2000 if active.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [www.Shieldhealthcare.com/.../2012/...nutrition](http://www.Shieldhealthcare.com/.../2012/...nutrition) over-70-a-guide-to-senior-dietary-needs.

Let's get away from and change our thinking about calories. They are not weight inducing "fat building" substances but equal ENERGY or FUEL substances. We burn/use calories/energy packets daily and need to replenish them daily. Calories naturally come from our food and healthy eating will provide us with all the energy we need.

Food Sources of Energy-there are four sources of energy which we get from all the foods we eat: carbohydrates, starches, proteins and fats. The major primary supplier of quick & preferred energy are *carbohydrate* foods(called macronutrients or simple carbs) which get converted quickly into sugars or glucose absorbed & burned by our cells.

The others sources of energy(proteins, fats, starches) require more lengthy digestion time, and the body uses these energy sources for other essential health functions like repair of tissues, building cells, fighting disease etc. Many food have combinations of the food resources-they have both carbohydrates and proteins or carbs & proteins & fats (like white rice).

**The major food resources are:**

**Carbohydrate sources:** oats, bananas, blueberries, strawberries, sweet potatoes, rice, etc. (Recommended consumption: 35-65% of daily calories).

**Protein sources:** fish, meat, eggs, dairy, nuts, bananas, blackberries, oats, oranges, peaches (consume 10-35% of your daily calories)

**Starch sources:** bread, potatoes, corn, peas, lentils,, cereal (consume 25% of food calories daily)

**Fat sources:** cheese, nuts, salmon, virgin olive oil, dark chocolate, etc. (consume 25% of food daily)

**We often hear that in order to be on a healthy diet we have to watch our “CARBS”. What exactly are they talking about, and how does this relate to healthy eating or dieting?**

**Let's start with you having a craving for a snack or quick energy boost. You go to the kitchen or your stash drawer and pull out some chocolate or chips, candy bar or granola bar. Or you might go to the refrig and pull out a soda or some ice cream. This is a nice break of your routine and may have emotional/psychological benefits(MBC), but what is it doing for you nutritionally and maybe that diet you are thinking about?**

**First of all, most of these “foods” are *processed*. This means that the manufacturers added chemicals to preserve the food, enhance its taste(with added sugar/salt), and hope you want more calories than you need(try eating just one potato chip) so you will spend more money.**

**A low carb diet limits the number of carbohydrate calories and increases the protein & fat food calories. When we do this we decrease the sugars going in and this limits the calories. If we consume more than 2000 calories a day and are sedentary, we will risk gaining weight.**

***In order to lose weight* use the simple formula: consume less calories, and increase activity. Just remember this: “CONSUME LESS AND BURN MORE”. When you are active you burn calories and the body uses the sugar calories(remember from carbohydrates) first then burns the fats stored in your body. It has been calculated that if we want to lose a pound of fat on our body we have to burn or decrease 3500 calories per week.<sup>3</sup>**

# Do your heart a favor: Eat wisely.

Eating a heart-healthy diet throughout your life can go a long way toward keeping you in top shape as you age. "In fact, heart disease is largely preventable," says Walter Willett, a professor of epidemiology and nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Making a healthy diet, combined with not smoking and exercising regularly, could prevent about 80 percent of heart disease cases.

As a general rule, a heart-healthy diet should focus on whole grains, healthy fats, lean sources of protein and a rainbow of fruits and vegetables. And you should minimize refined carbohydrates, sugar and saturated fats.

But certain foods are particularly heart-smart because they've been specifically linked to clearer arteries, lower cholesterol, lower blood pressure and/or reduced inflammation. Incorporating some of them into your overall healthy diet may help decrease your risk of heart disease.

First, it's not so much about eating more foods (and more calories) to your daily intake as it is about using these heart-healthy options to replace less-healthy ones. "You can't sprinkle nuts on top of a chocolate sundae and think you've done something good for your heart," says Alice Lichtenstein, director and senior scientist at the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at Tufts University.

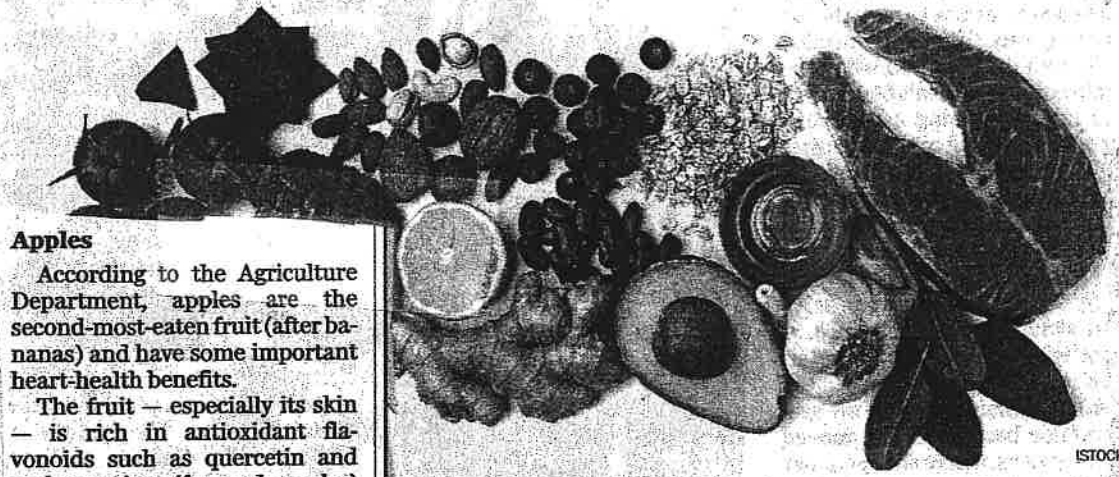
When you're looking for heart-healthy options, here are seven foods that stand out.

## Whole grains

Whole grains are good for your heart. A 2016 analysis of 14 studies published in the journal *Journal of Nutrition* found that for every serving of whole grains consumed daily, the risk of cardiovascular disease dropped by 9 percent (compared with eating no whole grains).

But oatmeal deserves special recognition for its cholesterol-lowering powers. "Oatmeal is particularly rich in soluble fiber," Willett says. "And soluble fiber has been shown to bind to cholesterol and keep it out of the bloodstream."

To get the benefits, you need to have at least three grams of soluble fiber a day — that's the amount in three-quarters of a cup of dry oats.



## Apples

According to the Agriculture Department, apples are the second-most-eaten fruit (after bananas) and have some important heart-health benefits.

The fruit — especially its skin — is rich in antioxidant flavonoids such as quercetin and anthocyanins (for red apples)

that have been linked to cardioprotective effects.

And a 2012 study of 160 postmenopausal women found that those who consumed 75 grams of dried apple daily (equal to about two medium fresh apples) reduced their total cholesterol by 9 percent and LDL cholesterol by 16 percent after three months.

Plus, apples are a top source of soluble fiber.

## Sardines

Fish is the best dietary source of omega-3 fatty acids, a type of fat that may help reduce the risk of heart disease. The American Heart Association recommends eating at least two 3½-ounce servings of fish a week.

Unfortunately, some types of fish that are omega-3-rich have too much mercury (think mackerel or albacore tuna) or are pricey (such as salmon). Sardines are a low-mercury choice and pack nearly 1,000 milligrams of omega-3s in just 3½ ounces. Plus, they're inexpensive and, because they come canned, convenient.

## Walnuts

Nuts are a good source of unsaturated fats as well as fiber, protein and a variety of minerals and antioxidants.

Walnuts in particular may have a slight edge, thanks to their high levels of anti-inflammatory alpha-linolenic acid, a type of omega-3 fat found in plant foods. A study published last year in the *Journal of the American College*

of Cardiology found that people who ate a one-ounce serving of nuts five or more times a week had a 14 percent lower risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) than those who didn't eat nuts. But those who ate one or more servings of walnuts per week had a 19 percent lower risk of CVD.

## Lentils

The category of food known as pulses (which includes lentils, beans, chickpeas and dry peas) is known for its heart-health benefits. These plant-based protein sources are low in fat, high in fiber and rich in nutrients — such as potassium and the B vitamin folate — that have been linked to lower blood pressure.

While you can tap into the power of pulses by eating any variety, lentils have one big advantage: They're fast. Unlike most dried beans that require soaking and at least an hour on the stove, lentils just need a quick rinse and cook in less than 20 minutes.

## Blueberries

Berries (of all kinds) get well-deserved attention for their heart-health benefits. They get their red and blue coloring from antioxidant anthocyanins.

Blueberries have one of the highest levels of anthocyanins, with 120 milligrams per half-cup. Some clinical trials have shown that higher intakes of anthocyanins can help decrease blood pressure, lower LDL cholesterol

and reduce inflammation.

## Kale

Dark leafy greens are a universally healthy food group, rich in many beneficial nutrients. And they all pack high doses of magnesium and potassium, both of which are important for helping to regulate blood pressure.

Among leafy greens, kale stands out for also containing high levels of the antioxidant lutein. Lutein gets a lot of credit for helping to prevent macular degeneration. But several studies have also linked higher levels in the blood to decreased levels of inflammatory markers and atherosclerosis.

Note, though, that kale is high in vitamin K, and eating too much vitamin K can interfere with anticoagulant medications — especially if you suddenly consume a lot of it. So if you take these drugs, check with your doctor before gorging on kale salads.

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CONSUMER REPORTS INSIGHTS

# Coffee is not really a caff-fiend!

**T**he headlines about coffee's impact on your health seem to change as quickly as the time it takes to drink a cup. Should you savor every drop or try to cut down? Here's what we know right now:

**It may lengthen your life.**  
True, coffee drinkers are more likely than nondrinkers to smoke, eat red meat, skimp on exercise and have other life-shortening habits, according to a large 2012 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

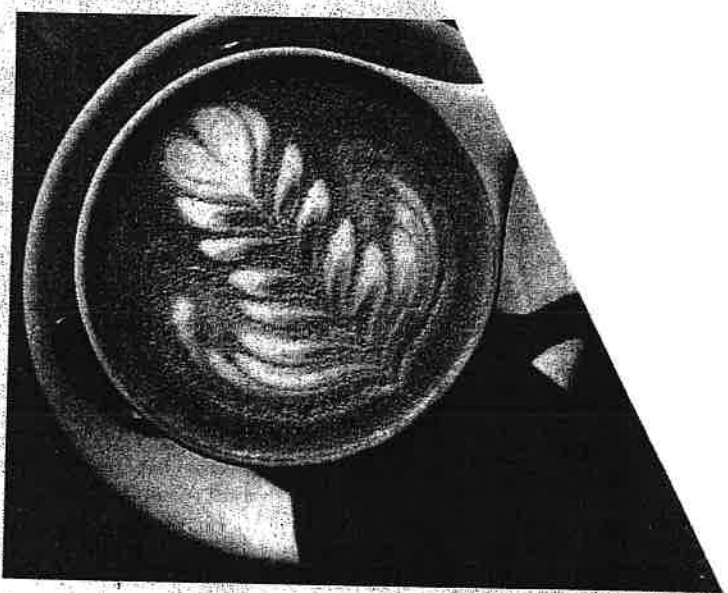
But even after adjusting for such factors, they found that people age 50 to 71 who drank at least one cup of coffee per day had a lower risk than nondrinkers of dying from diabetes, heart disease or other health problems when followed for more than a decade. That may be due to beneficial compounds in coffee such as antioxidants — which might ward off disease — and not caffeine. Decaf drinkers had the same results.

**It may make you happier.**  
Coffee is not just a pick-me-up; it also has been linked to a lower risk of depression. In a study led by the Harvard School of Public Health that tracked 50,000 women for 10 years, those who drank four or more cups of caffeinated coffee per day were 20 percent less likely to develop depression than nondrinkers. Another study found that adults who drank two

to four cups of caffeinated coffee were about half as likely to attempt suicide as decaf drinkers or abstainers. The researchers speculated that long-term coffee drinking may boost the production of "feel good" hormones such as dopamine.

**It contains many good-for-you chemicals.**  
For most Americans who drink coffee, it provides more antioxidants than any other food, according to Joe Vinson, a chemistry professor at the University of Scranton. But it's also a top source of acrylamide, a chemical whose link to cancer is being investigated.

**It may cut your risk for Type 2 diabetes.**  
A recent Harvard-led study of more than 120,000 men and women found that those who increased the amount of caffeinated coffee they drank per day by more than one eight-ounce cup, on average, were 11 percent less likely to develop Type 2 diabetes than those whose coffee habits stayed the same. And those who decreased their daily intake by at least a cup per day, on average, were 17 percent more likely to



BONNIE JO MOUNT/THE WASHINGTON POST

develop the disease.  
**The method matters.**  
Cafestol, a compound in coffee grounds, has been found to increase levels of LDL, or "bad," cholesterol. Brewing with a paper filter helps remove the substance. Coffee made other ways, including French press and espresso, has higher levels of cafestol.

**It's not for everyone.**  
More than 500 milligrams (about four to five cups) of brewed coffee per day can cause side effects including insomnia, irritability and restlessness, says regis-

tered dietitian Maxine Siegel, manager of product usability and foods at Consumer Reports. Caffeine stimulates the central nervous system, heart and muscles. So if you have an anxiety disorder, irritable bowel syndrome or heart disease, or if you take certain medications, watch your consumption or opt for decaf. And if you have acid reflux, you might want to skip coffee altogether because the acidity could exacerbate it.

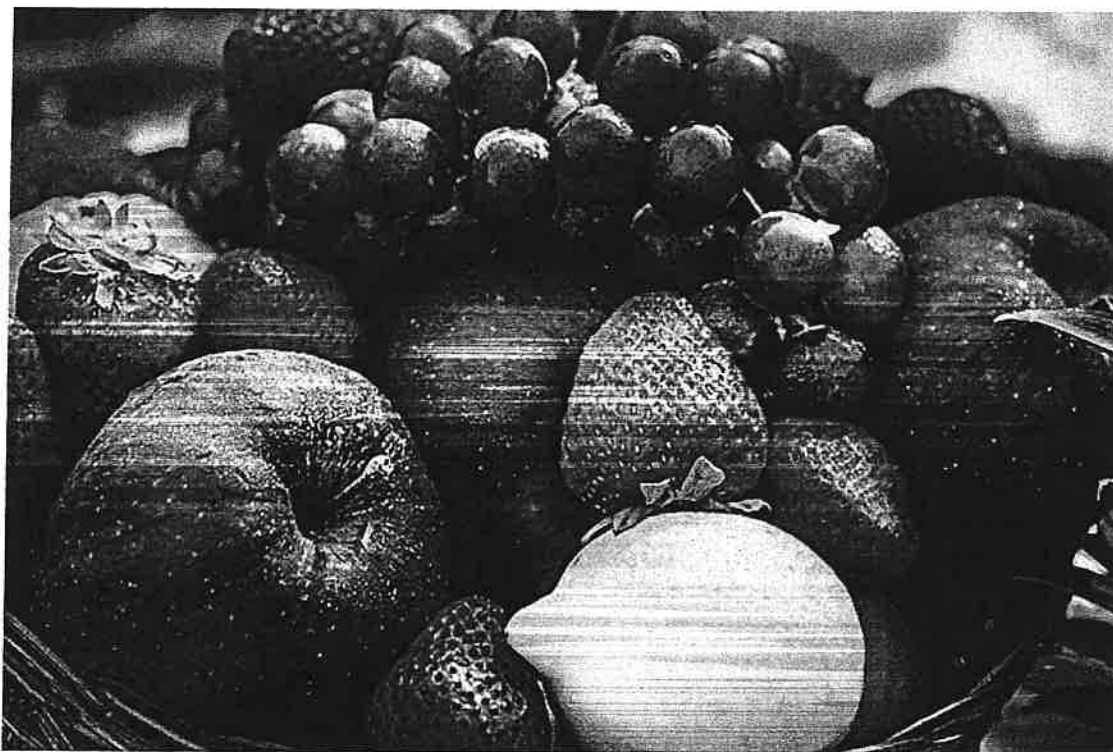
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## The 10 Most Toxic Fruits and Vegetables

Saving a buck by buying nonorganic produce can cost you your health.



*(Photo: Pete Labrozzi/Flickr)*

OCT 7, 2014



Melanie Haiken is a San Francisco Bay Area-based health, science, and travel writer who contributes regularly to Forbes.com and numerous national magazines.

Bio



When trying to keep the grocery bill down, organic produce can seem like an indulgence you just can't afford.

It's true—in most cases, you pay more for fruits and vegetables raised with the extra care it takes to protect plants without chemicals. But what are you really bringing home with those savings? Chemicals known or suspected of causing cancer, harming the brain, and interfering with growth and development—not to mention killing off bee colonies that pollinate the plants in the first place.

Parents in particular should be concerned about pesticides, experts say, because they have a more potent effect on children. In the American Academy of Pediatrics' groundbreaking statement on pesticide exposure in children, the organization warned parents of links to higher levels of childhood cancer, learning disabilities, and behavior problems.

Those health problems can begin before children are even born. Stephen Rauch of British Columbia Children's Hospital studied 300 mothers exposed to organophosphate pesticides during pregnancy and found their babies were born earlier and at lower birth weights than comparable children.

When it comes to pesticides, fungicides, and other chemicals, all crops are by no means equal. Here are the 10 nonorganic fruits and veggies that top the Environmental Working Group's 2014 list of worst offenders.

## ✦ 1. Apples

This lunch bag favorite tops the EWG's list because of the chemical diphenylamine, which growers use to coat apples and





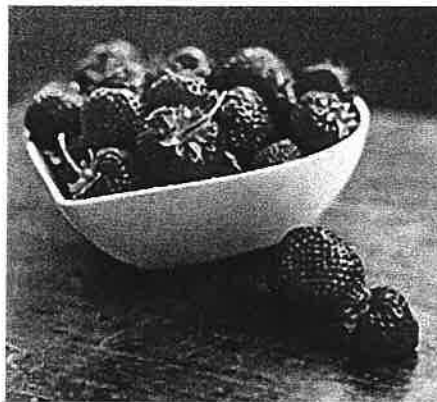
(Photo: Diana Miller/Getty Images)

prevent the skins from darkening from “storage scald” while in cold storage. According to USDA tests, 80 percent of the apples sampled tested positive for DPA. The European Union banned DPA in 2012 because of the risk that the chemical could combine with nitrogen to produce

nitrosamines, which are known to be serious carcinogens. This spring the European Commission restricted DPA on imported fruit to 0.1 part per million; the average concentration of DPA on American apples is four times that. (Apple juice, applesauce, and some pears also tested positive for DPA.)

## 2. Strawberries

To keep these low-lying berries pest- and disease-free, growers use fumigants, most commonly methyl bromide, chloropicrin, and Telone (1,3-D). All of these have been linked to developmental issues, cancer, and hormone disruption in children, according to the Pesticide Action Network North America. Even worse is the fumigant methyl bromide, which the EPA banned in 2012 but can still be used while farmers’ stocks last.



(Photo: Deborah Pendell/Getty Images)

## 3. Grapes

Would you believe that a single grape





(Photo: Getty Images)

tested positive for 15 pesticides? Perhaps the most serious is chlorpyrifos, an insecticide known to sicken farmworkers and others living or working close to fields. Immediate exposure to chlorpyrifos causes coughing, shortness of breath, headache, nausea, dizziness, and disorientation. Studies have shown that long-term exposure is toxic to the

brain, particularly affecting brain development in children.

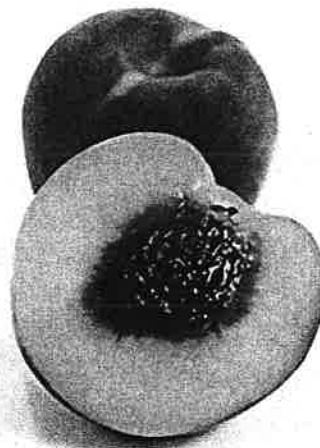
(Chlorpyrifos is also commonly sprayed on citrus fruit and nuts.) Two weeks ago, the National Resources Defense Council and PANNA sued the EPA in an attempt to ban the use of chlorpyrifos.

#### 4. Celery

This seemingly innocuous vegetable tests high in dicloran and acephate, both possible carcinogens, along with a laundry list of other pesticides and fungicides.

#### 5. Peaches and Nectarines

If you've ever seen a backyard peach tree, you've probably seen peach leaf curl, brown rot, or one of the many other diseases and pests that afflict these trees. Hence the high number of pesticides and fungicides needed to get a high yield of stone fruit to market in unblemished condition. USDA data show that 96



(Photo: Rosemary Calvert/Getty Images)

percent of all peaches and 100 percent of imported nectarines test positive for pesticide residue.

## 6. Spinach



*(Photo: UpperCut Images/Getty Images)*

Among the pesticides used on spinach (and lettuce) are acetamiprid and imidacloprid, two pesticides from the family known as neonicotinoids that are known neurotoxins. Also commonly used on celery, grapes, apples, spinach, lettuce, and most cruciferous vegetables (such as cauliflower,

cabbage, and broccoli), neonicotinoids are now restricted in Europe because of their effect on brain development in children.

## 7. Bell Peppers

Residues of 15 pesticides were found on bell peppers, among them neurotoxic neonicotinoids, which harm bee colonies as well as people.

## 8. Cucumbers

Among the 86 pesticides found on cucumbers were neurotoxins, suspected hormone disruptors, and probable carcinogens. Of particular concern is carbendazim, a fungicide that's considered a probable carcinogen. Carbendazim has been turning up in orange juice and many other food products, prompting FDA consumer health warnings.

## 9. Cherry Tomatoes

The many pesticides and fungicides used to keep tomatoes disease-free include insecticides known as endosulfins, which can pose a danger to the central nervous system.

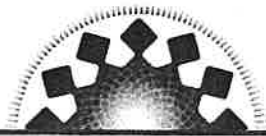
## 10. Kale, Collards, and Other Leafy Greens

While the amount of pesticide detected on these greens was not as worrisome as on other produce, the types of pesticides detected were.

*(Photo: Rita Maas/Getty Images)*

According to tests by USDA, three insecticides banned from use on most crops—acephate, chlorpyrifos, and oxamyl—were found on kale, collards, and other greens (and on hot peppers), earning them the EWG's Dirty Dozen Plus rating.

To learn more about what's on the food you eat, use Pesticide Action Network's handy database (available as an app too) to check items on your shopping list before buying them.



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## 20 Ingredients To Memorize and Avoid In Any Food You Consume



Marco Torres, [Prevent Disease](#)

### Waking Times

Artificial flavors, colors, [preservatives](#), emulsifiers, [sweeteners](#) have saturated the food supply for more than four decades. We are on the precipice of discovering what our [toxic food industry](#) has done to our bodies and our environment. There is a heightened awareness and a sense of caution on the minds of most grocery shoppers, so let's make it easier for them. Here are 25 of the most common toxic ingredients you must avoid in foods. The discovery of even one of these ingredients on a food label means "stay away."

This list is by no means all inclusive as there are dozens of other culprits, but these are the most commonly used by the food industry with little regard to consumer's health.

### **1. Artificial Flavors**

Artificial flavorings are derived from chemicals made in a laboratory and offer absolutely no nutritional value and are a magnet for processed foods. They show up in almost everything today, including bread, cereals, flavored yogurt, soups mixes, and cocktail mixers, so they can be hard to avoid. Every single artificial flavor in the food industry has some kind of detrimental health effect. These include neurotoxicity, organ, developmental, reproductive toxicity and cancer.

### **2. Enriched Wheat**

Wheat is already one of those grains that should be avoided, but the key word to watch out for is 'enrichment'. That means niacin, thiamine, riboflavin, folic acid, and iron are added after these and other key nutrients are stripped out in the first place during the refining process. That applies to whether it's wheat, rye, or other grains. Enriched flour is really just refined flour that has had a few nutrients re-added to it, but not enough to make any food made from this nutritionally worthy.

### **3. Hydrogenated or Fractionated Oils**

Fractionating oil is a process most often used on palm and palm kernel oil that involves heating the oil, then cooling it quickly so that it breaks up into fractions (hence the name). The key thing is that the filtration process separates out most of the liquid part of the oil, leaving a high concentration of solid unhealthy fat behind which is terribly toxic for human consumption.

Hydrogenated oils are oils that are often healthy in their natural state, but are quickly turned into poisons through the manufacturing and processing they undergo. They take these naturally healthy oils such as palm, kernel, soybean, corn oil, canola oil or [coconut oil](#) and they heat it anywhere from five hundred to one thousand degrees. They then become fantastic preservatives because all the enzymatic activity in the oil has been neutralized during the hydrogenating process. Hydrogenated oils are the

closest thing you can get to plastic sludge running through your body. If you see "hydrogenated" anywhere on an ingredient list, run like the wind.

#### 4. Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)

The food additive "MSG" is a slow poison which hides behind dozens of names, such as natural flavoring, yeast extract, autolyzed yeast extract, disodium guanylate, disodium inosinate, caseinate, textured protein, hydrolyzed pea protein and many others. Currently, labeling standards do not require MSG to be listed in the ingredient list of thousands of foods.

MSG is not a nutrient, vitamin, or mineral and has no health benefits. The part of MSG that negatively affects the human body is the "glutamate", not the sodium. The bound glutamic acid in certain foods (corn, molasses, wheat) is broken down or made "free" by various processes (hydrolyzed, autolyzed, modified or fermented with strong chemicals, bacteria, or enzymes) and refined to a white crystal that resembles sugar.

There are a growing number of Clinicians and Scientists who are convinced that excitotoxins play a critical role in the development of several neurological disorders, including migraines, seizures, infections, abnormal neural development, certain endocrine disorders, specific types of obesity, and especially the neurodegenerative diseases; a group of diseases which includes: ALS, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's disease, and olivopontocerebellar degeneration.

#### 5. Sugar

The single largest source of calories for Americans comes from sugar. Sugar is loaded into your soft drinks, fruit juices, sports drinks, and hidden in almost all processed foods—from bologna to pretzels to Worcestershire sauce to cheese spread. And now most infant formula has the sugar equivalent of one can of Coca-Cola, so babies are being metabolically poisoned from day one if taking formula. Sugar changes metabolism, raises blood pressure, critically alters the signaling of hormones and causes significant damage to the liver — the least understood of sugar's damages. These health hazards largely mirror the effects of drinking too much alcohol, which they point out in their commentary is the distillation of sugar. If it's not a natural sugar, it doesn't belong in your food.

#### 6. High Fructose Corn Syrup

A few years ago, the Corn Refiners Association petitioned the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to allow the term 'corn sugar' as an alternative label declaration for high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). The reason? Too many people were finding out how lethal HFCS was for the human body.

HFCS causes insulin resistance, diabetes, hypertension, increased weight gain, and not to mention manufactured from genetically modified corn.

#### 7. Potassium Benzoate and Sodium Benzoate

Sodium Benzoate can convert into lethal carcinogenic poison when combined with ascorbic acid. Professor Peter Piper, a professor of molecular biology and biotechnology, tested the impact of sodium benzoate on living yeast cells in his laboratory. What he found alarmed him: the benzoate was damaging an important area of DNA in the "power station" of cells known as the mitochondria. "These chemicals have the ability to cause severe damage to DNA in the mitochondria to the point that they totally inactivate it: they knock it out altogether," he stated.

Potassium benzoate often shows up in seemingly innocuous foods such as apple cider, low-fat salad dressings, syrups, jams, olives, and pickles. It is just as hazardous as Sodium Benzoate so read your labels.

#### 8. Artificial Coloring

Food colorings still on the market are linked with cancer. Blue 1 and 2, found in beverages, candy, baked goods, and baked goods, has been shown to cause thyroid tumors and bladder cancer. The widely used yellow 6, added to beverages, sausage, gelatin, baked goods, and candy, has been linked to tumors of the adrenal gland and kidney.

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#### 9. Acesulfame-K

Acesulfame-K, also known as acesulfame potassium, represents one of the food additives used for sweetening aliments and drinks. It is approved by the FDA, but there are several potential problems correlated with consumption of this food additive. Even though there are many studies that attest its safety, acesulfame potassium is still suspected of causing benign thyroid tumors. In rats, the development of such tumors took only 3 months, a period in which the concentration of this additive in the consumed food was between 1 and 5 percent. This is a very short period of time, so the substance is believed to have significant carcinogenic properties. Methylene chloride, a solvent used in the manufacture of acesulfame potassium, is the substance that may give the food additive its potential carcinogenic characteristics.

#### 10. Sucralose

Splenda/sucralose is simply chlorinated sugar, a chlorocarbon. Common chlorocarbons include carbon tetrachloride, trichlorethelene and methylene chloride, all deadly. Chlorine is nature's Doberman attack dog, a highly excitable, ferocious atomic element employed as a biocide in bleach, disinfectants, insecticide, WWI poison gas and hydrochloric acid. Chlorocarbons are never nutritionally compatible with our metabolic processes and are wholly incompatible with normal human metabolic functioning. Sucralose is a very common additive in protein mixes and drinks so beware all of you who love to add these into your smoothies.

#### 11. Aspartame

The sale of aspartame, with only four calories per gram and 200 times sweeter than sugar, is sold under the trademarks NutraSweet and Equal. Results indicate that aspartame is a multi-potential carcinogen, even consumed daily at 20 milligrams per kilogram of body weight. That is a lower quantity than the maximum recommended by the FDA. It's one reason you should never purchase major brands of chewing gums.

#### 12. BHA and BHT

Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA) and butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT) are used to preserve common household foods. Any processed food that has a long shelf life is often filled with BHA. They are found in cereals, chewing gum, potato chips, and vegetable oils. They are oxidants, which form potentially cancer-causing reactive compounds in your body.

#### 13. Propyl Gallate

Another preservative, often used in conjunction with BHA and BHT. It is sometimes found in meat products, chicken soup base, and chewing gum. Animals studies have suggested that it could be linked to cancer.

#### 14. Sodium Chloride

A dash of sodium chloride, more commonly known as salt, is the culprit that the mainstream media and medical community claim we should stay away from. They're right, but only because it's not real salt. Common table salt (sodium chloride) has almost nothing in common with traditional rock or sea salt. If a food label lists salt, or sodium chloride as an ingredient, that's the bad stuff and you need to avoid these foods wherever possible.

### 15. Soy

Although it's often lauded as a healthy, cholesterol-free, cheap, low-fat protein alternative to meat, soy is NOT a health food. Any foods that list soy in any form as an ingredient should be avoided. Soy protein, soy isolate, and soy oil are present in about 60 percent of the foods on the market and have been shown to impair fertility and affect estrogen in women, lower sex drive, and trigger puberty early in children. Soy can also add to the imbalance between omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids.

The only soy products fit for human consumption are fermented and organic and I can guarantee you will never find this type of soy in any processed foods. The majority of soy is GMO and you can't get around this. Regardless of who I am speaking with, soy is one of those foods I use to gauge the nutritional IQ of others. You would not believe how many health practitioners and even Naturopathic Doctors still think soy is a health food. Please don't touch this stuff.

### 16. Corn

We are at the point where all corn products, including fresh corn should be avoided. The percentage of genetically modified corn is just far too high. You will never know if you are actually consuming organic corn. Modified cornstarch, dextrose, maltodextrin, and corn oil should all be avoided. All are high in omega-6 fatty acids, which can promote inflammation, cancer, and heart disease. While your body needs both omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids to perform at its full potential, most experts recommend an omega-6 to omega-3 ratio of 1:1—currently most Americans consume about 15-20 times more omega-6 acids than omega-3s.

### 17. Potassium Sorbate

As one of the most prolific preservatives in the food industry, it is difficult to find an ice cream without potassium sorbate. However, it is not only recommended to avoid this chemical, it's a necessity to eliminate it from our foods. The food industry and its scientists will parrot endless myths that potassium sorbate is not a health threat because of its safety record and non-toxic profile. This could not be further from the truth.

Food and chemical toxicology reports have labeled potassium sorbate as a carcinogen, showing positive mutation results in the cells of mammals. Other studies have shown broad systemic and toxic effects on non-reproductive organs in animals. No long term studies have ever been initiated on either animals or humans, so there is simply not enough evidence to theorize what could happen after years of ingesting this preservative. However, based on short-term carcinogenic and toxic effects, is it worth the risk to find out?

### 18. Soy Lecithin

Soy Lecithin has been lingering around our food supply for over a century. It is an ingredient in literally hundreds of processed foods, and also sold as an over the counter health food supplement. However, most people don't realize what soy lecithin actually is, and why the dangers of ingesting this additive far exceed its benefits.

Soybean lecithin comes from sludge left after crude soy oil goes through a "degumming" process. It is a waste product containing solvents and pesticides. The toxic hexane extraction process is what is commonly used in soybean oil manufacture today. Another big problem associated with soy lecithin comes from the origin of the soy itself. Look out for this emulsifier in ice creams, chocolate and many processed creams.

### 19. Polysorbate 80

Polysorbate 80 has been found to negatively affect the immune system and cause severe anaphylactic shock which can kill. Food and Chemical Toxicology has shown that Polysorbate 80 causes infertility. It accelerates maturing, causes changes to the vagina and womb lining, hormonal changes, ovary deformities and degenerative follicles. What is very suspicious about this ingredient is its addition to vaccines. Scientists are obviously aware of its ability to cause infertility yet it continues to appear in children's vaccines. You will also commonly find this in a child's favorite treat, ice cream.

### 20. Canola oil

Canola or rapeseed oil is poisonous to living things and is an excellent insect repellent. It is an industrial oil, not a food. It is a genetically modified plant designed through intensive breeding and genetic engineering techniques. The Canadian government and industry paid the FDA \$50 million dollars to have canola oil placed on the (GRAS) List, "Generally Recognized As Safe". It is becoming increasingly difficult to find products that do not contain Canola oil. Please do not buy any food product containing canola oil.

#### About the Author

Marco Torres is a research specialist, writer and consumer advocate for healthy lifestyles. He holds degrees in Public Health and Environmental Science and is a professional speaker on topics such as disease prevention, environmental toxins and health policy.

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# Why you need to get enough vitamin D in winter

BY MARGHERITA T. CANTORNA

Winter is upon us and so is the risk of vitamin D deficiency and infections. Vitamin D — which is made in our skin following sunlight exposure and also found in oily fish (mackerel, tuna and sardines), mushrooms and fortified dairy and nondairy substitutes — is essential for good health. Humans need vitamin D to keep healthy and to fight infections. The irony is that in winter, when people need vitamin D the most, most of us are not getting enough. So how much should we take? Should we take supplements?

## *Vitamin D plays a big role in maintaining health in the gastrointestinal tract.*

How do we get more? And, who needs it most?

I am a medical microbiologist and immunologist who studies the functions of vitamin D in immune cells. My laboratory has been interested in figuring out why the immune system has vitamin D receptors that determine which cells can use vitamin D. In the immune system, vitamin D acts to improve your ability to fight infections and to reduce inflammation.

### **The right foods, supplements**

Vitamin D is called the sunshine vitamin since it is made in the skin after exposure to sun. The same UVB rays that cause a sunburn also make vitamin D. Sunscreen, darker skin pigmentation, clothing and reduced daylight in winter diminish the skin's ability to make vitamin D. The people who experience the biggest seasonal swings

in vitamin D levels are fair-skinned individuals living in the northern regions of the United States and at higher latitudes around the globe where there is very little daylight in winter.

But those most at risk for low vitamin D levels are people of color and people living at higher latitudes. Dark-skinned individuals are more likely than fair-skinned individuals to be low for vitamin D year-round because the darker skin blocks the UVB rays from producing vitamin D. But even in dark-skinned individuals, vitamin D is lowest in the winter.

In the winter, in addition to high vitamin D food, adults should take additional vitamin D from foods or supplements to get at least 600 IU per day of vitamin D. People who have dark skin or avoid sunshine should eat more vitamin D year-round.

### **Good for bones, microbes**

Originally, doctors thought vitamin D was important only for bone health. This was because the vitamin D deficiency caused bone diseases such as rickets in children and osteoporosis in adults. But in the 1980s, scientists discovered that immune cells had receptors for vitamin D.

My group's research has shown that vitamin D plays an important role in maintaining health in the gastrointestinal tract. Higher levels of vitamin D reduce susceptibility to inflammatory bowel disease and Crohn's disease, gut and lung infections in animals and people.

My colleagues and I have discovered that one of the ways vitamin D functions is by keeping the microbes in the gut healthy and happy. Vitamin D increases the number and diversity of microbes living in the gut, which together reduce inflammation throughout the body.

Low vitamin D levels are associated with inflammatory bowel disease in humans. Researchers have



A woman enjoys the sunshine at a ski resort. In the winter, people have a reduced ability to make vitamin D when they go outside.

found that inflammatory bowel disease patients in Japan have more symptoms in winter than during other seasons.

### **The vitamin's importance**

In the winter, humans are exposed to more infections and spend less time outside. Exactly how much vitamin D healthy adults should have is debated. Some authorities recommend from 200 IU per day to 2,000 IU per day. In the United States, the Institutes of Medicine recommends 600 to 800 IU per day for adults, while the Endocrine Society states that optimal vitamin D status may require 1500 to 2,000 IU per day.

In the winter, people have a reduced ability to make vitamin D when they go outside, so amounts of at least 600 IU per day of vitamin D from food or supplements would help maintain vitamin D status at summer levels.

But, like many things, too much vitamin D can be harmful. Vitamin D toxicity — which can cause bone pain, kidney stones, vomiting, other symptoms — does not result from too much sun or food.

Because of the risk of skin cancer, dermatologists and other health professionals do not recommend unprotected sun exposure to boost your vitamin D. Instead, they suggest supplements. But vitamin D toxicity can occur if an individual takes too much.

The experts that set the national intakes of vitamin D for the United States recommend adult individuals take no more than 4,000 IU per day of vitamin D to avoid toxic side effects. Vitamin D helps you absorb calcium from your diet, but when vitamin D is too high, calcium levels in the blood go up and that can lead to kidney disease.

By consuming more vitamin D during the winter, your gut microbes will be healthier, and you'll be more resistant to infection and inflammation year-round.

[health-science@washpost.com](mailto:health-science@washpost.com)

Margherita T. Cantorna is distinguished professor of molecular immunology at Pennsylvania State University. She receives funding from the National Institutes of Health. This report was originally published on [theconversation.com](http://theconversation.com).

The Washington Post - Health & Science - 1/21/20

E-3



"... [T]he substantial impact of sugar consumption found in the study was mainly due to the costs of treating caries and other diseases of the hard tissue of teeth, hypertensive and cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, rectal and colon cancer, as well as chronic kidney disease."

### Ketogenic Diet May Be Key to Cancer Recovery

## How Excess Sugar and Obesity Promotes Cancer

One of the key mechanisms by which sugar promotes cancer and other chronic disease is by causing mitochondrial dysfunction.

Since sugar is not our ideal fuel, it burns dirty with far more reactive oxygen species than fat, which generates far more free radicals which in turn causes mitochondrial and nuclear DNA damage along with cell membrane and protein impairment.

Research<sup>6</sup> has also shown that chronic overeating in general has a similar effect. Most people who overeat also tend to eat a lot of sugar-laden foods — a double-whammy in terms of cancer risk.

Chronic overeating places stress on the endoplasmic reticulum (ER), the membranous network found inside the mitochondria of your cells. When the ER receives more nutrients than it can process, it signals the cell to dampen the sensitivity of the insulin receptors on the surface of the cell.

Thus continuously eating more than your body really needs promotes insulin resistance by the mere fact that your cells are stressed by the work placed on them by the excess nutrients. Insulin resistance in turn is at the heart of most chronic disease, including cancer.

## ★ High-Fructose Corn Syrup Primary Culprit in Cancer

This also helps explain why intermittent fasting (as well as other forms of calorie restriction) is so effective for reversing insulin resistance, reducing your risk of cancer, and increasing longevity.

Obesity, caused by a combination of eating too much refined fructose/sugar and rarely if ever fasting, may also promote cancer via other mechanisms, including chronic inflammation and elevated production of certain hormones, such as estrogen, which is associated with an increased risk for breast cancer.

According to recent research,<sup>7,8</sup> from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, refined sugar not only significantly increases your risk of breast cancer, it also raises your risk of tumors spreading to other organs.

Moreover, this study found that it was primarily the refined fructose in high-fructose corn syrup, found in most processed foods and beverages that was responsible for the breast tumors and the metastasis.

## ★ Without Sugar, Cancer Cannot Thrive ★

One of the most powerful strategies I know of to avoid and/or treat cancer is to starve the cancer cells by depriving them of their food source, which is primarily *sugar* and excessive protein.

Unlike all the other cells in your body, which can burn carbs or fat for fuel, cancer cells have lost that metabolic flexibility and can *only* thrive if there enough sugar present.

Dr. Otto Warburg was actually given a Nobel Prize in 1931 for discovering this. Sadly very few experts have embraced his metabolic theory of cancer, but have embraced the nuclear genetic theory that is a downstream side effect of mitochondrial dysfunction.

Make no mistake about it, the **FIRST** thing you want to do if you want to avoid or treat cancer if you have insulin

# EXPLORE HEALTH

The pungent sulfur compounds in cabbage appear to give it cancer-fighting properties.

DHA—a type of omega-3 fatty acid found in fish oil—boosts brain power.

## EAT, DRINK, AND BE WARY

By Catherine Zuckerman

If only it were as simple as “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” Nutrition scientists are in fact constantly scrutinizing the health properties of foods. Everything on this page, along with olive oil and tea, has been the subject of more than 20 studies in the past 25 years, says physician Michael Roizen, chief wellness officer at the Cleveland Clinic. Why? “They either have unexpected benefits,” he says, “or are commonly consumed but may have risks.”

Some foods—like pomegranates and pistachios in the U.S.—rise to nutrition fame because a large company that dominates the production and sales pays for much of the research. But sponsored studies can shade the science, says Roizen. The National Dairy Council, for instance, “has a huge marketing arm,” allowing it to widely promote the genuinely nutritious aspects of milk, yogurt, cheese, and more. Some dairy products

contain a compound called lecithin, long considered healthy. However, it interacts with gut bacteria to produce the damaging compound trimethylamine, which causes inflammation and can lead to disease. Egg yolks also have lecithin in them, so Roizen advises minimal intake.

Highly studied foods are not always the ones you should eat. Roizen suggests avoiding low-carb diets that emphasize butter, cheese, and lots of meat. Even healthy-sounding grass-fed beef contains carnitine, another trimethylamine producer. “The protein is not different whether it’s grass-fed or grain-fed.” Red wine or a generous splash of unadulterated extra-virgin olive oil—two top-studied foods—can slightly mitigate the negative effects of meat and dairy. But alcohol is hazardous, and olive oil is high in calories.

The best bet, says Roizen, is to follow science, not sensation. Eat vegetables. Instead of meat, choose salmon or ocean trout—they have more good fish oil than most other high-fat, low-mercury species. Drink black coffee (it can be good for the liver). Snack on nuts, but not too many. And for dessert: a bite of dark chocolate.

Nuts are known to reduce risk of cancer, heart disease, and stroke.

REBECCA HALE, NGM STAFF

***PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL HEALTH***  
**STEP #3**

***“Be Social, Nap, Play, Destress, Communicate, Be with Family”***

## Major Mood Neurotransmitters

**Endorphins:** a group of hormones produced in the pituitary gland that converge on brain sensory receptors to lessen feelings of pain or stress, or add to its positive feelings.

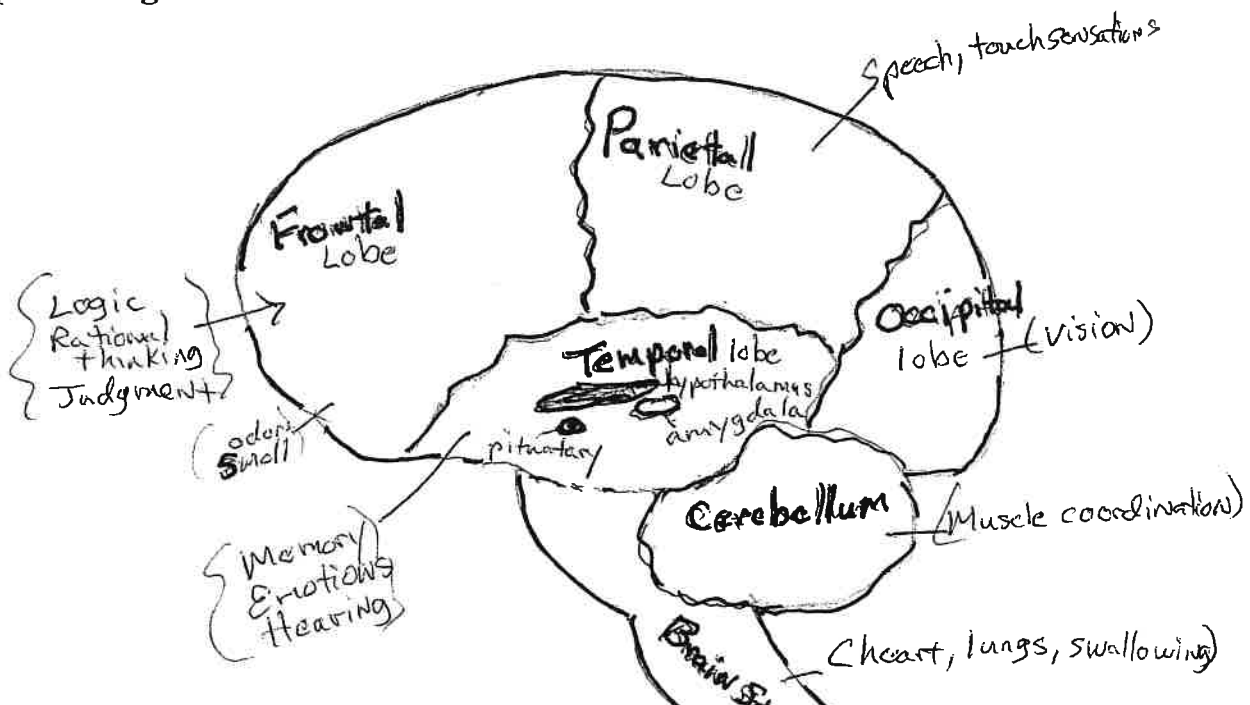
**Serotonin-**a neurotransmitter mostly produced in the hypothalamus and gastrointestinal tract (GI), and nerves which help regulate appetite, sleep, memory, sex drive and mood. (Shortage of it in brain or weak receptors can lead to depression.)

**Dopamine-**A neurotransmitter produced in hypothalamus area that helps control mood greatly influenced by rewards and can lead to addiction-food, sex, happiness, & other pleasures.

**Oxytocin-**a neurotransmitter produced in the brain's hypothalamus & released by pituitary gland most of the time as a result of sex, childbirth, lactation & interpersonal happiness.(wedding oxytocin levels)= Love Hormone.

**Cortisol-**produced in adrenal glands(on top of kidneys) and its release used to control stress situations.

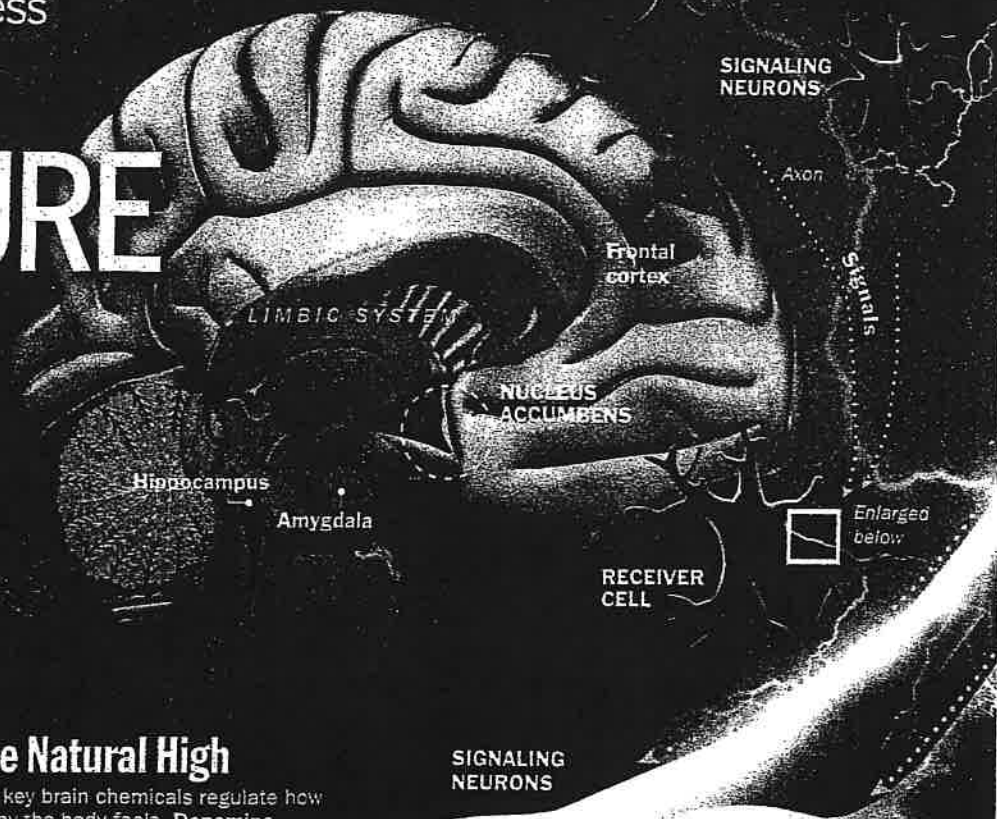
**Adrenaline-**produced in adrenal glands after stimulated by hypothalamus signal in brain. This hormone increases heart and lung rates, and flow of blood to peripheral organs.



mind & body happiness

# The Paths to PLEASURE

We all know what it feels like: the delight in a mouthful of chocolate, the afterglow of a good workout. A look at two systems in the brain that, with the right natural or artificial stimulus, conjure these sensations

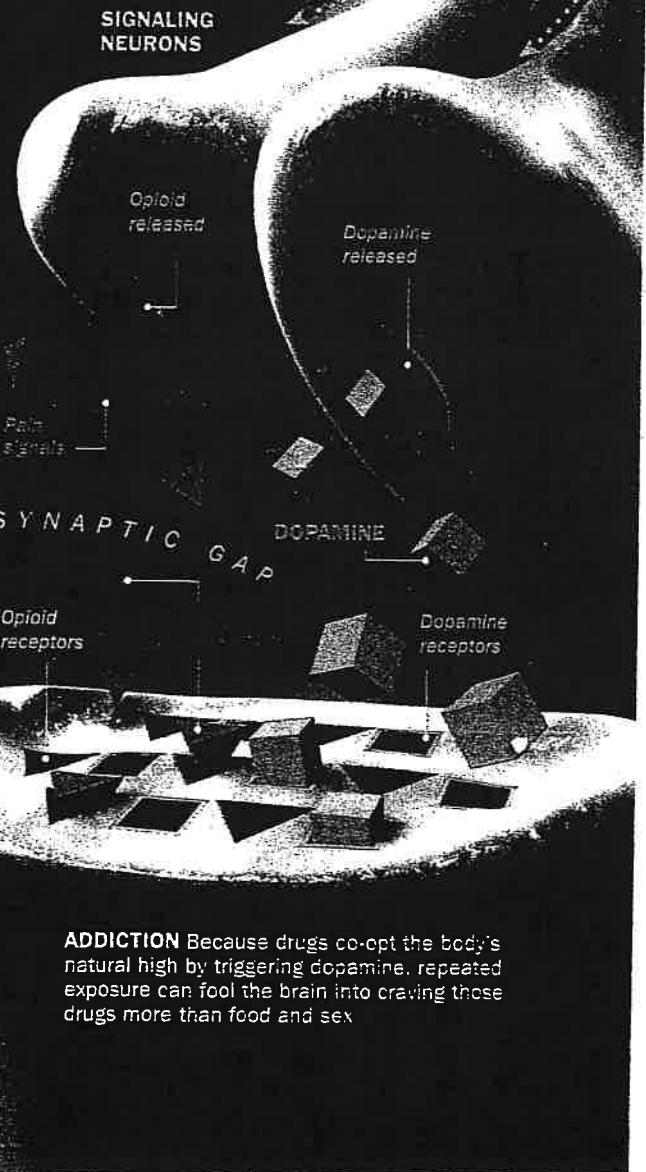


## The Natural High

Two key brain chemicals regulate how happy the body feels. **Dopamine**, which is released in the **nucleus accumbens** and the **frontal cortex**, bathes neurons involved in memory and emotion, rewarding activities like eating and sex with pleasurable feelings. **Endorphins**, which are chemically similar to morphine, promote pleasure by dampening pain and producing a high

**DOPAMINE** Once released, it floods the **synaptic gap** between nerve endings and binds to **receptors** on adjacent cells. With more dopamine, more neurons involved in memory and emotion are activated, reinforcing feelings of joy

**OPPIOIDS** Physical stress, such as a long run, stimulates **pain signals**. In response, neurons release **opioids**, such as **endorphins**, preventing the signals from reaching nearby cells and producing pleasure elsewhere in the brain



## The Artificial Buzz

Drugs can alter the brain's normal reward circuit, making it harder to feel pleasure without help

**OPPIOIDS** mimic opioids by binding to the same receptors, blocking pain and producing a feeling of euphoria

**COCAINE** triggers the release of dopamine in the nucleus accumbens to produce a very powerful high

**ALCOHOL AND NICOTINE** affect both endorphin and dopamine circuits in more roundabout ways

**ADDICTION** Because drugs co-opt the body's natural high by triggering dopamine, repeated exposure can fool the brain into craving those drugs more than food and sex

Illustration: UT Southwestern Text by Kristina De...

Time Mag. 1/5/05

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a Therapist City or Zip



**Mari**

iAge

## Brain Plasticity in Older Adults

Learning new tricks in older age.

Posted Apr 27, 2013

Source:

Our brains can continue to grow at any age. One of the startling revelations of the 21st century is the improvement in our knowledge of nerve cell development among older adults. Known as neurogenesis or brain (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/neuroscience>) plasticity, this new knowledge is showing us that the brain has the ability to CHANGE throughout life by forming new connections between brain cells, and to alter function. For a long time, it was assumed that as we become older, the connections in the brain became fixed, and then it was just a matter of time that we started "losing" brain cells. However this assumption is being aggressively challenged by recent studies showing that the brain never stops changing.

This evidence comes from a number of different observations. In a study of London taxi drivers who are learning some 25,000 streets, researchers found that compared with bus drivers (who had a fixed route), taxi drivers' brains changed, with more brain cells growing in one part of their brain that is related to knowledge of maps. This study shows that the brain is an active neurological mechanism and not just a warehouse for cells. The brain is more than a reserve gas tank, switching from tank A to tank B, but has 'plasticity', a flexibility that can change the capacity and function of specific areas.

Plasticity can also be observed in the brains of people who speak more than one language. It appears that learning a second language is possible through functional changes in the brain: the left back part of the brain is larger in bilingual speakers than in the brains of those who just speak one language. Differences also occur in musicians' brains compared to those of non-musicians. Brain volume was highest in

professional musicians, intermediate in amateur musicians, and lowest in non-musicians in several brain areas. Finally, extensive learning of abstract information can also trigger some changes in the brain. By looking at the brains of German medical students three months before their medical exam and right after the exam, then comparing them to brains of students who were not studying for exam, students' brains showed changes in regions known to be involved in memory (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/memory>) retrieval and learning.

This growing evidence is popularizing the idea that the adult brain is more malleable than assumed and that it can regenerate throughout life. Decreased mental capacity is something that occurs through physical and functional changes in the brain. It can be avoided and even reversed through a variety of environmental enrichment activities, including physical and mental training exercises. The secret is to challenge the brain, to do novel and stimulating tasks that do not rely on established ways of doing things.

A number of new computer programs can help accomplish this. San Diego County is lucky to have a community college system for older adults that offer these programs for free. Working with Pat Mosteller, SDSU gerontology program is looking at how effective these programs are among older adults of different ethnic backgrounds. Other novel things you can do independently—start writing with your opposite hand, learn an exotic language, listen to bird songs and figure out what birds they are, learn to play an instrument, or learn mathematics.

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## About the Author



**Mario Garrett, Ph.D.** is a professor at the school of social work at San Diego State University.

[\(/experts/mario-d-garrett-phd\)](https://www.psychologytoday.com/experts/mario-d-garrett-phd)

If skipping sleep causes so much damage, why do we think we can shake it off? People who regularly skimp on sleep are like chronic alcoholics, Veasey says. This state of impairment has become their baseline, so it's hard for them to recognize that anything is wrong. When people who've

had one night of impaired sleep take cognitive tests, they'll say they did "terrible," Veasey says. But after that first day, they stop noticing their impairment. "Their performance goes down almost linearly with time, but they seem to lack perception that this is happening." Meanwhile, people around them see that they've developed a short temper, seem depressed or are uninterested in normal activities.

COVER BY FOX VIA GETTY IMAGES

by *Christie Aschwendon*  
*Parade Mag. 1/2019*

from page 9

## PROVEN SLEEP SOLUTIONS

**Ready to get out of zombieland?** Here are three realistic strategies.

### 1. Pick a bedtime and stick to it—every night.

There's a very clear linear relationship between a consistent bedtime and the amount of sleep you get, says Karla Gleichauf, senior data scientist at Fitbit. People whose bedtimes are consistent within 30 minutes per night get an average of 35 minutes more sleep per week than those whose bedtimes vary by two hours over a week.

### 2. Shift your body clock with strategically timed light.

If your body clock is mismatched to your work or life schedule, the best way to shift it is with light, which influences how your body secretes sleep hormones like melatonin, says Amy Bender, senior research scientist at Calgary Counselling Centre in Alberta. Someone who wants to become more of an early bird can dim overhead lights and shut off electronic devices at least an hour before bed and then seek bright light in the morning. To train yourself to stay up later, seek out sunshine or bright lights late in the day. The same principles can help you adjust to a new time zone.

### 3. Embrace the nap.

Falling asleep on the job was once considered a firing offense, but that attitude may be changing as businesses and sports teams adopt napping as a performance strategy. Consider skier Mikaela Shiffrin, who took a nap between ski runs on her way to an Olympic gold

*continued on page 12*

from page 10

medal in Pyeongchang.

If you can swing it, using that post-lunch slump as a time to grab a few zzz's could help you think better. A 2016 study enlisted nearly 3,000 adults age 65 and older to examine the relationship between napping and cognitive function. The results found that people who took a nap of an hour or so after lunch scored higher on cognitive tests than those who didn't nap or who napped for 90 minutes or more. Even more interesting: Napping didn't prevent people from sleeping at night.

SLEEP



## ARE SLEEP MONITORS HELPING OR HURTING?

Since fitness trackers such as Fitbit and Apple Watch have added sleep monitoring capabilities, more of us are getting a picture of our habits. And tracking your sleep can be a good thing if it nudges you to get more sleep. But don't let it rule your life, says sleep scientist Amy Bender.

Fixating on the data can create an anxiety loop that makes you sleep and feel worse, she says. The problem of sleep anxiety induced by self-tracking has become common enough that researchers have given it a name—orthosomnia. "Some people put a lot of reliance on what their tracker is saying, and it can impact how they feel that day," Bender says. Use it for a nudge, but not as a judge.

Visit [Parade.com/sleep](http://Parade.com/sleep) for a step-by-step routine to get the best sleep ever.

ISTOCK



THE BIG NUMBER

0

hours of daylight

If you're feeling shortchanged because the sun now sets at about 5 p.m., consider this: People living in Barrow, Alaska, the northernmost city in the United States, will have no daylight — darkness only — starting when the sun sets Sunday and lasting for nine weeks until it rises again Jan. 23. By comparison, Washington-area residents can expect 9 hours 52 minutes of daylight on the same day. Even on the shortest day of the year, the winter solstice on Dec. 21, people in the Washington region will get nearly 9 hours 30 minutes of daylight. If you live in Miami, you can expect 10 hours 31 minutes on that day. In Portland, Ore., it's 8 hours 42 minutes and in Billings, Mont., 8 hours 40 minutes. Many find that the shorter days and longer nights this time of year affect their health. About 5 percent of the population develops seasonal depression, according to Mental Health America. Reduced amounts of daylight trigger the somewhat milder "winter blues" in another 10 to 20 percent, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians. Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, affects women far more often than men; 4 out of 5 people with SAD are women. It also affects people under 30 more often than older people. Symptoms include typical signs of depression — such as low energy, sleep problems, changes in appetite and weight, and loss of interest in favorite activities. But with SAD, symptoms come and go with the season. No one knows what causes SAD, but most experts link its development to less exposure to the sun's rays, brought about by shorter days in the fall and winter. This may disrupt your body's internal clock, sparking depression, and reduce your body's serotonin levels, increase melatonin levels and decrease vitamin D levels, affecting your mood. Treatment options include light therapy — sitting in front of a special light box for 20 to 60 minutes a day — as well as behavioral therapy and possibly antidepressants. If relocation is an option, consider heading south. The closer you are to the equator, the lower your risk for seasonal depression.

— Linda Searing

HEALTH NEWS

Poor sleep can make you tired. Now research finds it can cause another problem: Anxiety.

A sleepless night can leave the brain spinning with anxiety the next day.

In healthy adults, overnight sleep deprivation will trigger anxiety the next morning, along with altered brain activity patterns, scientists reported at the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience on Nov. 4.

People with anxiety disorders often have trouble sleeping. The new results uncover the reverse effect — that poor sleep can induce anxiety.

The study shows that "this is a two-way interaction," said Clifford Saper, a sleep researcher at Harvard Medical School and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston who wasn't involved in the study. "The sleep loss makes the anxiety worse, which in turn makes it harder to sleep."

Sleep researchers Eti Ben Simon and Matthew Walker, both of the University of California at

Berkeley, studied the anxiety levels of 18 healthy people. Following either a night of sleep or a night of staying awake, these people took anxiety tests the next morning. After sleep deprivation, anxiety levels in these healthy people were 30 percent higher than when they had slept.

On average, the anxiety scores reached levels seen in people with anxiety disorders, Ben Simon said in a news briefing on Nov. 5.

Sleep-deprived people's brain activity also changed. In response to emotional videos, brain areas involved in emotions were more active. The prefrontal cortex, an area that can put the brakes on anxiety, was less active, functional MRI scans showed.

The results suggest that poor sleep "is more than just a symptom" of anxiety, but in some cases, may be a cause, Ben Simon said.

— Science News

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## Awake in America

For millions of us, the pursuit of a good night's rest has become a kind of dark obsession. We're getting an hour less sleep per night, on average, than our forebears did a few generations ago. In 1942, only 11 percent of Americans slept six hours or less a night. By 2013, 40 percent did. Older adults are more vulnerable to sleep disorders, particularly obstructive sleep apnea, an intermittent breathing problem that causes serious health issues.

So many seem to be getting so little shut-eye that in 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared the sorry state of the nation's slumber a public health problem: Some 80 million adult Americans aren't getting enough sleep, the latest CDC study says. The National Institutes of Health states that 70 million adults suffer from sleep difficulties. In a 2015 survey of the top health complaints, sleep issues have climbed to No. 2. "It didn't used to be in the top five," says Mayo Clinic pulmonologist Timothy Morgenthaler, former president of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. "Is there a sleep crisis? Well, define 'crisis.' These problems have definitely increased radically in the past few years."

Experts have identified several reasons why, including rising obesity and the unprecedented number of adults taking medications such as antidepressants. But for many, sleeping less is a choice: We're watching TV, fiddling on Facebook or otherwise occupied in front of electronic screens deep into the wee hours. This consumes more than 11 hours per day for an average adult, according to Nielsen estimates. All those tablets and smartphones and TVs collectively conspire to steal our sleep by emitting a high-intensity light that scrambles our circadian rhythms, which evolved to follow the cycles of natural daylight.

We're also subject to the workplace phenomenon of "sleep shaming"—when alpha-achiever types humble-brag about how late they work and how early they rise. This is hardly new: Thomas Edison, a champion sleep shamer, claimed to need no more than four hours of rack time and demanded the same of his employees. He's a formative figure in what Penn State labor history profes-

### THE BASICS

## Simple Fixes for a More Restful Night



### Set a schedule

Experts recommend avoiding the temptation to sleep in (or stay up) on the weekend; instead, try to maintain the same sleep-wake pattern all week.



### Upgrade your bedroom

Buy fresh pillows, replace a worn-out mattress, and kick the TV out of the room you sleep in.



### Lay off the lights

Turning on a lamp (or futzing with your smartphone) when you wake in the middle of the night can reset your internal clock, warns sleep expert Charles Czeisler: You might wake up at the same time the next night.

sor Alan Derickson, in his book *Dangerously Sleepy*, dubbed "the cult of manly wakefulness." (A period exemplar: Charles Lindbergh, who claimed to stay up for 63 hours during his transatlantic flight.) "We are always hearing people talk about 'loss of sleep' as a calamity. They better call it loss of time," Edison once proclaimed. "There is really no reason why men should go to bed at all."

On the other side of this late-night culture war stand pro-sleep evangelists such as *Huffington Post* founder Arianna Huffington, whose book *The Sleep Revolution* joins several new self-help tomes promising to restore sanity to the night. "We're a society that's on the clock," says Matt Berical, senior editor of *Van Winkle's*, an online publication devoted to sleep. "The next great struggle for us is, how are we going to get rest? Sleep

inequality will be a big issue in the future. There are services that will be available only to people who can afford it."

The sleep gap is just one of many stubborn disparities that haunt the night. The wealthy sleep better than the less affluent, and whites sleep better than African Americans. Women sleep more than men, although men are more satisfied with their sleep. And age itself is a factor, says University of Chicago epidemiologist Diane Lauderdale, who

### EXTRA CREDIT

## Still Can't Sleep? Try These



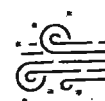
### Embrace the dark side

Insomniacs often report that their symptoms disappear during blackouts and camping trips. To mimic the inky blackness of the preindustrial night, aficionados of "paleo sleep" go full caveman in their evening routine—no artificial lighting whatsoever. A long dusk is your brain's cue to pump up the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin.



### Go for two

Psychiatrist Thomas Wehr placed volunteers in darkness for 14 hours for a 1992 study and found that they settled into a two-stage sleep cycle, with a mellow period of wakefulness in the middle. This segmented, or biphasic, sleep probably persisted for millennia: Modern segmented sleepers tout its stress-reduction benefits (and bonus opportunity for snuggling).



### Gone in 60 seconds

A breathing exercise touted by holistic doc Andrew Weil promises to knock you out in a minute. The "4-7-8" technique is derived from yoga: Inhale for four seconds, hold your breath for seven seconds, and exhale forcefully for eight. Repeat thrice and say good night. With practice, Weil says, you can induce an altered state of consciousness.

Naps boost alertness and improve motor performance, which is why you feel energized after taking one. The length of your nap determines the benefits. A 20-minute snooze—called a stage two nap—is ideal to enhance motor skills and attention, while an hour to 90 minutes of napping brings Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep, which helps make new connections in the brain and can aid in solving creative problems. Set an alarm to make sure you get just the right amount of sleep. (Napping for a length of time between 20 and 90 minutes may also help, but you're likely to feel groggy afterward.)

## Zap Stress

Regular, short naps can help lower tension, which decreases your risk of heart disease. Get the most health benefits out of your nap by doing it right. Stick to a regular napping schedule during optimal hours, which are between 1:00pm and 3:00pm. This timeframe is optimal, since that's usually after lunchtime, when your blood sugar and energy starts to dip. Keep shut-eye short; and nap in a dark room so that you'll fall asleep faster.

## Boost Your Mood

As anyone who has suffered from a sleepless night knows, it's hard to be chipper the next day. Sneaking in a nap can help erase that sleep-deprived irritability.

Keep in mind, a short snooze is a wiser choice than sipping espresso.

## 8 SCIENTIFIC BENEFITS OF NAPPING

by Jordan Rosenfeld(Mental Floss, August 4, 2017).

*Fact-34% of Americans Nap*

**Benefit #1-Napping can boost your immune system-Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism found that napping decreased inflammatory molecules and stress hormones cortisol & norepinephrine with two one half hour naps.**

**Benefit #2-Napping can improve night alertness-for people who work at night naps from 30 minutes to four hours in advance of a shift improved performance and alertness(called prophylactic nap). Napping is better than caffeine for this population-Journal of Sleep.**

**Benefit #3-Naps and Caffeine are a one-two punch against sleepiness for surgeons-Journal of Ergonomics 1994 found that naps were effective for surgeons who had to remain awake for 24 hours but only with caffeine. Alone neither was as effective.**

**Benefit #4-To Improve daytime alertness , take frequent naps-a number of lab studies showed that “the most effective time of them all for naps was 10 minutes.”**

**Benefit #5-Naps can help you learn new skills-Research quoted in *Biological Physiology 2006* found that the brains...”of habitual nappers consolidated motor learning better, which is part of the process of learning a new skill.”**

**Benefit #6-Napping helps improve your physical stamina-In a 2007 study in the Journal of Sports Sciences found that athletes who lose some sleep time due to training were able to improve their sprint times and alertness from post lunch naps.**

**Benefit #7-Naps help improve your memory- In the *Journal of Neurobiology of Learning and Memory 2010* studies showed that participants improved their associative memory(ability to make connections between unrelated objects) with a 90 minutes daytime nap.**

**Benefit #8-Napping helps perceptual learning-In 2003 *Journal of Nature Neuroscience study* found that people performed just as well on a visual texture distinguishing task after a 90 minute nap as on a full nights sleep.**

**RESEARCH NOW SHOWS FROM 10-20 MINUTE NAPS ARE BEST**

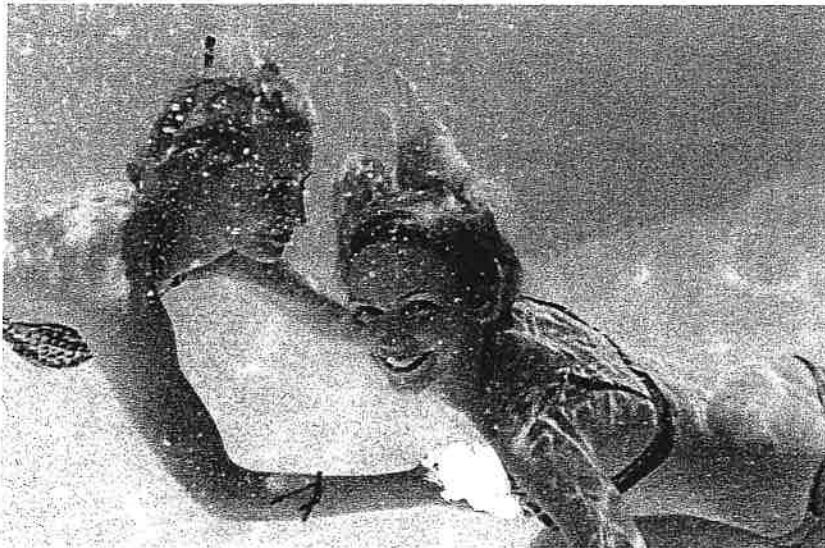
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## Fun And Health: What's The Connection?

Taking life too seriously? You could be harming your health.

BY MEREDITH DAULT MEREDITH DAULT



If you've ever watched a child splashing in a puddle, or laughing at the top of her lungs at something as simple as a silly hat or a goofy dance move, then you've seen fun in action. In our busy world, kids are the keepers of fun, finding joy in the little things that make worth living.

As we get older and busier,

however, fun can sometimes elude us. Our lengthy to-do lists and packed schedules often keep us from cultivating time for carefree frolicking and good, old-fashioned play. But scheduling a little fun into every day is an important way to cultivate good health and overall happiness.

## 1. Go with the flow

"I think the biggest thing I see in my practice is that when people are having fun, they get into the flow," explains art therapist Nalini Iype, who helps her clients use creativity as a means of developing self-awareness while working through their problems. "They get so focused on what they're doing that they forget what's going on around them, and that brings them into a state of mindfulness."

That's because learning to live in the present—rather than worrying about things you can't control in the past or the future—is an effective way of managing stress and anxiety. "You learn not to worry about the things you have no control over anyway," says Iype with a laugh.

## 2. Stop stress and anxiety

Whether you're dancing, laughing with friends, playing music, or embarking on a new craft project, doing something enjoyable can help you relax and slow down. Too much stress can negatively affect both mental and physical health. It can manifest itself in feelings of irritability or sadness, sleeping too much or not enough, weight loss or gain, or in straight-up negative thinking. It is considered a risk factor for issues including heart disease, mental illness, and some types of digestive disease, and can have a negative effect on the immune system, which can leave the body vulnerable to disease.

Iype, who says she turns to painting and ceramics, bike riding, and having picnics with friends when she's looking for fun, says she recently worked with a man in his mid-thirties who was suffering from severe anxiety. "He was timid using the art materials," she explains, "so I suggested using finger paints. You could tell how happy he was to be making a mess. There were no rules, except to have pure fun." Iype says she could see his body relax as he worked. "There was a change in his body language. His shoulders dropped...he was really into it."

"I think having fun allows people to connect to themselves and to become more in tune with themselves," she adds. "That's a healthy thing, because you can become more aware of your own wants, needs and desires—and that's important because we are so often focused on

other people."

### 3. Embrace the good kind of selfish

Happiness coach and motivational speaker Leigh Anne Saxe agrees, saying too many of her clients see taking time for themselves as selfish. Instead, she urges them to see it as a good thing. "We can only be of help to other people when we're feeling okay about things," she explains, "and we have nothing to offer anyone when we're not. So it's not only not selfish, it's a selfless thing to do!"

Saxe says that she sees too many adults forgetting that they are allowed to have fun—or indulging in activities that are competitive, rather than relaxing. "People forget to have fun for the sake of having fun," she explains. "I think there really are some societal pressures that say it's irresponsible to have fun. I also think people get caught up in how they might look to their peers, so they may not pursue their passions." But she says as people grow older, they need to find a way to reconnect to the activities that fueled them when they were younger.

When she is helping her clients reconnect to their playful and creative selves, Saxe says she often walks them through their life stories, helping them note what once gave them joy. "When they were young they painted, or they built things. They didn't hold back. We try to go back to the things they loved then. Many times they'll find things they want to get back into."

Whether you're indulging in physical activity for the pure joy of the movement (and not just to burn fat!), using your hands to create something new, or spending time with others (try a board game or a sing-along!) you'll reap all kinds of healthy benefits investing in your playful side. You may even enjoy yourself!

*Web exclusive August 2011 Best Health magazine*



FILED UNDER: HEALTHY HABITS

# Play is too important to be left

PLAY FROM E1

"What all play has in common," Brown says, "is that it offers a sense of engagement and pleasure, takes the player out of a sense of time and place, and the experience of doing it is more important than the outcome."

Although some people may appear more playful than others, researchers say that we are all wired by evolution to play.

## It's evolution

Peter Gray, a research professor of psychology at Boston College, says, "Play primarily evolved to teach children all kinds of skills, and its extension into adulthood may have helped to build cooperation and sharing among hunter-gatherers beyond the level that would naturally exist in a dominance-seeking species." In other words, for our earliest ancestors, play wasn't just about adding fun to their lives, it may have been a way of keeping the peace, which was critical for survival.

There's a reason that adult play exists in modern society, says Lynn Barnett, a professor of recreation, sports and tourism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. One theory is that we play because it's therapeutic — and there's research to back that up, she says. "At work, play has been found to speed up learning, enhance productivity and increase job satisfaction; and at home, playing together, like going to a movie or a concert,

can enhance bonding and communication."

Playful adults have the ability to transform everyday situations, even stressful ones, into something entertaining, Barnett says. She co-authored a study that found highly playful young adults — those who rated themselves high on personality characteristics such as being spontaneous or energetic, or open to "clowning around" — reported less stress in their lives and possessed better coping skills.

Perhaps they have these attributes because they are better able to keep stress in perspective, Barnett theorizes. "Highly playful adults feel the same stressors as anyone else, but they appear to experience and react to them differently, allowing stressors to roll off more easily than those who are less playful," she says.

## Attracts the opposite sex

Being a playful adult may also make us more attractive to the opposite sex, according to a study from Pennsylvania State University. Researchers there asked 250 students to rate 16 characteristics that they might look for in a long-term mate. "Sense of humor" came in first among the males and second among the females, "fun-loving" came in third for both, and being "playful" placed fourth for women and fifth for men. Lead researcher Garry Chick speculates that the attraction to playfulness may be rooted in

evolution and what we value in a mate. "In men, playfulness signals nonaggressiveness, meaning they'd be less likely to harm a mate or an offspring," he said, "and in women, it signals youth and fertility."

Not all adults play alike, of course. In a study published in April in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, researchers examined the complexities of adult playfulness in an effort to tease out patterns of behavior.

The researchers identified four types of playful adults: those who outwardly enjoy fooling around with friends, colleagues, relatives and acquaintances; those who are generally lighthearted and not preoccupied by the future consequences of their behavior; those who play with thoughts and ideas; and those who are whimsical, exhibiting interest in strange and unusual things and are amused by small, everyday observations.

Lead researcher René Proyer, a professor of psychology at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in Germany, says that by showing how varied playfulness can be, he hopes that people will be encouraged to become more playfully engaged with others. "A less playful person can learn to be more playful, much like an introvert can learn to be a better speaker by observing the techniques extroverts use," Proyer says. "Play is a basic human need as essential to our well-being as

## ONLY TO CHILDREN

sleep, so when we're low on play, our minds and bodies notice," Brown says. Over time, he says, play deprivation can reveal itself in certain patterns of behavior: We might get cranky, rigid, feel stuck in a rut or feel victimized by life. To benefit most from the rejuvenating benefits of play, he says, we need to incorporate it into our everyday lives, "not just wait for that two-week vacation every year."

## Then and now

To identify the kind of play that would be most meaningful to you, Brown suggests thinking back to the play you enjoyed as a child and trying to connect that to your life now. For example, a person who was very active as a child may be wise to engage in recreational sports as an adult. "Play has the power to deeply enrich your adult life if you pay attention to it," Brown says.

Brittany Rouille, a 28-year-old travel blogger based in Hood River, Ore., says she made a point of incorporating more play into her life a few years ago after her then stressful and rigid lifestyle left her depressed. "It wasn't until I reintroduced play into my life that I started to feel like myself again," she says.

"Now I play every day, whether it's rollerblading, painting or playing my harmonica, even if it's only for an hour, because I know how important it is for me to let go and not think about anything except for the fun thing I'm doing in that moment," Rouille says. "I find play so crucial to my well-being that I have built my life around playing outside."

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# dren



IS THERE A FORMULA—some mix of love, work, and psychological adaptation—for a good life? For 72 years, researchers at Harvard have been examining this question, following 268 men who entered college in the late 1930s through war, career, marriage and divorce, parenthood and grandparenthood, and old age. Here, for the first time, a journalist gains access to the archive of one of the most comprehensive longitudinal studies in history. Its contents, as much literature as science, offer profound insight into the human condition—and into the brilliant, complex mind of the study's longtime director, George Vaillant.

# WHAT MAKES US HAPPY?

By Joshua Wolf Shenk

## CASE NO. 218

*How's this for the good life? You're rich, and you made the dough yourself. You're well into your 80s, and have spent hardly a day in the hospital. Your wife had a cancer scare, but she's recovered and by your side, just as she's been for more than 60 years. Asked to rate the marriage on a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 is perfectly miserable and 9 is perfectly happy, you circle the highest number. You've got two good kids, grandkids too. A survey asks you: "If you had your life to live over again, what problem, if any, would you have sought help for and to whom would you have gone?" "Probably I am fooling myself," you write, "but I don't think I would want to change anything." If only we could take what you've done, reduce it to a set of rules, and apply it systematically. Right?*

## CASE NO. 47

*You literally fell down drunk and died. Not quite what the study had in mind.*

LAST FALL, I SPENT about a month in the file room of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, hoping to learn the secrets of the good life. The project is one of the longest-running—and probably the most exhaustive—longitudinal studies of mental and physical well-being in history. Begun in 1937 as a study of healthy, well-adjusted Harvard sophomores (all male), it has followed its subjects for more than 70 years.

years later still: "It seemed as if all time had stopped" for you when you resigned. "At times I wondered if there was anybody home," Dr. Vaillant wrote. Your first wife had died, and you treated your second wife "like a familiar old shoe," he said.

But you called yourself happy. When you were 74, the questionnaire asked: "Have you ever felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up?" and gave the options "All of the time, some of the time, none of the time." You circled "None of the time." "Have you felt calm and peaceful?" You circled "All of the time." Two years later, the study asked: "Many people hope to become wiser as they grow older. Would you give an example of a bit of wisdom you acquired and how you came by it?" You wrote that, after having polio and diphtheria in childhood, "I never gave up hope that I could compete again. Never expect you will fail. Don't cry, if you do."

**W**HAT ALLOWS PEOPLE to work, and love, as they grow old? By the time the Grant Study men had entered retirement, Vaillant, who had then been following them for a quarter century, had identified seven major factors that predict healthy aging, both physically and psychologically.

Employing mature adaptations was one. The others were education, stable marriage, not smoking, not abusing alcohol, some exercise, and healthy weight. Of the 106 Harvard men who had five or six of these factors in their favor at age 50, half ended up at 80 as what Vaillant called "happy-well" and only 7.5 percent as "sad-sick." Meanwhile, of the men who had three or fewer of the health factors at age 50, none ended up "happy-well" at 80. Even if they had been in adequate physical shape at 50, the men who had three or fewer protective factors were three times as likely to be dead at 80 as those with four or more factors.

What factors don't matter? Vaillant identified some surprises. Cholesterol levels at age 50 have nothing to do with health in old age. While social ease correlates highly with good psychosocial adjustment in college and early adulthood, its significance diminishes over time. The predictive importance of childhood temperament also diminishes over time: shy, anxious kids tend to do poorly

in young adulthood, but by age 70, are just as likely as the outgoing kids to be "happy-well." Vaillant sums up: "If you follow lives long enough, the risk factors for healthy life adjustment change. There is an age to watch your cholesterol and an age to ignore it."

The study has yielded some additional subtle surprises. **Regular exercise in college predicted late-life mental health better than it did physical health. And depression turned out to be a major drain on physical health: of the men who were diagnosed with depression by age 50, more than 70 percent had died or were chronically ill by 63. More broadly, pessimists seemed to suffer physically in comparison with optimists, perhaps because they're less likely to connect with others or care for themselves.**

More than 80 percent of the Grant Study men served World War II, a fact that allowed Vaillant to study the effect of combat. **The men who survived heavy fighting developed more chronic physical illnesses and died sooner than those who saw little or no combat, he found. And "severity of trauma is the best predictor of who is likely to develop PTSD." (This may sound obvious, but it countered the claim that post-traumatic stress disorder was just the manifestation of preexisting troubles.)** He also found that personality traits assigned by the psychiatrists in the initial interviews largely predicted who would become Democrats (descriptions included "sensitive," "cultural," and "introspective") and Republicans ("pragmatic" and "organized").

Again and again, Vaillant has returned to his major preoccupations. One is alcoholism, which he found is probably the horse, and not the cart, of pathology. "People often say, 'That poor man. His wife left him and he's taken to drink,'" Vaillant says. "But when you look closely, you see that he's begun to drink, and that has helped drive his wife away." The horrors of drink so preoccupied Vaillant that he devoted a stand-alone study to it: *The Natural History of Alcoholism*.

Vaillant's other main interest is the power of relationships. "It is social aptitude," he writes, "not intellectual brilliance or parental social class, that leads to successful aging." Warm connections are necessary—and if not found in a mother or father, they can come from siblings, uncles, friends, mentors. The men's relationships at age 47, he found, predicted late-life adjustment better than any other variable, except

defenses. Good sibling relationships seem especially powerful: 93 percent of the men who were thriving at age 65 had been close to a brother or sister when younger. In an interview in the March 2008 newsletter to the Grant Study subjects, Vaillant was asked, "What have you learned from the Grant Study men?" Vaillant's response: "That the only thing that really matters in life are your relationships to other people."

The authority of these findings stems in large part from the rarity of the source. Few longitudinal studies survive in good health for whole lifetimes, because funding runs dry and the participants drift away. Vaillant managed, drawing on federal grants and private gifts, to finance surveys every two years,

physicals every five years, and interviews every 15 years. The original study social worker, Lewise Gregory Davies, helped him goad the subjects to stay in touch, but it wasn't a hard sell. The Grant Study men saw themselves as part of an elite club.

Vaillant also dramatically expanded his scope by taking over a defunct study of juvenile delinquents in inner-city Boston, run by the criminologists Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck. Launched in 1939, the study had a control group of nondelinquent boys who grew up in similar circumstances—children of poor, mostly foreign-born parents, about half of whom lived in a home without a tub or a shower. In the 1970s, Vaillant and his staff tracked down most of these nondelinquent boys—it took years—so that today the Harvard Study of

**Some surprises: cholesterol levels at age 50 have nothing to do with health in old age; regular physical exercise in college predicted late-life mental health.**

## You Asked: Does Laughing Have Real Health Benefits?

Nov 19, 2014

It may not be the *best* medicine. But laughter's great for you, and it may even compare to a proper diet and exercise when it comes to keeping you healthy and disease free.

That's according to Dr. Lee Berk, an associate professor at Loma Linda University in California who has spent nearly three decades studying the ways the aftershocks of a good laugh ripple through your brain and body.

Berk says your mind, hormone system and immune system are constantly communicating with one another in ways that impact everything from your mood to your ability to fend off sickness and disease. Take grief: "Grief induces stress hormones, which suppress your immune function, which can lead to sickness," he says. Hardly a week goes by without new research tying stress to another major ailment.

Why mention stress? "Because laughter appears to cause all the reciprocal, or opposite, effects of stress," Berk explains. He says laughter shuts down the release of stress hormones like cortisol. It also triggers the production of feel-good neurochemicals like dopamine, which have all kinds of calming, anti-anxiety benefits. Think of laughter as the yin to stress's yang.

Thanks largely to these stress-quashing powers, laughter has been linked to health benefits ranging from lower levels of inflammation to improved blood flow, Berk says. Some research from Western Kentucky University has also tied a good chuckle to greater numbers and activity of "killer cells," which your immune system deploys to attack disease. "Many of these same things also happen when you sleep right, eat right, and exercise," Berk says, which is why he lumps laughter in with more traditional healthy lifestyle activities.

Berk has even shown that laughter causes a change in the way your brain's many neurons communicate with one another. Specifically, laughter seems to induce "gamma" frequencies—the type of brain waves observed among experienced meditators. These



Illustration by Peter Oumanski for TIME

gamma waves improve the “synchronization” of your neuronal activity, which bolsters recall and memory, Berk says.

How does laughter accomplish all this? That’s where things get murky, says Dr. Robert Provine, a neuroscientist at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and author of *Curious Behavior: Yawning, Laughing, Hiccupping, and Beyond*.

Provine calls himself a “reserved optimist” when it comes to laughter’s health-bolstering properties. “One of the challenges of studying laughter is that there are so many things that trigger it,” Provine explains. For example, you’re 30 times more likely to laugh around other people than when you are by yourself, he says. Social relationships and companionship have been tied to numerous health benefits. And so the social component of laughter may play a big part in its healthful attributes, Provine adds.

Here’s why that matters: If you’re going to tell people they should laugh to improve their health, there may be a big difference between guffawing on your own without provocation, watching a funny YouTube clip or meeting up with friends who make you laugh, Provine says.

“That doesn’t mean the benefits aren’t real,” he adds. “But it may not be accurate to credit laughter alone with all these superpowers.”



That possibility intrigued Gregory Bratman, a graduate student at the Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources at Stanford University, who has been studying the psychological effects of urban living. In an earlier study published last month, he and his colleagues found that volunteers who walked briefly through a lush, green portion of the Stanford campus were more attentive and happier afterward than volunteers who strolled for the same amount of time near heavy traffic.

But that study did not examine the neurological mechanisms that might underlie the effects of being outside in nature.

So for the new study, which was published last week in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Mr. Bratman and his collaborators decided to closely scrutinize what effect a walk might have on a person's tendency to brood.

Brooding, which is known among cognitive scientists as morbid rumination, is a mental state familiar to most of us, in which we can't seem to stop chewing over the ways in which things are wrong with ourselves and our lives. This broken-record fretting is not healthy or helpful. It can be a precursor to depression and is disproportionately common among city dwellers compared with people living outside urban areas, studies show.

Perhaps most interesting for the purposes of Mr. Bratman and his colleagues, however, such rumination also is strongly associated with increased activity in a portion of the brain known as the subgenual prefrontal cortex.

If the researchers could track activity in that part of the brain before and after people visited nature, Mr. Bratman realized, they would have a better idea about whether and to what extent nature changes people's minds.

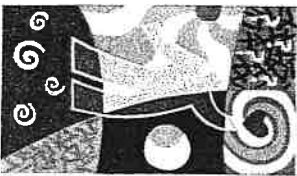
Mr. Bratman and his colleagues first gathered 38 healthy, adult city dwellers and asked them to complete a questionnaire to determine their

### *SOME OF THE EFFECTS OF LOW SELF ESTEEM:*

- Distorted vision of self and others
- Lack of self confidence
- Staying in abusive situations
- Poor health
- Problems making decisions
- High stress
- Difficult relationships
- Not reaching your true potential

### *WITH INCREASED SELF ESTEEM, YOU CAN:*

- Be the person you want to be
- Enjoy your relationships
- Offer more of yourself to the world
- Make healthy choices
- Have confidence
- Be understanding
- Develop personally, professionally and socially



*THINK  
POSITIVELY  
ABOUT  
YOURSELF: YOU  
DESERVE IT!*

### *SOME WAYS TO BUILD POSITIVE SELF ESTEEM:*

- Be Positive - Have an "I can do it", "Let's move forward" attitude.
- Stop - Stop negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones.
- Be Credible - Be honest with yourself about your feelings, thoughts and actions.
- Accept - Identify and accept your strengths as well as your challenges.
- Organize - Set and meet realistic goals that address your personal challenges.
- Celebrate - Honor yourself for your accomplishments, whether they are big or small.
- Be Patient - When you have a hard time reaching your goals, simply re-evaluate and try again.
- Get Help - Ask for and accept help.
- Contribute - Sincerely give of yourself to others by being honest and helpful.
- Honor - Don't try to be someone else. Be proud of who you are.
- Act - How we perform in the world affects our outlook. You have control over how you perform.
- Practice - Practice the above suggestions, this is how we grow.

### *THINGS ADULTS CAN SAY TO INCREASE CHILDREN'S SELF ESTEEM:*

- That's very good
- Awesome!
- Excellent
- That's the way to do it
- Wow!
- Keep up the good work
- You make it seem so easy
- I knew you could do it
- You are doing wonderfully
- I am proud of you
- I like how you pay attention
- You really work hard
- I love you

### *HINTS TO HELP OTHERS FEEL BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES:*

- Truly listen, think twice and breathe before you speak
- Don't give advice, instead speak from your personal experience
- Be encouraging
- Let others help you
- Maintain an open heart
- Take responsibility for your actions
- Be reliable
- Be lovingly honest
- Treat others as you would like to be treated

# Gratitude

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## **Why Am I Doing This?**

Adopting a regular gratitude practice can improve your relationships, your body and your mind. Studies show that grateful people have fewer body aches and feel healthier overall. People who feel grateful are also more likely to exercise and take care of their bodies. A number of studies have demonstrated that gratitude can increase happiness and lower rates of depression. Showing appreciation to a new acquaintance or friend makes them more likely to stay connected with you, according to a 2014 study published in the journal Emotion. Studies also show that grateful people sleep better.

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## **Helpful Tips**

A regular gratitude meditation is an easy way to clear your mind and reap the benefits of a gratitude practice. It doesn't have to be a meditation. Another proven technique is keeping a gratitude journal. Just keep a pen and notebook by your bed and once or twice a week, take time to write down a few things in your life for which you feel gratitude. Try to focus on one or two events and elaborate about why you feel grateful for them. Focusing on people and experiences will have more of an impact than writing about the things for which you feel grateful. And don't feel obligated to write anything. Studies show that people who kept gratitude journals once a week for several weeks were happier than those who journaled their gratitude three days a week. A little gratitude once a week goes a long way to boosting your wellbeing.

# Six Free Steps for Easing Anxiety

**STRESS.** From Page E1

can I manage?"

In this uncertain time, symptoms of chronic illnesses — hypertension, back pain, diabetes — that were controlled or dormant are erupting. Low-level depression, whose hallmarks are feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, is endemic.

Large numbers of people across the country are trying to quiet their apprehension with drugs or drink, or have turned to antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications and sleeping pills. But after decades working not only in Washington but also with war-traumatized populations overseas, I've found there are simple strategies for helping people cope that are easy to learn, practice at home and, in these stressful times, free.

**1** **Begin a simple meditation practice.** Loss — of jobs or economic security, as well as of a beloved person — is perhaps the greatest and most common of stressors, and the most frequent cause of anxiety and depression. Slow, deep breathing — in through the nose, out through the mouth, with the belly relaxed and soft, and the eyes closed — is a sure "evidence-based" antidote to the stress response that uncertainty provokes. Practicing this "soft belly" technique several times a day for several minutes each time quiets the "fight-or-flight" response that makes people anxious and agitated, and brings us what cardiologist Herbert Benson famously called "the relaxation response." Financial advisers,



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MINE OZON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

child-care workers and soldiers back from a second tour in Iraq with whom I've worked have all found, in this simple practice, a source of calm.

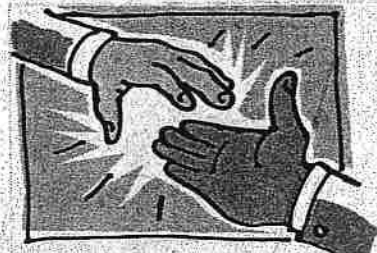
**2** **Move your body.** With the possible exception of talking with a sympathetic, skilled human being, physical exercise may be the single best therapy for depression. It's very good for anxiety as well. Exercise has been shown in animal studies to increase cells in the hippocampus, a region of the brain concerned with memory and emotion, which can be deplet-



ed by significant psychological trauma (and financial stress is one of the most significant traumas) or chronic depression. Exercise increases mood-enhancing neurotransmitters in our brains, and decreases the levels of stress hormones that exacerbate chronic illness.

It may not be easy to get moving when you're feeling defeated, but every step you take, literally as well as figuratively, will encourage you to take the next one. Make sure you do something physical that you enjoy or once did enjoy. Aerobics or yoga classes may feel overwhelming or too expensive. Don't worry: Dancing at home by yourself works just as well, and so does walking. Exercise is often the first item on my prescription pad.

**3** **Reach out to others.** Human connection — to family, friends, co-workers in the same boat — is an antidote to the sense of aimlessness and isolation that may come from job loss or unexpected economic insecurity. Social connection also helps prevent the chronic illness that can often follow prolonged stress. I see the healing power of group membership every day in



mind-body skills groups that colleagues and I organize, when a group member, demoralized and humiliated by job loss, realizes he or she is not the only one. Acknowledging and sharing (but not indulging) this sense of grief and pain is a remarkable source of strength for many people.

**4** **Find someone who will listen and help you take a realistic look at your situation.** When the middle-aged woman with the "seized-up" back came to see me, we discussed her finances as well as her feelings. Although her husband had lost his job, her own job, in the health-care industry, was still secure. She and her husband would have to give up some of the "little luxuries" to which they'd been accustomed, but it was clear they could still manage. She needed to relax (using the soft-belly technique), recognize what she could and couldn't do, give her husband a fair share of the household



chores while he looked for another job, and generally unburden her mind, body and spirit. This simple exploratory conversation — and a subsequent heart-to-heart with her husband — allowed her to turn aside the cascade of anxious emotions. Her body began to repair itself.



# y in Uncertain Times

**5** Let your imagination help you find healing — and new meaning and purpose. The wealthy man who came to see me last winter paralyzed by anxiety attacks after losing much of his fortune was able to put his own trauma in perspective by using his imagination.

Though he still was, by most standards, wealthy, his sense of himself as a wise, sure-footed investor had been shattered. He did soft belly breathing to relax and began to cut out and copy pictures from magazines that seemed to him somehow hopeful. He spent days, he told me, copying a photo of a man his age, a grandfather apparently, standing with his arm around a young boy on the verge of the hole where the



World Trade Center had been. "The tragedy in the picture is so much greater than my own," he said, "and I realized that what's really important is the connection between this man and boy, the hope for the future. I drew it, and I really started looking for this connection in my own life — a connection with meaning now, not money."

Other patients find relief and assistance from imagining themselves in a safe place and consulting their inner "wise guide" to help them find peace, direction and meaning. This may seem kind of strange at first, but it's an ancient process used in many indigenous cultures and is actually pretty easy.

First, after breathing deeply and relaxing, imagine someplace safe and comfortable, one you know or one that just arises at the moment in your imagination. As you sit there, you allow your "guide" to appear. Accept whatever image appears — a wise old man or woman, a relative, a figure from scripture or literature, or even an animal. Mentally introduce yourself, and ask this guide a

question about what's troubling you, and then "listen" to the response that comes into your mind. Let the dialogue with you and this guide continue. Often helpful guidance will emerge from your own intuitive understanding.

**6** Speak and act on your own behalf. Sometimes this produces rapid and even material benefits: One patient, a financial analyst, talked to her colleague about impending cut-backs; they forestalled a layoff by offering their supervisor a job-share alternative. Often speaking up for yourself produces valuable information and greater peace of mind and clarity: An anxious nanny finally asked her employer, who was herself experiencing a significant decrease in income, if her own job was secure and discovered it was; an IT consultant, asking his boss for a straightforward response, discovered his job was likely to be eliminated and began the search for another job, early, unsurprised and still employed.

There are two common denominators to these six strategies for dealing with and healing from financial setbacks and the unnerving feeling that the ground has shifted. All of them remind us, in times when the economy has made us feel powerless, that there are things we can do to help ourselves. And none of them costs money.



James S. Gordon, author of "Unstuck: Your Guide to the Seven-Stage Journey out of Depression," is a clinical professor of psychiatry and family medicine at Georgetown Medical School and director of the Center for Mind-Body Medicine in the District. Comments: [health@washpost.com](mailto:health@washpost.com).

"Vote"  
TB B

Parade Magazine 7/28/19

# Healthy

## Good Health News From Head to Toe

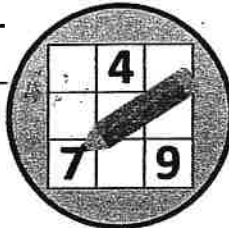
The latest research and developments could add up to a stronger, better you.

By Marygrace Taylor

### 10

The number of years you could shave off of your mental age simply by doing crosswords or Sudoku, say two new British

studies of 19,000 adults age 50 and older. Those who regularly played word or number puzzles scored significantly higher on memory, attention and reasoning assessments—showing that better health really can be a matter of fun and games.



### IN THE KNOW



### 1 in 7

The number of cardiovascular deaths that could be caused by not eating enough fruit, according to Tufts University research presented at the American Society for Nutrition's latest meeting. Another 1 in 12 could be caused by not eating enough vegetables. Adults should get 1½ to 2 cups of fruit and 2 to 3 cups of veggies per day. "Aim to include one of each at every meal," recommends registered dietitian Christine Palumbo. Try spooning fresh fruit salsa over grilled fish, or topping pizza with leftover roasted veggies, she says.



### Soy Om for Your Eyes

If you have glaucoma, mindfulness meditation might give your treatment regimen a boost—75 percent of patients who meditated for an hour a day saw their eye pressure drop by 25 percent in just three weeks, according to a recent study published in *The Journal of Glaucoma*. The practice—which emphasizes focusing on the present moment—was shown to lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol and improve patients' overall quality of life too.

***PERSONAL CARE HEALTH***  
**STEP #4**

*“Our skin is the largest organ to take care of”*

*Brad Bickford, BCD, LCSW*



## 7-COMMON PERSONNEL PRODUCT TOXINS

Before we get into this alarming topic, let's get you smiling or groaning with a good joke:

Q-What do you call a person who is wise about good oral hygiene?

A- “A flosserphor”.5

***Did you know that many of the common personal care products (soap, toothpaste, body wash, lotions, deodorants, air fresheners, shampoos, colognes) you daily use contain potentially toxic ingredients? So when we use these items on our skin, the pores of our body can absorb them and it may not be healthy.***

**Remember, aging skin becomes thinner, loses elasticity, and is overall drier. Our facial skin is thinner than most of our body skin due to greater exposure to UV light, and other aging factors.<sup>1</sup> We have 5 million skin pores all over and 20,000 of these are on our face. Our pores help us by protecting our blood and organs, and are used to help our body's get rid of excess oils and waste.**

**Here are some skincare ingredient chemicals to *AVOID/BE COGNIZANT OF FOR YOUR HEALTH, AND BEAUTIFUL SKIN:***

**#1. PHTHALATES- (plastic softeners & solvents & chemicals used in making fragrances). Found *in plastic containers, lotions, colognes,***

hairspray, shampoos, lipsticks, air fresheners, scented candles. Could contribute to breast cancer, obesity, liver, lung, kidney and male reproductive damage-banned in children's plastic toys in 2008 by Congress).<sup>2</sup>

Phthalates in our personal care products mentioned above are ingredients labeled as DEP(diethyl phthalate), DHP(dibutyl phthalate)etc.\_

Remember to NEVER microwave or freeze plastic containers with food or water in them. This exacerbates the leeching of phthalates into the ingredients.

( I use a room air freshener whose label states “NO: heavy perfumes, aerosols, phthalates, dyes, formaldehyde.”)

**#2. PARABENS (preservative)- Present in shampoos, lotions, deodorants and fragrances. (Labeled as methylparaben, propylparaben, butylparaben, ethylparaben etc).**

Parabens have been found to be scalp irritants, and bond with estrogen in the body possibly weakening it's influence as a hormone.<sup>3</sup> (My shampoo purchased on line and in several local food stores is paraben free and cleans my hair beautifully).

**#3. SODIUM LAURYL SULFATE-(a surfacant labeled as SLS)surface acting agent that separate oils from skin and bacteria from teeth-it creates suds. On skin, it could cause drying and irritation for some. Found in shampoos, detergents, soaps & toothpastes.**

It is banned in Europe. Be sure to wash skin off thoroughly with water when using SLS.<sup>4</sup> (My soaps and shampoos bottle states, “Free of parabens, sulfates and gluten.”)

**#4. TRICLOSAN- (*antibacterial agent*) found mostly in some toothpastes, shaving creams-(banned by FDA in soaps/body washes in 2016). Proctor and Gamble removed it from all its products.**

***Research showing inflammation of gut (microbiome)linings in animals, endocrine system cell signaling disruption in humans. (Found in ingredients that say “antibacterial, fights germs/odors”)***<sup>5</sup>

**#5. FLUORIDE- (a chemical) in toothpastes, mouthwashes that could cause dental fluorosis(spots on teeth) in young children(from ingestion of excessive toothpaste and water with high fluoride).**

**American Dental Association states fluoride makes tooth enamel stronger and recommends no more than a pea size amount for children 3-6 yo when brushing their teeth. There have been concerns that children this age might swallow too much fluoride and get fluorosis, a spotting on new teeth <sup>6</sup> (*FDA mandates warning labels on all toothpastes used by children-check it out*). Other researchers don't find this such a serious issue.<sup>7</sup>**

**Make sure your grandchildren and their parents are aware of this and rinse their mouths out well after brushing.**

**#6 GLYCERIN-(is a moisturizer) ingredient in body lotions and creams, however it can also be an irritant for some people.**

**What it does it draw water from deeper in the skin layers to the surface, but in drier or cool climates or in air conditioned rooms it can irritate the skin. Our endodermis (lower skin layer) needs moisture too, and glycerin can pull water from this area causing irritation.**

**So what you can do is mix water to the lotion when you apply it on your**

**skin or just buy another product without glycerin ingredient.8**

**#7 DYES & ALCOHOL-(product appeal and alleged germ killer) these ingredients in many of our mouthwashes are unhealthy for us. The alcohol in mouthwash kills germs but also kills good bacteria in our mouth, and could lead to oral cancer. The American Dental Association recommends against it. 9**

**The dyes that a personal product especially mouthwash contains can eventually stain your teeth and if ingested put stress on your liver which purifies our blood of toxins. 10**

**What to do: Buy alcohol free mouthwash with no dyes(labeled white). These are available in most stores and be sure to thoroughly rinse your mouth with water after using.**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF SOAP TODAY**

**Soap whether in bar or liquid form is essential for all of us now as in the past. It removes a lot of the excess oils and dirt from our skin. Due to the Covid -19 virus we should be using a lot of it.**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF USING SOAP & WATER WITH COVID19**

***Everyone has learned that during the Pandemic it is important to wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. So how does soap and warm water work:***

**Well, first off the COVID19 virus is surrounded by fat/oil molecule membranes. Soap breaks open these membranes. If COVID19 was a *bacterium* this technique would not work to destroy it, only antibiotics and time. Speaking of time, we have records that soap was first used around 2800 BCE in Babylonia. It's formula was a little different then but it was allegedly being used throughout the world.**

**Most of today's bars of soap are made from animal tallow/fat which is superheated and melted. Then lye and certain vegetable oils and fragrances are added to the mix. This eventually is allowed to harden into our bars of soap. However, it's not necessary to slaughter animals to get their fat. They can be gotten from plant oils like almonds, olives, coconuts.<sup>10</sup>**

### **So how does soap work to kill Covid 19 on a molecular level?**

**Simply put without the chemical technical names, soap molecules have two sides. One side is attracted to grease/dirt and oils(hydrophobic) and the other side of the soap molecule is attracted to water (hydrophilic).**

**When the hydrophobic side meets grease/oil/dirt it surrounds it. In COVID19's case, it attaches to it's surrounding membrane. It then opens it up or breaks down the membrane wall of oil/fat around the virus.**

**With COVID 19, they have observed that it takes about *20 seconds for the oil/fat membrane wall around the virus to be broken. SO THIS IS WHY WE HAVE TO SCRUB OUR HANDS/BODY FOR ABOUT 20 SECONDS*(less then that, the virus won't be totally destroyed but can still be washed away in a larger intact form).**

**While this is going on the *hydrophilic side of soap* which is attracted to water, latches on to the water molecules. If these molecules are warm, it helps create more soap suds which loosen the surrounding virus membrane. The *force* of the water and it's *dissolving* quality breaks open the virus membrane then washes the virus down the drain and you are SAFE. Good riddance COVID-19!**

**( *\*Remember don't use DOVE for this- it's not a soap-its a beauty bar!* )**

### **Caveat HAND SANITIZERS**

***Hand sanitizers however, don't kill all of the covid19 virus unless their labels say it contains at least 60% Ethyl Alcohol. You have to get the sanitizer all over your hands and under fingernails, and it can also dry out your skin eventually. The best thing is washing with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.***<sup>11</sup>

***SO LOOK AT THE LABELS OF YOUR PERSONAL CARE PRODUCT INGREDIENTS, AND RESEARCH YOUR PRODUCTS FOR SOME OF THE ABOVE UNHEALTHY INGREDIENTS. GO ONLINE AND EDUCATE YOURSELF TOO. ONE SUCH SITE IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING***



**GROUP(EWG) WHICH HAS A SPECIAL DATABASE CALLED SKIN DEEP.**

**THERE ARE MANY NEW AND HEALTHY PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS WHICH CONTAIN ORGANIC AND OTHER LESS TOXIC CHEMICAL INGREDIENTS. USING THEM WILL KEEP US LIVING HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER, and Better Looking.**

*Brad Bickford, BCD, LCSW 9/15/20*

*.5-Upjoke.com/hygiene-joke accessed 8/11/20*

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*2- Lauren Zanolli, “Phthalates: Why you need to know about the chemicals in cosmetics,” The Guardian (May 23, 2019).*

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*4.Yousuf Mohammed, “What is sodium lauryl sulfate and is it safe to use,” the University of Queensland (December 8, 2019).*

*5 Matt McMillan, “Banned from Soap, Is Triclosan in your Toothpaste?” WEBMD HEALTHNEWS(July 5, 2018).*

*6-WebMD.com/children/fluorosis-symptoms-causes-treatment#1.accessed August 15, 2020*

*7-Dan Oldenburg, “Toothpaste: How Safe” The Washington Post(June 16, 1997).*

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*10- Mareka Gandhi, “Soap industries prefer animal tallow to vegetable fat torturing many creatures in the process,” Firstpost(May 23, 2017).*

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Nash Post 7/2/19

EZ EE

FROM CONSUMER REPORTS

# What's in your toothpaste anyway?

If you've been concerned about your toothpaste containing triclosan — an antibacterial that helps prevent gingivitis — the good news is that it's essentially gone from the U.S. market, though it's still technically permitted.

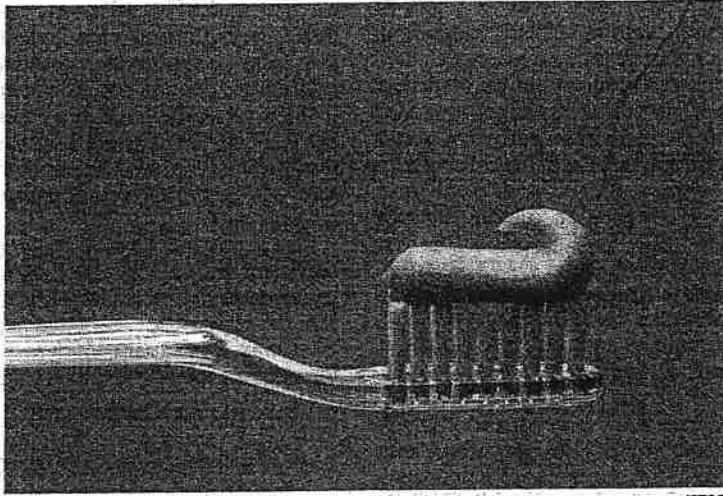
Its removal is probably because of widespread circulation of research suggesting that triclosan may disrupt some thyroid hormones and immunity, and contribute to antibiotic resistance overall, says Tunde Akinleye, a chemist in Consumer Reports's food safety division. (Triclosan was banned from hand soaps and body washes in 2017.)

Until a few months ago, Colgate Total still contained the ingredient. But it has now been updated to a triclosan-free formula, renamed Colgate Total SF.

That's good news for consumers, Akinleye says, "because triclosan is just not worth the risk." So if you have a tube of the old formula in your bathroom, we suggest tossing it. Wondering what else may be in your toothpaste?

Here are a few words worth paying attention to.

**ADA seal of acceptance:** A toothpaste bearing this seal from the American Dental Association must be safe and effective at whatever its label claims. It also must contain fluoride, have no ingredients that "cause or contribute to" decay and not harm teeth.



ISTOCK

**Triclosan, which may have adverse health effects, was essentially removed from toothpaste in the U.S. market. But there are other ingredients in your toothpaste tube worth knowing about.**

**Abrasives:** Calcium carbonate and modified silica help to remove food debris and surface stains.

**Baking soda:** Toothpaste with baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) shows some promise for reducing plaque and may slightly decrease gum bleeding from gingivitis compared with toothpaste that doesn't have it.

**Desensitizers:** Used regularly, ingredients such as sodium citrate, casein phosphopeptide and potassium nitrate may help relieve uncomfortable sensitivity. They "are effective in some people and not in others," says Richard

Niedermaier, professor at the NYU College of Dentistry.

**Fluoride:** This active ingredient comes in several different forms (including sodium fluoride and stannous fluoride) and helps protect teeth from decay. "Fluoride is effective at reducing cavities by 20 to 30 percent," Niedermaier says. Stannous fluoride may also help with sensitivity and gum inflammation. You can buy fluoride-free toothpaste, but it probably won't help reduce cavities.

**Sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS):** SLS is called a detergent, but it has little cleaning power. Instead, it creates foam to help circulate

the toothpaste into nooks and crannies. Some people may get canker sores or experience peeling of mouth tissue in as little as one use. If you're among them, look for SLS-free or "nonfoaming" toothpaste.

**Whiteners:** Basic whiteners include hydrogen peroxide, which chemically lightens teeth, and polyphosphates, such as sodium hexametaphosphate, said to help with enamel staining.

But some experts say these aren't concentrated enough or in contact with tooth surfaces long enough to make a noticeable difference. And polyphosphates may cause mouth irritations.

**Xylitol:** Some small studies suggest that toothpaste with both fluoride and xylitol may be better at cavity prevention than a fluoride-only product. But experts say that even brushing several times daily is unlikely to deliver enough xylitol to provide a benefit.

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**Essential Tips and Facts**

See that long list of ingredients on the back of the bottle? Some probably aren't as safe as you'd hope.

- 1 Top tips for safer products
- 2 Frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- 3 Why Skin Deep®?
- 4 Myths on cosmetic safety
- 5 User's guide to Skin Deep®

**About Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep**

It's our mission at Environmental Working Group to use the power of information to protect human health and the environment. EWG's Skin Deep database gives you practical solutions to protect yourself and your family from everyday exposures to chemicals. We launched Skin Deep in 2004 to create online profiles for cosmetics and personal care products and their potential hazards and health concerns. Our aim is to fill in where industry and government leave off. Companies are allowed to use almost any ingredient they wish. The U.S. government doesn't review the safety of products before they're sold. Our staff scientists compare the ingredients on personal care product labels and websites to information in nearly 60 toxicity and regulatory databases. Now in its eighth year, EWG's Skin Deep database provides you with easy-to-navigate ratings for a wide range of products and ingredients on the market.

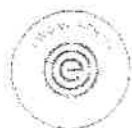
**Read more:**

- [Quick facts on Skin Deep](#)
- [Skin Deep Product and Ingredient Databases](#)
- [Data sources - toxicity, regulatory, and study availability databases](#)
- [Skin Deep's Dual Rating Factors](#)

**Quick facts on Skin Deep**

Skin Deep contains information and online hazard assessments for:

**70,116 products | 2,169 brands**



EWG VERIFIED

**Skin Deep Product and Ingredient Databases**

Below we describe the data sources and the methodology we use to construct Skin Deep's linked databases of ingredients, products, brands, companies, hazards, testing availability, and regulatory status.

**Product Details**

The core of Skin Deep is an electronic product database that contains ingredients in 70,116 products. EWG obtained detailed information on these products from online retailers, manufacturers, product packaging, and, to a lesser extent, through other methods described below. In most cases the information we obtain includes a brand name, product name, directions for use, warnings, ingredients, package/advertising text, and indications (cosmeceuticals).

In order for Skin Deep users to easily find the most current products on the market, EWG will mark any products that have been in the database for longer than 3 years as "old formulation." Products that have not been verified in the last 6 years will be removed from the database. This will ensure that the most up-to-date products show up first on when consumers search the database.

Get The Guide!

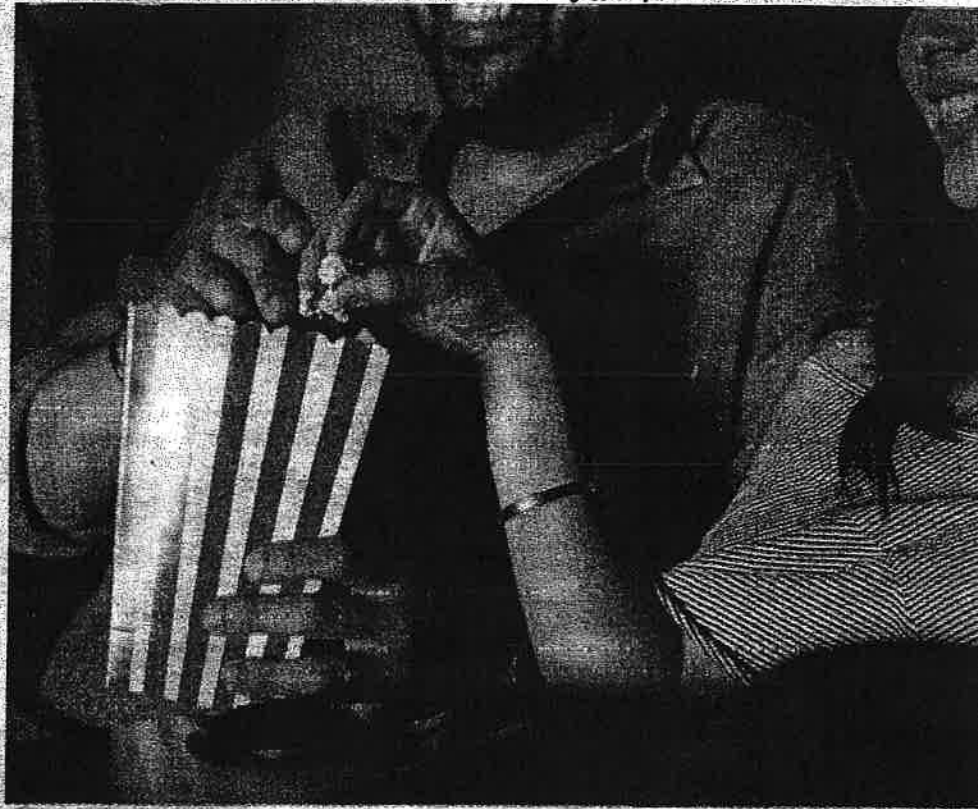
**Donate Now!**

Source	Current Formulations (products found on the market in the last 3 years)	-Old Formulations (products found on the market between 3 and 6 years ago)
Label information in electronic format from a variety of online retailers	0	-38
Ingredient information provided to FDA by companies as part of the Voluntary Cosmetics Registration Program (VCRP)	0	39
Label information provided to EWG from companies	25,634	44,449

**Value-Added Product Information**

Every product added to Skin Deep is carefully reviewed by EWG staff to identify product type, product use and composition, target demographic, and special product claims.

BY PAUL DAWSON  
AND BRIAN SHELDON



Before you dive into a bag of popcorn at a holiday blockbuster, be aware of the hidden risks.

ISTOCK

The holidays are upon us, and with them all sorts of celebrations that involve food and drinks. Many of us will engage in typical eating-related behaviors — such as looking at a menu, sharing a bite with a friend or double-dipping that carrot stick — without a second thought. Unfortunately, these seemingly innocuous habits can spread disease, as we learned through the many germ-laden experiments we conducted for our new book, "Did You Just Eat That?"

No matter the occasion, humans can encounter or transmit infectious agents in a variety of ways — by touching surfaces or people, sharing food or drinks, or coughing or sneezing. The microbes involved can be related to foodborne illnesses, such as *E. coli* or salmonella, or can be viral disease agents that cause the common cold and influenza. Contagious disease agents often lurk in the bioaerosols — tiny water droplets — coming from our mouth and nose. These droplets are about 10- to 100-plus-times larger than bacterial cells and viral particles, providing plenty of room for nasty microbes to ride along when the bioaerosols are expelled during breathing, coughing, sneezing or even blowing out birthday candles.

Other than wearing gloves and masks wherever we venture, what's a partygoer to do? If you want to stay healthy, here are six situations to avoid this holiday season.

### Eating birthday cake

Will any of your holiday celebrations coincide with someone's birthday? If so, you might want to politely decline a slice of cake: Our studies showed that blowing out birthday candles can transfer oral bacteria to the cake surface. In our experiments, nearly 3,000 more bacteria — and as many as 37,000 bacteria — were recovered from the surface of birthday cakes after the candles were blown out, compared with control cakes where candles remained lit.

### Using hand air dryers

If you're in a public restroom, try to avoid the hand air dryers, which blow bacteria around along with the hot air (it is for this reason that they are not recommended for medical facilities by several organizations, including the Infectious Diseases Society of America). In our study, we found an average of more than 18,000 bacteria on restroom hand air dryers in grocery stores and more

than 2,000 in gas stations and on a college campus. (In general, the activation push buttons and air intake vents in male bathroom dryers had more bacteria than hand dryers found in female bathrooms.) One study out of the United Kingdom found that hand air dryers increased bacteria populations on hands fivefold after washing, while paper towels decreased bacterial populations on hands by 42 percent. In our estimation, hand towels are your best option.

### Requesting ice and lemons

In developed countries, it's rare for ice to be contaminated before freezing, but it does happen: In 1987, ice-borne Norwalk virus sickened more than 5,000 people in Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey. What's more likely is that bacteria and viruses will be transferred from hands touching your ice and lemon before they are plopped into your drink. We inoculated our test subjects' hands with *E. coli* bacteria and then had them touch wet lemons or cubes of ice. The result? More than 6,000 *E. coli* bacteria were transferred to 100 percent of the wet lemons or ice cubes touched by test subjects' hands.

### Sharing food

Psychologists have found that sharing food increases intimacy, but you are also sharing your oral microbes. We found that 70,000 more bacteria per milliliter

*No matter the occasion, humans can encounter or transmit infectious agents in a variety of ways — by touching surfaces or people, sharing food or drinks, or coughing or sneezing.*

transferred to a bowl of broth from a spoon placed in the mouth than from a spoon not placed in the mouth. The transfer population to rice via the mouth/spoon route was 800,000 bacteria per gram of rice; more than 2 million bacteria per gram were transferred when using hands alone (a common practice in some cultures).

And before you head out to the cinema for that holiday blockbuster, consider: Eating popcorn in a movie theater may also have hidden risks. First, the seats and armrests you touch just before diving into a bag of popcorn have been touched by many other people and are probably contaminated. A report by the ABC show "20/20" found that the seats and

Angeles movie theaters contained fecal bacteria. If you touch a seat or armrest and then dive into a bucket of popcorn, such germs can contaminate your snack. Our testing showed that 85 percent of the handfuls of popcorn touched with hands inoculated with *E. coli* contained these bacteria, while 79 percent of the popcorn samples remaining in the serving bowl contained *E. coli* transferred from the person taking a handful of popcorn from the same bowl.

### Double-dipping

George Costanza of "Seinfeld" was wrong and Timmy was right! Double-dipping is like putting your whole mouth right in the dip. We found that on average, between 100 and 1,000 bacteria were transferred from the mouth to the dip by double-dipping a cracker. And, as you might expect, the thinner (less viscous) the dip (salsa vs. cheese or chocolate), the more bacteria transferred from the mouth to the dip, because a greater volume of the thinner dip drops from the cracker back into the bowl. On the other hand, after two hours at room temperature, the number of bacteria in the salsa had dropped to similar levels as those in the chocolate and cheese dips because of its acidity level, but the salsa still had significant levels of bacteria.

### Handling a menu

meal, bacteria face a real challenge, are in the hands of staff members known to us. In our study, more than 2,000 bacteria per square centimeter were found on other surfaces. In our study, 100 percent of the menus we had tested had bacteria on them. In our study, 100 percent of the menus we had tested had bacteria on them.

There are many ways to reduce the risk of infection. One of the most effective is to wash your hands frequently. Another is to avoid touching surfaces or people. A third is to avoid sharing food or drinks. A fourth is to avoid coughing or sneezing. A fifth is to avoid double-dipping. A sixth is to avoid eating birthday cake.

These are just a few of the many ways to stay healthy during the holidays. For more information, see our new book, "Did You Just Eat That?"

Paul L. Dawson, MD, is a professor of Food, Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of North Carolina. Brian Sheldon, MD, is a professor of Microbiology at the University of North Carolina. Their book, "Did You Just Eat That?" is available at Amazon.com.

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## STAYING HEALTHY

backfires, selecting for germs that are tough to kill. But no one was prepared for how easily resistance could spread even when the drugs were used in what was thought of as appropriate treatment.

The problem is that bacteria share genetic information much more readily than anyone thought. Individual cells—often from different species—routinely exchange tiny loops of DNA called plasmids. They will even pick up snippets of DNA from dead bacteria or viruses. Once a strain of bacteria survives destruction by antibiotics, chances are it will eventually pass on the genes for resistance to other germs. “It’s a numbers game,” says Dr. Stuart Levy, a Tufts researcher and author of *The Antibiotic Paradox*. And because they live everywhere and reproduce quickly, bacteria have the upper hand.

It doesn’t help matters that many Americans have come to think of antibiotics as tools for prevention. Patients will often ask for the drugs to keep their colds from turning into sinus infections, even though antibiotics have no effect on the viruses that cause colds in the first place.

What’s harder to evaluate is the treatment of something like a middle-ear infection, which is indeed caused by several different types of bacteria, including *Pneumococcus*. Left alone, a handful of these infections could lead to permanent hearing loss. And yet their treatment has, in just the past 10 years in the U.S., boost-

## SEX, BUGS AND DNA

Many bacteria have developed intricate strategies of foiling antibiotics. Here are some of the most common ways in which genes for resistance are transferred from one germ to another

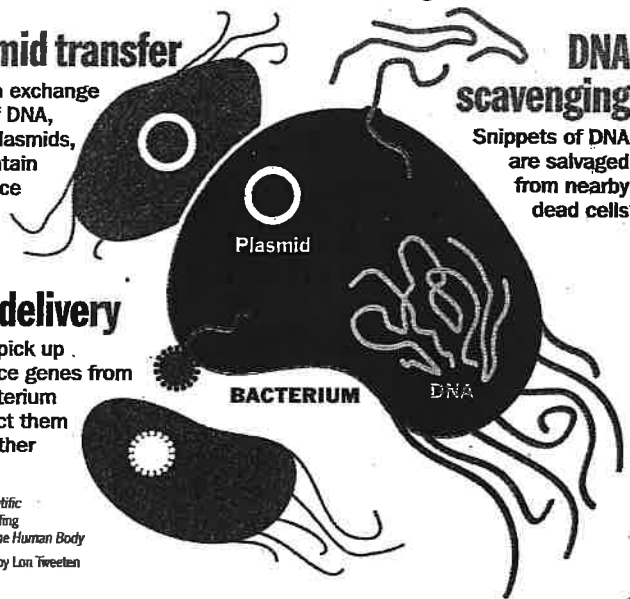
### Plasmid transfer

Bacteria exchange loops of DNA, called plasmids, that contain resistance genes

### Viral delivery

Viruses pick up resistance genes from one bacterium and inject them into another

Sources: Scientific American; Dorling Kindersley’s *The Human Body*  
TIME Graphic by Lon Twesten



### DNA scavenging

Snippets of DNA are salvaged from nearby dead cells

ed the prevalence of penicillin-resistant pneumococci to more than 20%.

No one yet advocates allowing all bacterial infections to run their course. But don’t be surprised if your doctor takes more of a wait-and-see approach with your next case of flu (which, like a cold, is caused by viruses). Hospitals are also learning how to vary the drugs they give their patients to diminish the chances of selecting for ever more resistant germs.

Relief may soon be on the way. Thanks to advances in the new science of genomics, researchers have started to scour bacterial DNA for new and possibly better targets for drug development. The goal is to produce a compound that works

so differently from today’s antibiotics that germs won’t know how to start developing resistance. Other research has produced drugs that help restore penicillin’s ability to clobber resistant germs, provided the compounds are given in combination.

In the meantime, the FDA is so concerned about the possibility of losing Cipro and similar drugs that it has asked pharmaceutical companies to stop selling them to poultry farmers. Bayer, which manufactures both Cipro and enrofloxacin, is contesting the idea, arguing that resistance levels have stabilized and can be managed.

The question remains: How much resistance are you willing to live with? “Most infections you get that are drug resistant

came to you drug resistant,” Levy says. You can do your part to halt their spread by not taking antibiotics unnecessarily and following a doctor’s orders when they are prescribed. Saving pills for later, so you don’t have to get a new prescription, is definitely a bad idea. “We’ll be in this business for a long time to come,” says Dr. Stephen Lory, professor of microbiology and molecular genetics at Harvard Medical School. “We will come up with something; bacteria will become resistant. We’ll come up with something new.” It’s the kind of contest where no matter how hard you fight, the best you can hope for is a draw. —Reported by David Bjerklie and Alice Park/New York

## Hands Too Clean?

If the widespread use of antibiotics is helping drug-resistant germs spread, will things get even worse if everybody starts using those new antibacterial soaps? No one knows for sure, but there is cause for concern.

Unlike antibiotics, which are either found in nature or mimic the action of natural substances, antibacterial soaps contain triclosan and other synthetic chemicals that manufacturers once claimed could wipe out all bacteria. But in the past two years, researchers have shown that some germs can, at least in the laboratory, mutate to counter triclosan’s effects. That could

◀OVERKILL: More than 700 household products contain antibacterial chemicals

be a problem because so many household products—from sponges to cutting boards to dishwashing liquids—now contain triclosan. Once a few germs develop resistance, they will be much more likely to survive in a world full of triclosan. Many researchers believe that prudent consumers, for their own good—not to mention the good of the planet—should keep triclosan products out of the house.

What about alcohol-based sanitizers such as Purell? They are less likely to pose a problem, because liquid alcohol quickly evaporates and leaves no bug-fighting residue. —C.G.

out, *staphylococcus aureus*, a bacteria that can be transferred from your skin to the towel. Normally benign, it can cause infection if it comes into contact with a wound — and it can also live on dry surfaces.

**REPLACE:** Use indefinitely if washed at high temperatures without damage.

## " Pillows "

A brand-new pillow doubles its weight in three years, thanks to remains of dust mites that build up inside it.

This could aggravate hay fever, eczema or asthma, - particularly since your face is touching the pillow and you will be breathing in the remains, explains Professor Jean Emberlin, director of Allergy UK.

Dust mite waste also leaves people more susceptible to rhinitis (stuffy nose) and sinusitis. Washing your pillow

will help — do so every few months at 60c for at least 20 minutes. If you have asthma or allergies, buy hypoallergenic pillows, which are usually made from foam.

Duvets also harbour dust mites and skin debris in the same way.

In one study by the University of Worcester, ten typical duvets were analysed and scientists discovered they contained up to 20,000 live house dust mites along with bacteria and fungal spores. Duvets should be washed every six months.

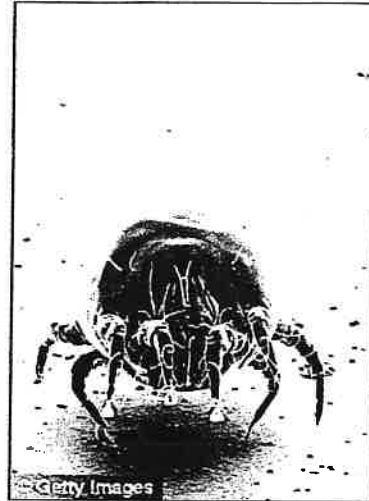
**REPLACE:** Pillows, every two years; duvets every five years.

## " HAIRBRUSHES "

One hair follicle can hold 50,000 germs and your brush can contribute to this. Brushes can also collect residues of hair products which can become sticky and attract dirt.

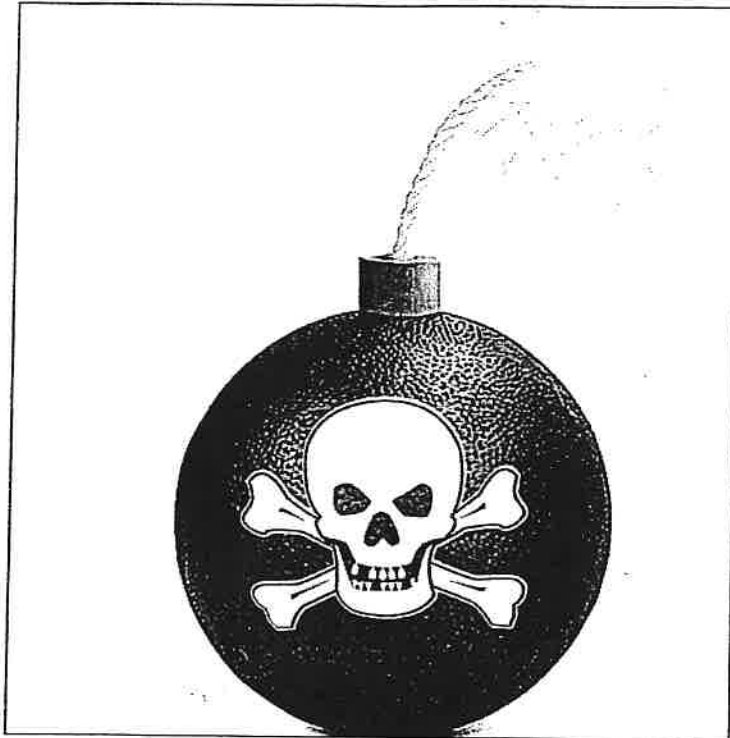
'We also have lots of bacteria on the skin and what may affect one person may not affect another,' adds dermatologist Dr Andrew Wright, consultant dermatologist with Bradford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

So diseases such as impetigo, a contagious skin infection that usually produces blisters or sores on the face, neck or hands can spread from one person to another by sharing a brush.



**Unwelcome guests: Dust mites can live in your duvet and pillows**

habits. This can lead to severe food poisoning.



**Beware: Seemingly innocent household items can harbour harmful bacteria**

### "Wooden Spoons"

Don't put wooden spoons in the dishwasher, especially not on a regular basis, as they may crack and therefore provide a haven for bacteria. Instead, soak in disinfectant for about half an hour and then wash with boiling soapy water.

**REPLACE:** After five years, but earlier if the wood cracks, or if any part becomes soft or dark, as this could mean the wood is rotting and retaining bacteria.

### "Toothbrushes"

Research suggests that a range of serious health problems, including heart disease, stroke, arthritis and chronic infections could be linked to 'unhygienic' toothbrushes.

A study by Manchester University found that the average toothbrush contained about ten million germs, including a high percentage of potentially fatal bacteria such as staphylococci, streptococcus, E. coli and candida.

'You can't see the build-up of germs, but you can see the distorted and broken bristles that will harbour the bacteria, explains Wimpole Street dentist Dr Charles Ferber.

**REPLACE:** Every three months.

### "Bath Towels"

These need to be washed once a week at 90c or more to wipe

Sponges

***FAMILY & PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP  
HEALTH  
STEP #5***

***“Support, communicate, touch, love, joke”***



## **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH GOOD COMMUNICATION**

*Relationships are the key to happiness and based on good communication skills. This includes good talking, listening and thinking/emotional tools. Relationships hopefully will last, but sometimes they don't. There are thousands of people out there and so the loss of one can be rejuvenated with another. You just have to get OUT and meet them.*

### **Initiating Talk:**

1. **Smile and introduce yourself with/without handshake. You have nothing to lose as an initial test as to whether it will go further.**
2. **Ask a question-of something you have in common('Why are you interested in this class?' or "How long does it take to get here" or "Were you affected by the snow")?**
3. **Listen to see if they \*reciprocate which shows possible interest.**

### **Next step:**

1. **Take a risk and ask more questions about what you have in common("So what did you think of class today?" "Did you understand his comments about..")?**
2. **If get response and questions back, take risk(maybe after 3 classes or encounters unless you sense a real good chemistry) and ask if person would like to get together before or after class next week for chat, drink, bite to eat etc.**
  - A). **If response is positive set definite time, place etc.-If negative or non committal, don't worry there maybe other personal reasons why they didn't commit, and there are other people out there. Don't take it personally.**
  - B). **If initial time together seems positive ASK if they want to exchange phone #s or emails "Would you like to exchange phone #s/emails" or "can I get your email/phone#?"**

### *Maintaining Relationships:*

1. Communicate at least once a week or every other. Suggest activities to share, show up for activities, ask about their health, families etc. Don't load them with personal problem issues initially-keep it light. **HAVE FUN.**

\* With immediate FAMILY members -communicate at least WEEKLY, and whenever they call/text/email *make it a priority to respond/ talk/listen as soon as possible.* (Is watching a TV show more important?-turn it off).

### *Essential Communication skills:*

\*Reciprocal communication: Whenever someone asks you a question like “How are you?” you **SHOULD** *return the communication* with “How are you?” or If they ask “What did you do this weekend or how was your weekend” you should respond the same.

Length of communication: Don't talk more than *30-45 seconds* unless you are giving a lecture or elaborate explanation. Most people will turn you off after this amount of time. You should make your comment then stop and ask them or listen to their response.

Listening skills: Be a good listener by looking at person (some cultural exceptions), not fighting, or interrupting. This is especially important in arguments. Let person make their comment or point without interrupting, then respond.

Tone of communication: Don't raise voice even when angry/upset. Get emotional control over your emotions first by deep breathing, taking time out etc. then present issue in somewhat calm voice. People won't even listen if they are being yelled at (We also problem solve better and think more clearly when we are not emotional).

**CONFLICTS/ARGUMENTS-**Remember the relationship is the most important thing so remember that, and always be respectful and patient. Maybe you will have to change eventually or take a time out and let things cool off which provides you also with time to problem solve the issue differently.

## SHOULD I MAKE NEW FRIENDS AS I GET OLDER?

ANYONE WHO'S EVER MADE ROOM FOR A BIG milestone of adult life—a job, a marriage, a move—has likely shoved a friendship to the side. After all, there is no contract locking us to the other person, as in marriage, and there are no blood bonds, as in family. Friendships are flexible. “We choose our friends, and our friends choose us,” says William K. Rawlins, Stocker Professor of Communication Studies at Ohio University. “That’s a really distinctive attribute of friendships.”

But modern life can become so busy that people forget to keep choosing each other. That’s when friendships fade, and there’s reason to believe it’s happening more than ever. Loneliness is on the rise, and feeling lonely has been found to increase a person’s risk of dying early by 26%—and to be even worse for the body than obesity and air pollution. Loneliness wreaks health havoc in many ways, particularly because it removes the safety net of social support. “When we perceive our world as threatening, that can be associated with an increase in heart rate and blood pressure,” says Julianne Holt-Lunstad, professor of psychology and neuroscience at Brigham Young University and author of the recent study linking loneliness to mortality. Over time, she says, these effects can lead to hypertension, which increases risk for cardiovascular disease.

**THE ANTIDOTE IS SIMPLE:** friendship. It helps protect the brain and body from stress, anxiety and depression. “Being around trusted others, in essence, signals safety and security,” says Holt-Lunstad. A study last year found that friendships are especially beneficial later in life. Having supportive friends in old age was a stronger predictor of well-being than family ties—suggesting that the friends you pick may be at least as important as the family you’re born into.

Easy as the fix may sound, it can be difficult to keep and make friends as an adult. But research suggests that

you only need between four and five close pals. If you’ve ever had a good one, you know what you’re looking for. “The expectations of friends, once you have a mature understanding of friendship, don’t really change across the life course,” Rawlins says. “People want their close friends to be someone they can talk to, someone they can depend upon and someone they enjoy.”

If you’re trying to replenish a dried-up friendship pool, start by looking inward. Think back to how you met some of your very favorite friends. Volunteering on a political campaign or in a favorite spin class? Playing in a band? “Friendships are always about something,” says Rawlins. Common passions help people bond at a personal level, and they bridge people of different ages and life experiences.

Whatever you’re into, someone else is too. Let your passion guide you toward people. Volunteer, for example, take a new course or join a committee at your local religious center. If you like yoga, start going to classes regularly. Fellow dog lovers tend to congregate at dog runs. Using apps and social media—like Facebook to find a local book club—is also a good way to find simpatico folks.

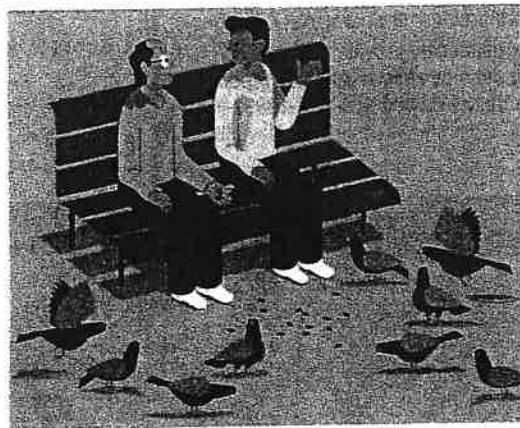
Once you meet a potential future friend, then comes the scary part: inviting them to do something. “You do have to put yourself out there,” says Janice McCabe, associate professor of sociology at Dartmouth College and a friendship researcher. “There’s a chance that the person will say no. But there’s also the chance they’ll say yes, and something really great could happen.”

The process takes time, and you may experience false starts. Not everyone will want to put in the effort necessary to be a good friend.

Which is reason enough to nurture the friendships you already have—even those that span many miles. Start by scheduling a weekly phone call. “It seems kind of funny to do that, because we often think about scheduling as tasks or work,” says McCabe. “But it’s easy, especially as

an adult, to lose track of making time for a phone call.” When a friend reaches out to you, don’t forget to tell them how much it means to you.

It’s never too late to start being a better pal. The work you put into friendships—both new and old—will be well worth it for your health and happiness.  
—MANDY OAKLANDER



**PRO-TIP**

*I live alone. It's a lonesome type of life. A lot of my friends have passed away. But I have Princess, my late wife's Pomeranian. She's there to greet me and sit on my lap while I watch TV. She gives me all the affection I need. She makes my life worthwhile.*

MYER SEIDMAN, 92; former sales manager; Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Longevity pro tips reported by Olivia B. Waxman

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



**RULES FOR THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS VISIT:**

**NO JUDGING ME. THAT INCLUDES MY CLOTHES, WEIGHT, CAR, AND WHO I'M DATING.**

**NO DISCUSSING POLITICS. YOU ARE ALL LOONS.**

**I do not find you small child as end as you do. Please keep in mind when the screaming or throwing at my head**

**Please don't tell me how to live my life. Remember, I see you as loons.**

**And please do not brag about your own life. It makes me want to shove your head into the rear end of the turkey.**

**Lastly, none of these rules apply to me. I AM GREAT.**

**COMMUNICATION IS TO A HAPPY F**

*Communication is the key to a happy family*

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BY S

## Creating a Strong Family

# Why Are Families So Important?

John DeFrain, Extension Specialist, Family and Community Development; Gail Brand, Extension Educator;  
Jeanette Friesen, Extension Educator; Dianne Swanson, Extension Educator

This is one in a series of NebGuides by UNL Extension Family Life specialists and educators who explore the attributes and experiences of strong families.

The late David R. Mace, a pioneer in the field of marriage and family enrichment, was fond of saying, "Nothing in the world could make human life happier than to greatly increase the number of strong families."

We agree with him, and for that reason applaud the work being done in many communities to strengthen and support families. Families, in all the diverse patterns, sizes, creeds, and colors they come in, are, indeed, the heart and soul of human society.

Marriage and family are perhaps society's oldest and most resilient institutions. From the beginning of human life, people have grouped themselves into families to find emotional, physical, and communal support. Although social commentators often have predicted the demise of both marriage and the family, families not only survive but continue to change and evolve. Family structures may vary around the world, and yet, the value of our *family* endures.

Families are the basic, foundational social units in all human communities around the world, and healthy individuals within healthy families are at the core of a healthy society. It's in everyone's best interest, then, to help create a positive environment for all families. This can be a labor of love for all of our social institutions: educational institutions, businesses, human and family service agencies, religious institutions, health organizations — literally everyone involved in the daily life of a community.

Families are our most intimate social environment. They are the places where we begin the vital processes of socializing our children, and teaching them — in partnership with countless others in the community — how to survive and thrive in the world.

Many marriages are experiencing difficulties, and part of the challenge in building family-friendly communities is to also build marriage-friendly communities. A good way to do this is to develop couples enrichment courses and activities. This can be done through teamwork among various institu-

tions, including schools and colleges, religious institutions, volunteer groups, and family service organizations such as extension.

Involving fathers in the day-to-day life of families is crucial. Moms shouldn't have to carry all the burdens of childrearing alone. And dads should not have to miss all the wonderful feelings a parent experiences watching one's children grow and learn.

Of course, countless single-parent families are strong and emotionally healthy. Besides, in many cases involving violence, sexual abuse, alcohol, or other drug abuse, it may be best that a parent with any of those problems or behaviors be out of the picture for the rest of the family's personal well-being and safety. But in most cases, it is important for communities to find creative ways to strengthen and support two-parent families and make it possible for fathers to enjoy the benefits of increased time and involvement with their children.

Sometimes marriages get lost in all the hubbub surrounding modern life. We attend to our children's needs. We make the boss happy at work. But we often let our own personal health and well-being slide, and we borrow time and energy from our marriage to satisfy other demands in our world. The problem with this is that a healthy marriage is at the heart of a healthy two-parent family. We are reminded of the saying, "The best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother." And vice versa. Since the marriage is the foundation for the family, the needs of the relationship have to be carefully nurtured. This doesn't always come easily in a family. Sometimes it takes thought, planning, and effort on the part of both adults to keep the marriage in the forefront.

Life in families can bring us great joy or excruciating pain, depending upon how well family relationships are going. A healthy marriage and family can be a valuable resource for helping us endure the difficulties that life inevitably brings. Unhealthy or dysfunctional relationships can create terrible problems that may persist from one generation to the next.

Individuals and families successful in marriage and relationships will strengthen community vitality and future generations. By working together in our communities, we demonstrate the importance of families to the well-being of the total community, and we contribute to the happiness of all.

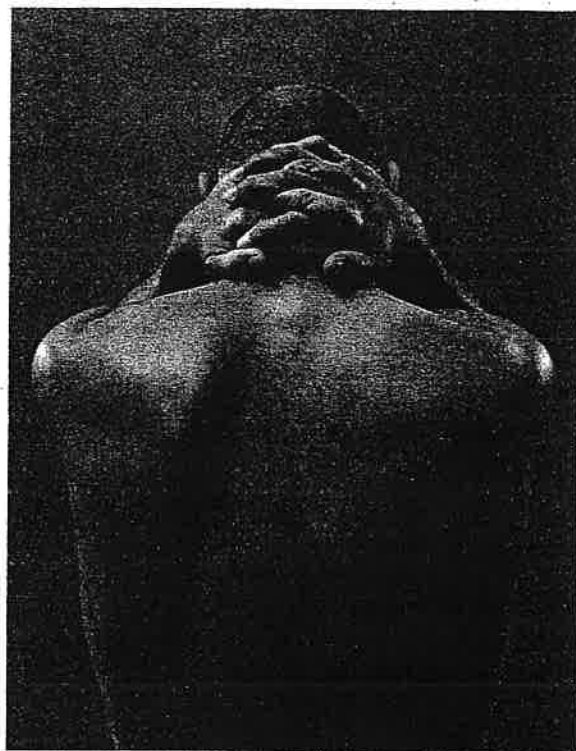
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**SHE HATES CLIMBING INTO A COLD BED. BEVERLY HERZOG** has been widowed for 21 years, but she still can't get used to this absence. She married at 18, and every night for 49 years, her husband, Bernard, was snuggled up next to her. "I miss that terribly," she says.

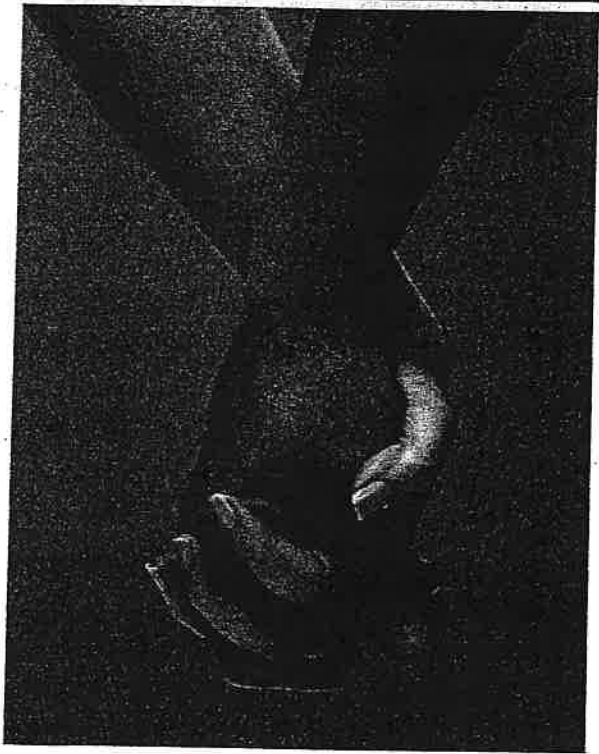
She bought a body pillow, which helps a little. But it's not the same. The truth is, there's no replacement for human contact, even if—maybe especially if—you're 88. "I like being touched, being stroked, being held," says Herzog, who lives in the Hebrew Home at Riverdale, a skilled nursing facility in New York. "Anyone who says they don't isn't telling the truth. You feel abandoned if you haven't been touched. We all need somebody."

The Hebrew Home has put an unusual emphasis on that idea. Staff here are encouraged to hold residents' hands and offer gentle caresses. Beauticians are trained to massage the feet during pedicures, as well as the scalp and neck during shampoos. And intimate relations between residents are not discouraged—a rarity in long-term care. Since she moved here almost three years ago, Herzog hasn't taken full advantage of this groundbreaking policy, but she's been able to enjoy the company of "a few gentlemen," she says—though their dates sound as chaste as those of mid-century teenagers. "I won't be intimate with just a Johnny-come-lately who walks off the street," she says. "But I'm in favor of people being close. People like to feel alive. How do you feel alive? Being close to somebody."

When you're younger, it might be easy to take touch for granted. The skin is our largest sensory interface with the world. And it's always on. We can close our eyes or



plug our ears to imagine losing sight or hearing, but it's hard to imagine losing the ability to feel. It's thought to be the first sense that we develop in the womb. Depriving newborns of touch is a disaster—growth is slowed, and serious cognitive and behavioral disorders emerge that can persist into adulthood. Touch is crucial for forging that first emotional bond with a parent and for creat-



ing the unique human experience. "Seeing's Believing," wrote the 18th-century English physician Thomas Fuller, "but Feeling's the Truth."

The essentiality of touch endures as we age: It is the social glue that binds parents with children, and sexual partners into lasting couples. Nonsexual social touch connects people in the community and in the workplace, fostering gratitude,

sympathy and trust. Doctors who touch their patients are not only considered more caring—their patients have better outcomes. One study showed that basketball teams that engage in more celebratory touch, such as high fives and chest bumps, play more cooperatively and win more games.

When we grow older, our sense of touch degrades. At about age 20, we start to lose nerve endings in skin at a rate of about 1 percent each year. On average, an 80-year-old has just one-quarter of the touch receptors of a 20-year-old. The loss is so gradual that we might not even notice, but the muting of our sense of touch over time can take a corresponding toll on quality of life. The cruel irony, of course, is that as sensitivity fades, the more we need to be touched—but the opportunity to experience touch often diminishes as well. "Aging people get touched less," says Tiffany Field, author of the book *Touch* and the founder and director of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. "Their grandchildren aren't nearby; their spouses die. It's very unfortunate."

**A** MASSAGE CHANGED Julia Wilcox's life. Not one she received, but one she performed. This was two decades ago, when she accompanied her mother, then in her 60s, on a wellness retreat for stroke survivors and their caregivers. Free massages were on offer to all guests, so she signed up her mom and herself. Her mother, who also had diabetes and suffered from nerve damage in her legs and hands, climbed up on the table. The massage seemed to offer nearly instant relief. "She just melted," recalls Wilcox, now 57.

The massage therapist, sensing her interest, invited Wilcox to help him rub her mother's back and legs. "We mirrored each other's strokes," she says. "That was it for me." The experience launched a new career for Wilcox, who lives in West Bloomfield, Michigan: In addition to signing up her mom for monthly massages, she left her job in information technology and became a full-time massage therapist.

What exactly is going on under the skin when we are touched? The cascade of physical effects is surprisingly complex: The sense of touch is formed by an array of sensors embedded in the nerve endings of our skin, each a beautiful, specialized micromachine that extracts information about the tactile world. There's one sensor for texture, another for vibration, yet another for pressure. Therapeutic touch lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol and increases the amount of oxytocin, the so-called love hormone, which is credited with mother-and-child bonding, among other things. When we put our hands on each other, we're tapping into deep associations between touch and emotion that are kindled at the dawn of life.

The good news is that there are all kinds of ways to harness this power. Even just rubbing your own skin in the shower can be therapeutic, Field says—this increases activity along the vagus nerve that runs from the brain stem to the

abdomen. Stimulating the nerve can offer benefits throughout the body, from improved digestion to a jolt of the mood-boosting neurotransmitter serotonin. Serotonin is “the body’s natural antidepressant,” she says.

When it comes to touch, giving can be even better than receiving: In one study, Field had a group of volunteers with an average age of 70 get massages three times a week. Then the same volunteers massaged infants in a shelter for three weeks. Both activities produced benefits, but after massaging the babies, the group reported lower levels of stress hormones, took fewer trips to the doctor and had higher levels of social interactions.

Daniel Reingold, president and CEO of RiverSpring Health, which operates the Hebrew Home, has seen how therapeutic touch can improve the lives of residents. “It may be that the sense of touch diminishes with age, but I’d argue that the impact of touch increases,” he says. He’s found that residents with cognitive issues who experienced a combination of massage, yoga and physical interactions with therapy pets slept better and had a host of behavioral improvements, compared with residents on traditional medications. Other studies report a slew of benefits associated with massage, for conditions ranging from arthritis to voice disorders: One showed that older adults with dementia were more likely to eat nutritious food when gentle touch accompanied verbal encouragement.

**B**UT THE HEBREW Home is best known for its trailblazing—often controversial—approach to residents’ sexual well-being. In 1995, the facility established a Sexual Expression Policy for consensual sexual behavior, a first for a skilled nursing facility. The policy helped to shift the thinking about sexual intimacy, as a civil right for residents in long-term care. New York state has since instituted mandatory training for facility staff and distributes a video made by the Hebrew Home on the subject. Other states have followed suit, and now the subject is a regular part of discussions about care for older people. “Touch is one of the last pleasures we give up,” Reingold says. “Our philosophy is that consenting older adults can engage in whatever they wish, as long as it doesn’t hurt someone or is dangerous. It’s the difference between waiting to die and getting up in the morning happy to see their beloved.”

While the Hebrew Home takes a measured approach to the importance of touch, Len Daley takes a more proactive stance. A psychologist and massage therapist in

## There’s the Rub

*Not feeling it? Here are 4 ways to bring touch into your life*

### GO DANCING

A salsa class involves plenty of interpersonal touch; proponents of dance/movement therapy use dancing to treat psychological woes.

### GET A DOG

Petting Fido for a few moments floods your brain with healthy, mood-boosting hormones.

### GET (OR GIVE!) A MASSAGE

A weekly rub-down from a pro can bring long-term pain relief and a big immunity boost.

### TOUCH YOURSELF

No, not like that. PG-rated self-massage techniques offer a cheap DIY dose of stress reduction.

Montgomery, Alabama, the snow-haired Daley teaches tai chi, yoga and self-massage to veterans at the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System in nearby Tuskegee. Since 2005, he’s also been an organizer and facilitator of Cuddle Parties—public gatherings for the touch-deprived.

The concept traces its roots to the 1970s, when Daley and a massage-therapist friend came up with the idea of Hugs and Cuddles events, where attendees could meet to give and receive nonsexual caresses. In 2004, two New York relationship coaches, Reid Mihalko and Marcia Baczynski, revived the idea and established a framework of rules and principles for structured events. A website—and a movement—was born: Today there are more than 100 trained Cuddle Party facilitators organizing gather-

ings worldwide. A handful of other groups promote similar events, and there are even brick-and-mortar “cuddle shops,” which offer paid by-the-hour cuddling services.

Despite what the name might suggest, Cuddle Parties are scrupulously nonsexual, Daley insists. Each event opens with an hour-long orientation and workshop led by the facilitator to make sure attendees understand the rules—for example, before you touch anyone else, you have to receive explicit verbal consent. Many attendees change into pajamas, but they must be chaste and nonrevealing—“flannel, not lace,” Daley says, and clothes stay on at all times. After orientation, participants can start cuddling—or not. “People ask for what they want,” Daley explains. “Sometimes it’s as simple as conversation; sometimes, it’s lying on the floor and embracing. Or it’s a drawerful of spoons in a long line, or shoulder-rub chains.”

Two hours later, attendees get back into street clothes and return to the real world, stress-free and buzzing on megadoses of oxytocin. Cuddle Parties are usually mixed-gender, intergenerational events, but organizers have arranged parties for all kinds of different groups. Some have only same-sex or LGBT participants; other events are geared specifically to college-age or older cuddlers. “My mother is 91—she goes to Cuddle Parties and loves them,” Daley says.

In these touch-hungry times, do we really need to invite strangers over for group back rubs to satisfy our human need for connection? Daley thinks it might not be a bad idea: “Thirty years from now, the cuddle business will become medicalized—there will be bonding clinics. It’s ahead of its time. The whole culture would turn around.” ■

*David Linden is a professor of neuroscience at Johns Hopkins University and the author of Touch: The Science of Hand, Heart, and Mind. Martha Thomas is a writer based in Baltimore.*



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# Emotional Connection: What Couples Who Stay Together Do Every Day

Enter ZIP or City

April 25, 2018 • By

, GoodTherapy.org Topic Expert



Emotional connection is the bond that keeps people together. It is the glue in relationships. Many couples don't realize that if they are not regularly connecting on an emotional level, the link that keeps them together weakens.

In a previous article I wrote

about what happens to our brains when we feel emotionally disconnected from a partner or spouse. We can feel like our sense of security is threatened, causing us to become fearful. The amygdala, the almond-shaped region in the midbrain, acts as an alarm system, and a sense of panic can set in.

When we don't get relief by reconnecting to loved ones, this can put us in a hyperaroused emotional state. This, in turn, can cause our stress levels to heighten due to elevated cortisol. Physical and mental health and well-being may suffer if cortisol stays elevated over a long period.

In Dr. John Gottman's research, he identified an important dynamic that healthy and emotionally intelligent couples exercise: *turning toward* one another. Turning toward is a subtle or brief positive exchange that helps to deepen a couple's emotional connection.

When partners turn toward one another, they are practicing what Gottman refers to as "bids." Bids are attempts to connect using affection, support,

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may be aware or unaware of the use of a bid, which may look like any of the following:

- A gentle touch
- A hug or kiss
- A smile
- A kind remark
- Listening
- A playful gesture
- A word of encouragement
- Sharing a news event
- Saying "I love you"



**Bids can result in deeper intimacy, greater romance, passion, and a more satisfying sex life.**

Bids can result in deeper <sup>intimacy</sup> greater romance, passion, and a more satisfying <sup>sex</sup> love life. Gottman explains that one secret to lasting love among couples is turning toward each other in little ways every day. He found in his research that couples who regularly practice emotionally connecting stay together longer than those who do not.

Couples who don't practice daily bids can more easily lose their way. When we are not emotionally connecting on a regular basis, our loved ones can feel uncared for or unvalued. The trap of taking a spouse or partner for granted can sneak up, especially if the couple has been together for a long time.

Given our busy and hectic lives, it is understandable how we can lose track of letting a loved one know how much we appreciate them. The risk of emotional disconnection is greater when we feel burdened, overwhelmed, or stressed.

Here are two things you can do today to emotionally connect with your partner or spouse:

### 1. Be intentional about turning toward your partner.

Being intentional and practicing emotional connection every day can make a big difference. You don't need to wait and plan an expensive vacation to emotionally connect. You can start right now, right where you are.

Here are a couple of suggestions to get you going. If you are near your partner or spouse, try reaching out and holding their hand. If you are not with your <sup>call them etc.</sup>

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# Marriage

By John Gottman and Christopher Dollard

Marriage is one of the oldest social, economic, religious and legal institutions in the world, and there's no shortage of opinions on what makes it work. But much of the conventional wisdom is not based on evidence, and some is flat-out wrong. After researching thousands of couples for more than 40 years at the Gottman Institute, these are some of the myths we've encountered most often.

## MYTH NO. 1

### Common interests keep you together.

Some dating sites, like Match.com, ask users to list their interests to help attract potential mates, and LoveFlutter matches users solely based on shared hobbies and activities. In a Pew survey, 64 percent of respondents said "having shared interests" is "very important" to their marriages — beating out having a satisfying sexual relationship and agreeing on politics.

But the important thing is not what you do together; it's how you interact while doing it. Any activity can drive a wedge between two partners if they're negative toward each other. It doesn't matter whether two people both enjoy kayaking if, when they head out on the lake, one says, "That's not how you do a J-stroke, you idiot!" Our research has shown that criticism, even of paddling skills, is one of the four destructive behaviors that indicate a couple will eventually divorce. A stronger predictor of compatibility than shared

interests is the ratio of positive to negative interactions, which should be 20-to-1 in every day situations, whether a couple is doing something they both enjoy or not.

## MYTH NO. 2

### Never go to bed angry.

It's one of the most clichéd pieces of relationship advice, immortalized in Eazy signage and a '90s R&B ballad by Silk: Don't allow an argument to go unresolved — even overnight. No less an authority than the Bible agrees: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26).

This advice pushes couples to solve their problems right away. Yet everyone has their own methods of dealing with disagreements, and research indicates that about two-thirds of recurring issues in marriage are never resolved because of personality differences — you're unlikely to work out that fight about the dishes no matter how late you stay up. In our "Love Lab," where we studied

physiological reactions of couples during arguments (including coding of facial muscles related to specific emotions), we found that when couples fight, they are so physiologically stressed — increased heart rate, cortisol in the bloodstream, perspiring, etc. — that it's impossible for them to have a rational discussion. With one couple, we intentionally stopped their argument about a recurring issue by saying we needed to adjust some of our equipment. We asked them to read magazines for 30 minutes before resuming the conversation. When they did so, their bodies had physiologically calmed down, which allowed them to communicate rationally and respectfully. We now teach that method to couples — if you feel yourself getting overwhelmed during a fight, take a break and come back to it later, even if that means sleeping on it.

## MYTH NO. 3

### Couples therapy is for fixing a broken marriage.

This is a common misconception. A 2014 New York Post story on "the crumbling marriage of Jay Z and Beyoncé" noted grimly that "they're allegedly traveling with marriage counselors." Seeking help early in or even before marriage is often seen as a red flag. As one skeptic noted in New York magazine, "If you need couples therapy before you're married — when it's supposed to be fun and easy, before the pressures of children, family, and combined financials — then it's the wrong relationship."

This idea often keeps spouses from seeking the sort of regular maintenance that would benefit almost any relationship. The average couple waits six years after serious issues arise before getting help with their marital problems, and by then it's often too late: Half of all divorces occur within the first seven years of marriage. In a therapist's office, spouses can learn conflict-management skills (like the Gottman-Rapport intervention, based on a method used to increase understanding between nations during the Cold War) and

Modern couples are told never to go to bed angry — and maybe they should draw up a relationship contract, too. But this advice isn't based on sound evidence.

from sex to chores expectations for Bill and Priscilla Chan rather specific details: "One date per hundred minutes apart and de Far more couples written or verbal, responsible for what. The concept, the science. In 1977, we found that marital reciprocity were in what we've seen in track can cause couples can lead to resent contracts and quick unhappy marriages can arise from unf especially if those. And when one partner for the other and they may expect to return. That response — a busy woman can create resentment trying to "win."

Consider one thing about: housework even division of labor they make a contract there's a pile of dishes fighting again. Ask couples by Harvard solution is to ditch money on a clean couple can spend positive interactions. Instead of a courtship Couples need to intentionally and can. Some things are not even by couples.

John Gottman is the Gottman, of the Gott conducted 40 years and divorce predictor content manager and institute.

Washington Post 6/3/18

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## What Does it Mean to be a Spiritual Person?

By Dr. Margaret Paul  
December 31, 2006

People often confuse spirituality with religion. People can be both religious and spiritual, but it is also possible to be religious without being spiritual, or to be spiritual without being religious.

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You go to church every Sunday and you say your prayers every day. Does this mean you are a spiritual person?

No.

You practice yoga and meditate every day. Does this mean you are a spiritual person?

No.

You belong to spiritual group and are devoted to following the teachings of the group. Does this mean you are a spiritual person?

No.

What, then, does it mean to be a spiritual person?

Being a spiritual person is synonymous with being a person whose highest priority is to be loving to oneself and others. A spiritual person cares about people, animals, and the planet. A spiritual person knows that we are all One, and consciously attempts to honor this Oneness. A spiritual person is a kind person.

So, you can go to church every Sunday and say your prayers every day, without caring about loving yourself, others and the planet. You can practice yoga and meditate every day without being conscious of what is loving and what is not loving in your thoughts and actions. You can belong to a spiritual group and devotedly follow the teachings, yet still be judgmental toward yourself and others in your daily life.

There are many people who do not practice a religion, who do not meditate, pray or belong to any group, who are very spiritual people. These people naturally do caring things for others. They think about how they can help. Their thoughts are kind rather than judgmental toward themselves and toward others. When you look at them, you see kindness in their eyes.

There are many religious people who are anything but kind. We all know of religious people who are extremely judgmental, righteous, and outright mean. Can you be both religious and spiritual? Of course! But only when you are operating in your religion from your heart rather than from the earned dogma of your mind.

Years ago I very briefly attended a "spiritual" group. People would meet in an auditorium to hear the leader of the group speak. The second time I attended I heard a number of parents yelling at their children and judging them to try to control them. These parents were being anything but kind with



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Are you looking outside or inside for the source of your anxiety or depression? If you are not feeling inner peace, look within at your own thoughts and beliefs for the source of anxiety, depression, guilt, fear and anger.

By Dr. Margaret Paul

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their children. That was the last time I attended the spiritual group. The focus of the group was surrender to God, but love was rarely in the picture! They obviously had a very different experience of God than I did.


My experience of God is that God is the energy of Love that created us and sustains us. In my experience, "God is Spirit" (John 4:24) and "God is love" (1 John 4:16). Anything that is not of love, peace, joy, truth and kindness is not of God. Praying to God does not mean that you are allowing the spirit that is God - the love, peace, joy, truth and kindness that is God - to guide your thoughts and actions. Practicing yoga or meditating does not mean that you have invited the love that is God into your heart, or that you are turning to that ever-present love to learn about what is in your highest good, and the highest good of others and the planet.

If you want to be a spiritual person, then let kindness be your guiding light - kindness toward yourself, toward others, toward animals, and toward this beautiful planet that is our home. Recognize that we all have the spark of love that is God within us, and learn to honor that love so that you can know and experience the Oneness of all that is.

Practicing Inner Bonding and learning to be kind to yourself inevitably leads to kindness to others. Inner Bonding is a powerful spiritual path.




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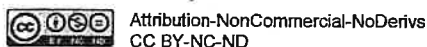
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Anger and Inner Bonding  
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INNER BONDING  
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How to Become Strong Enough To Love  
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measurable health benefit associated with prayer or spiritual interventions."

## Wired for Spirituality?

For the past 30 years, Harvard scientist Herbert Benson, MD, has conducted his own studies on prayer. He focuses specifically on meditation, the Buddhist form of prayer, to understand how mind affects body. All forms of prayer, he says, evoke a relaxation response that quiets stress, quiets the body, and promotes healing.

Prayer involves repetition -- of sounds, words -- and therein lies its healing effects, says Benson. "For Buddhists, prayer is meditation. For Catholics, it's the rosary. For Jews, it's called davening. For Protestants it's centering prayer. Every single religion has its own way of doing it."

Benson has documented on MRI brain scans the physical changes that take place in the body when someone meditates. When combined with recent research from the University of Pennsylvania, what emerges is a picture of complex brain activity: ✱

As an individual goes deeper and deeper into concentration, intense activity begins taking place in the brain's parietal lobe circuits -- those that control a person's orientation in space and establish distinctions between self and the world. Benson has documented a "quietude" that then envelops the entire brain.

At the same time, frontal and temporal lobe circuits -- which track time and create self-awareness -- become disengaged. The mind-body connection dissolves, Benson says.

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What Does "Crazy" Really Mean?

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## Can Prayer Heal?

Does prayer have the power to heal? Scientists have some surprising answers.

WebMD Feature Archive

### Wired for Spirituality? continued...

And the limbic system, which is responsible for putting "emotional tags" on that which we consider special also becomes activated. The limbic system also regulates relaxation, ultimately controlling the autonomic nervous system, heart rate, blood pressure, metabolism, etc., says Benson.

The result: Everything registers as emotionally significant, perhaps responsible for the sense of awe and quiet that many feel. The body becomes more relaxed and physiological activity becomes more evenly regulated.

Does all this mean that we are communicating with a higher being -- that we are, in fact, "hard-wired" at the factory to do just that? That interpretation is purely subjective, Benson tells WebMD. "If you're religious, this is God-given. If you're not religious, then it comes from the brain."



## The Impact of Religion on Health

But prayer is more than just repetition and physiological responses, says Harold Koenig, MD, associate professor of medicine and psychiatry at Duke and a colleague of Krucoff's.

Traditional religious beliefs have a variety of effects on personal health, says Koenig, senior author of the *Handbook of Religion and Health*, a new release that documents nearly 1,200 studies done on the effects of prayer on health.

These studies show that religious people tend to live healthier lives. "They're less likely to smoke, to drink to drink and drive," he says. In fact, people who pray tend to get sick less often, as separate studies conducted at Duke, Dartmouth, and Yale universities show. Some statistics from these studies:

- Hospitalized people who never attended church have an average stay of three times longer than people who attended regularly.
- Heart patients were 14 times more likely to die following surgery if they did not participate in a religion
- Elderly people who never or rarely attended church had a stroke rate double that of people who attended regularly.
- In Israel, religious people had a 40% lower death rate from cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Also, says Koenig, "people who are more religious tend to become depressed less often. And when they do become depressed, they recover more quickly from depression. That has consequences for their physical health and the quality of their lives."

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## Top Picks

What Does "Crazy" Really Mean?

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The Healing Power of Music

# Top 10 Things You Can Do to Reduce Global Warming

Burning fossil fuels such as natural gas, coal, oil and gasoline raises the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and carbon dioxide is a major contributor to the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Global climate change is certainly one of the \_\_\_\_\_ today.

You can help to reduce the demand for fossil fuels, which in turn reduces global warming, by using energy more wisely. Here are 10 simple actions you can take to help reduce global warming.



## 1. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Do your part to reduce waste by choosing reusable products instead of disposables - get a \_\_\_\_\_, for example.

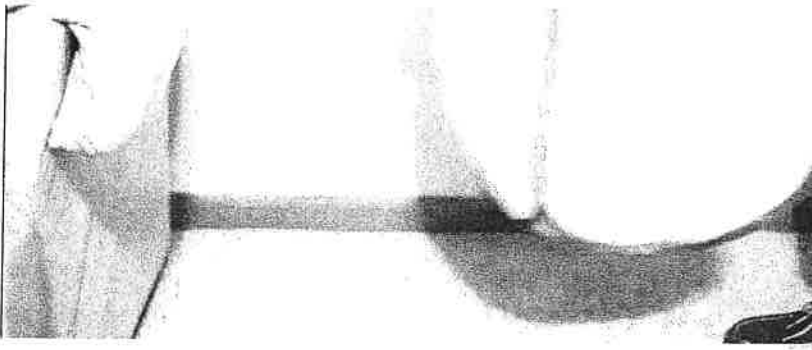
Buying products with minimal packaging (including the economy size when that makes sense for you) will help

to reduce waste. And whenever you can, recycle paper/plastic, newspaper, glass and aluminum. If there isn't a recycling program at your workplace, school, or in your community, ask about starting one. By recycling half of your household waste, you can save 2,400 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

- Global Climate Change >
- Biodiversity >
- Alt and Fossil Fuels >
- Renewable Energy >
- Pollution >
- Law and Policy >
- Health and Environment >
- Green Living and Design >
- Recycling >
- Nuclear Energy >
- Activism, Volunteering >
- Events >
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## How To Help Reduce Greenhouse Gases



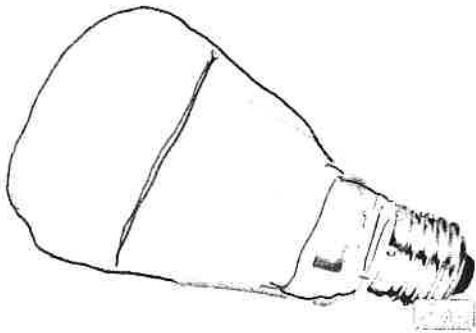


## 2. Use Less Heat and Air Conditioning

Adding insulation to your walls and attic, and installing weather stripping or caulking around doors and windows can lower your heating costs more than 25 percent, by

reducing the amount of energy you need to heat and cool your home.

Turn down the heat while you're sleeping at night or away during the day, and keep temperatures moderate at all times. Setting your thermostat just 2 degrees lower in winter and higher in summer could save about 2,000 pounds of *Carbon Dioxide* each year.



## 3. Change a Light Bulb

Wherever practical, replace regular light bulbs with **LED**; they are even better than compact fluorescent light (CFL). Replacing just one 60-watt incandescent light bulb with a LED used 4 hrs a day can yield \$14 in savings

annually. LEDs will also last many times longer than incandescent bulbs.



## 4. Drive Less • Drive Smart

Less driving means fewer emissions. Besides saving gasoline, walking and biking are great forms of exercise. Explore your community mass transit system, and check out options for carpooling to work

or school. Even to reduce your carbon footprint.

When you do drive, make sure your car is running efficiently. For example, keeping your can improve your by more than 3 percent. Every gallon of gas you save not only helps your budget, it also keeps 20 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

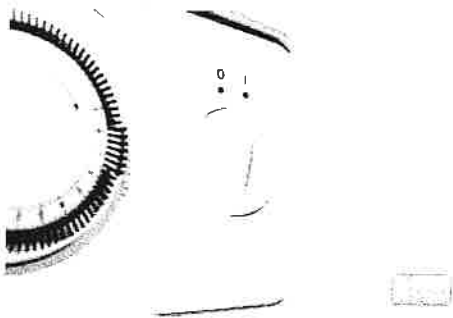


## 5. Buy Energy-Efficient Products

When it's time to buy a new car, choose one that offers . Home appliances now come in a range of energy-efficient models, and LED bulbs are designed to provide more natural-looking light while using far less energy than standard light bulbs. Look into

your programs, you might find some help.

Avoid products that come with , especially molded plastic and other packaging that can't be recycled. If you reduce your household garbage by 10 percent, you can save 1,200 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.



## 6. Use Less Hot Water

Set your water heater at 120 degrees to save energy, and wrap it in an insulating blanket if it is more than 5 years old. Buy low-flow showerheads to save hot water and about 350 pounds of carbon dioxide yearly. Wash your clothes in

warm or cold water to reduce your use of hot water and the energy required to produce it. That change alone can save at least 500 pounds of carbon dioxide annually in most households. Use the energy-saving settings on your and let the dishes air-dry.



## 7. Use the "Off" Switch

Save electricity and reduce global warming by turning off lights when you leave a room, and using only as much light as you need. And remember



to turn off your television, video player, stereo and computer when you're not using them.

It's also a good idea to turn off the water when you're not using it. While brushing your teeth, or washing your car, turn off the water until you actually need it

for rinsing. You'll reduce your water bill and help to conserve a vital resource.



## 8. Plant a Tree

If you have the means to plant a tree, start digging. During photosynthesis, trees and other plants absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen

They are an integral part of the natural atmospheric exchange cycle here on Earth, but there are too few of them to fully

counter the increases in carbon dioxide caused by automobile traffic, manufacturing and other human activities. Help : a single tree will absorb approximately one ton of carbon dioxide during its lifetime.

## 9. Utility Co. Report



Many utility companies provide free home energy audits to help consumers identify areas in their homes that may not be energy efficient. In addition, many utility companies offer rebate programs to help pay for the cost of energy-efficient

upgrades.

## 10. Encourage Others to Conserve

Share information about recycling and energy

# DO RELIGIOUS PEOPLE LIVE LONGER?

IF A LONG LIFE IS WHAT YOU'RE AFTER, GOING to church may be the answer to your prayers.

A number of studies have shown associations between attending religious services and living a long time. One of the most comprehensive, published in *JAMA Internal Medicine* in 2016, found that women who went to any kind of religious service more than once a week had a 33% lower chance than their secular peers of dying during the 16-year study-follow-up period. Another study, published last year in *PLOS One*, found that regular service attendance was linked to reductions in the body's stress responses and even in mortality—so much so that worshippers were 55% less likely to die during the up to 18-year follow-up period than people who didn't frequent the temple, church or mosque.

You don't have to become a nun to get these health benefits, however. The simple act of congregating with a like-minded community might deserve much of the credit. Tyler VanderWeele, one of the authors of the *JAMA* study and a professor of epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, says factors related to churchgoing—like having a network of social support, an optimistic attitude, better self-control and a sense of purpose in life—may account for the long-life benefits seen in his study and others.

**INDEED, IT'S ALSO THE VALUES** drawn from religious tradition—such as “respect, compassion, gratitude, charity, humility, harmony, meditation and preservation of health”—that seem to predict longevity, not the dogma preached at the altar, says Howard Friedman, a professor of psychology at the University of California, Riverside, and co-author of the book *The Longevity Project*.

Fostering these qualities may even affect rates of chronic disease, says Marino Bruce, a co-author



of the *PLOS One* study and a research associate professor of medicine, health and society at Vanderbilt University. “Having that sense that you're not in the world alone, that you are part of a power larger than oneself, can give one confidence to deal with the issues of life,” Bruce says. “Biologically, if that reduces stress, then that means you're less likely to have high blood pressure or diabetes or things that can increase mortality.”

But what if organized religion isn't your style? Can solo prayer—or even a more abstract sense of faith or spirituality—provide the same payoff?

It's difficult to say with certainty, because going to church is easier to measure than the intimate, individual way a person might practice religion. And the research on praying has been mixed. Some studies have found that prayer can improve disease outcomes and prolong survival, while others have been less conclusive. One 2006 study published in the *American Heart Journal* even found that people who knew they were being prayed for before undergoing heart surgery were more likely to experience complications than people who didn't know whether they were in others' prayers.

**BUT PRAYER HAS BEEN SHOWN** to be powerful, in at least one way. It triggers the relaxation response, a state of mind-body rest that has been shown to decrease stress, heart rate and blood pressure; alleviate chronic disease symptoms; and even change gene expression. This state is typically linked to activities like meditation and yoga, and research suggests it can also be found through praying.

Given that uncertainty and the accumulating evidence supporting communal religious participation, VanderWeele says solitary practitioners might want to consider congregating every once in a while.

“Might you be missing out on something—the power of religion and spirituality—by not participating communally?” VanderWeele says. “That's not saying, ‘You should have religious beliefs to live longer.’ That's saying, ‘You already hold these beliefs. Maybe it would be worthwhile to consider communal participation.’”

—JAMIE DUCHARME

## PRO TIP



**‘Everything seems to be in that prayer that Jesus taught us: ‘Lead us not into temptation.’ During the generation that I lived in, a lot of people had the habit of smoking cigarettes, but I didn't smoke. Moderation is the way to enjoy things. One pie can feed 16 people.’**

JOE BARRECA, 95, former bankruptcy lawyer, Seattle

# Brothers rescue girl who drifted out to sea

D.C.-area residents  
visiting Ireland swim  
to 6-year-old's aid

BY MARISA LATT

The girl on the pink flamingo-shaped raft was floating away quickly, screaming as her father yelled for a lifeguard who didn't appear.

Four brothers, who were visiting Ireland from the D.C. area, had just unpacked their towels after arriving at Portmarnock Beach near Dublin, where they had expected to spend a relaxing afternoon Monday. Before they could think about it, they were sprinting into the sea and swimming toward the girl as fast as they could during the almost hour-long rescue.

"I knew we were getting deep, but I didn't care," Declan Butler, 18, said Wednesday in an interview. "I just didn't want to give up on her."

One stroke, then another in the cold, sometimes choppy water as they raced toward the girl in the distance. They had a moment of panic when the 6-year-old, still far away, fell off the raft and briefly dipped under

SEE RESCUE ON B4

ST • SATURDAY, JULY 27, 2019

## Brothers call rescue an unlikely twist of fate

RESCUE FROM B1

the water, then popped back up.

It was adrenaline that propelled the brothers to speed-swim for about 25 minutes until they were close enough to yell to her that she would be okay, that they would bring her back to shore, Declan said.

Declan, his twin, Eoghan Butler, and Walter Butler, 21, are strong athletes. So is their brother-in-law, Alex Thomson. Three had swum competitively, and Thomson, 24, is an ultra-runner. Walter Butler had been a rescue swimmer on a Coast Guard cutter.

Still, swimming to reach the girl — they estimated that she was a half-mile out — was harrowing, they said. Declan and Eoghan Butler, who live in Arlington, and Thomson, who lives in Rockville, said they weren't sure how long they'd be able to hold on to the raft.

When they finally reached her, they helped keep her head above water and took turns swimming on their backs with the girl on their chests as they made their way against the current back to shore.

Spirituality?

The Washington Post 7/27/19

"It was intense. It was emotional," Thomson said. "If anything, it was extremely rewarding once we got to her."

Walter Butler, who also lives in Arlington, had waited on the beach in case he needed to perform first aid. He swam out to meet them when they got close and brought the girl the rest of the way to land.

He said that as the brothers were swimming out toward the girl, her father grabbed a life vest, threw it around his own neck and swam out to try to save his daughter, as well. But the father was not a strong swimmer, and after the girl was safe on land, the father was still in the water.

The girl's brother approached the four rescuers for more help, and two of them swam back in to get the father.

"Eoghan and Declan actually brought the dad into shore, as well," Butler said.

Beachgoers rushed to the girl to cover her in layers of towels as the brothers moved her into a beach tent to protect her from the elements, they said. A rescue service crew and paramedics arrived a few minutes later and brought the girl to a hospital.

*"I just didn't want to give up on her."*

Declan Butler, 18, who helped rescue a 6-year-old

She was later released.

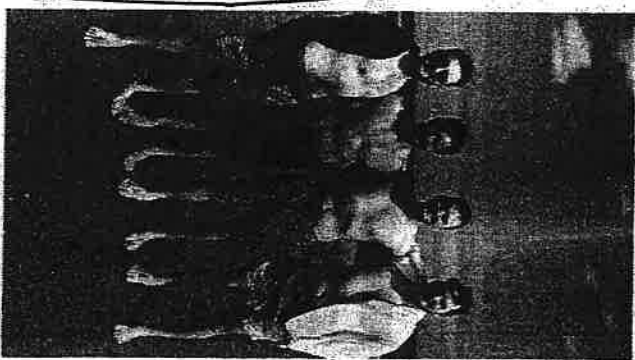
The girl's family, who lives in Ireland, visited the brothers Tuesday at the house where they're staying to thank them.

"Seeing her jump around, kiss her mom, that was actually amazing," Declan Butler said.

Two days after they saved the 6-year-old, the brothers were still thinking about an unlikely twist of fate: They had traveled to Ireland to celebrate the life of their recently deceased grandfather, whose brother drowned on the same date decades before the rescue.

"It's kind of like this golly, guardian angel kind of feeling," Walter Butler said. "That the same day he drowned 64 years ago is the day we actually saved the life of a 6-year-old girl!"

metro@washpost.com



From left: Eoghan Butler, Alex Thomson, Walter Butler and Declan Butler saved a girl who was swept out to sea.

JULIANA BUTLER

## SPIRITUAL GRIEF HEALING



**As we leave this spiritual time of year with Easter and Passover just behind us, how does being spiritual help our grief process? First let's examine what spiritual means.**

**Not everyone maybe religious and attend church or temple this time of year. Practicing yoga or meditation maybe helpful, but do each of these make us a spiritual person? Not necessarily. Does just praying mean that we are spiritual or reading about the teachings of our religion?**

**Dr. Margaret Paul writes that, "Being a spiritual person is synonymous with being a person whose highest priority is to be loving to oneself and others. A spiritual person cares about people, animals, and the planet. A spiritual person know that we are all One, and consciously attempts to honor this Oneness. A spiritual person is a kind person."**

**When we are spiritual and focus on being One with each other, we think about those less fortunate and act by donating our used clothing, or helping out in a soup kitchen or volunteering with animal shelters, or lonely patients in hospitals.**

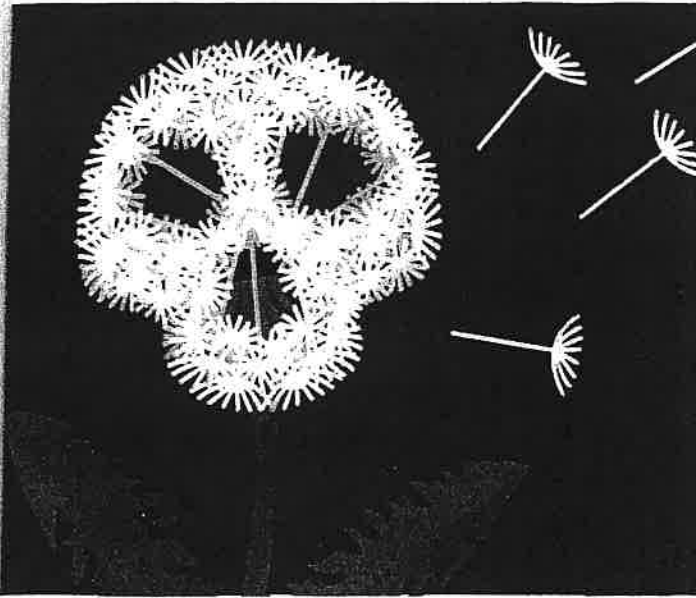
**When we are spiritual we care about the planet by not leaving lights on in a room at home when we leave it(wasting energy), or by taking renewable cloth bags to the grocery store and not wasting with oil produced plastic bags, or by not spreading toxic chemicals(which wash into our streams, rivers etc.) on our lawn.**

**So how does this all tie into helping our grieving? When we are grieving we are rightfully self focused. Our hearts are broken and we feel intense pain and loss. By looking outside of ourselves though, the intensity of the loss can dissipate some. We will realize that we are not the only ones suffering. We can reconnect with that Oneness and our planet. There is a sense of regained control. We realize we are not helpless, and can contribute to organizations and research fighting cancer, heart disease, Alzheimers, Parkinsons etc. Or maybe the Widowed Persons Outreach program at Sibley hospital or Friends of the Earth.**

**It's important to help our healing process by getting active and involved with people and the planet. By getting outside of ourselves will eventually serve us to regain a sense of control in our lives. So be in sync with this time of year of renewed life, explore being spiritual, and experience inside how it makes your heart feel.**

**Brad Bickford, BCD, LCSW**





## HOW DO I MAKE PEACE WITH DYING?

DEATH, IN THE VIEW OF MANY THEORISTS, IS A good thing, at least for a society that aspires to be creative. When you're on the clock, you accomplish more. Cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker, author of *The Denial of Death*, called mortality "a mainspring of human activity." If you want to invent a light bulb or paint a *Mona Lisa*, you'd best get started, because checkout time is coming.

That's perfectly fine when you're contemplating the human species as a whole, but our personal mortality is a different matter, right? Not always. A 2017 study in *Psychological Science* tallied the number of positive and negative words in blog posts written by the terminally ill and compared them with essays by people who were asked to imagine being near death and then write about it. The dying people, it turned out, were more positive.

People are able to come to terms with death as they age, thanks to what psychologists building on Becker's work dubbed Terror Management Theory. Equal parts denial and self-soothing, courage and fatalism, TMT is what kept Cold War Americans going despite fear of nuclear annihilation, and got New Yorkers out to work on that Sept. 12 following the terrorist attack.

Some TMT techniques involve what psychologists call constructive distraction: busying ourselves with a lifetime of meaningful things. When faced with acute reminders of death—say, a funeral—we push back with something that prolongs life, like going for a run. We also become good at flippancy, making death benign or

comical—think Halloween costumes.

We get better at this as we age. A 2000 meta-analysis found that fear of death grows in the first half of life, but by the time we hit the 61-to-87 age group, it recedes to a stable, manageable level.

**TERROR MANAGEMENT** happens not just individually but collectively, through our affiliation with social systems that define us, especially religion, nation and family. Religion is the most direct, because so many faiths sidestep fear of death by promising eternal life. But along with nation and family, religion provides something subtler too: a community that gives a kind of constitutional order to a cosmos that otherwise makes no sense.

"Death is typically on the fringes of our awareness," says Thomas Pyszczynski, a professor of psychology at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. "When reminded of their mortality, people cling to their worldviews more and react more warmly to people and ideas that comfort them."

A post-9/11 study in the journal *Identity* by psychologist Curtis Dunkel of Western Illinois University supports this idea. He found that people who have established an "identity commitment," or an allegiance to a group or worldview, exhibit less anxiety when reminded of death than people still engaging in "identity exploration."

The risk of such an allegiance is that it may make us less tolerant of other people. That may partly explain why we have religions that promise eternal life, but only for members of the faith.

Meanwhile, the ability to live in the moment is something that brings older people a sense of calm. "The elderly become more present-centered," says Steve Taylor, a lecturer in psychology at Leeds Beckett University in Leeds, England, "and research shows that being present-centered leads to enhanced well-being."

Most important is what developmental psychologist Erik Erikson dubbed generativity—the process not of achieving and keeping things, but giving them away. You can't take the house you built or the songs you wrote with you, to say nothing of the family you created. They are all your body of work, your mortal oeuvre, and there can be joy in handing them on.

"The idea of one generation replacing the next becomes a buffer against anxiety," says Pyszczynski. If there's peace to be had at the approach of death, it comes from knowing that the world you're exiting is at least a bit richer than the one you found when you arrived.

—JEFFREY KLUGER



### PRO TIP



*Before my wife died of a stroke at 70, I worried about dying. You sort of figure, well, maybe I'll be different, I'll live forever. But that won't happen. The thing is, I don't mind going now because she's gone, and I'll be with her then. She is the most wonderful person I ever met.*

GEORGE HARDY, 92; Tuskegee airman and pilot during World War II, Korea and Vietnam; Sarasota, Fla.

# ADDENDUM





# STAYING ACTIVE WORK SHEET

Include *DAILY* \*PHYSICAL/HEALTHY ACTIVITY

*\*Exercising/walking/labor (min. 30 minutes) at least 5X/week Eating healthy daily*

Include *DAILY* \*SOCIALIZING/COMMUNICATION

*\*By phone or in person*

Include *DAILY* \*SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

*\*Loving oneself, others, animals and the Earth*

*WEEKLY* -Volunteering, Being Creative, Learning

*SUNDAY*

*MONDAY*

*TUESDAY*

*WEDNESDAY*

*THURSDAY*

*FRIDAY*

*SATURDAY*


## THINGS TO DO TO BUILD STRUCTURE

### Volunteer

*City Wildlife*  
*DC & Arlington, Mont Cty. Animal shelters*  
*Montgomery Cty Homeless Shelter*  
*National Zoo*  
*At area Hospitals*

### Adult Education

*OLLI-DC & VA*  
*OASIS-Mont. Cty.*  
*Montgomery College*  
*NOVA*

### Learn to Play an Instrument

### Travel

### Teach Kids to Read

*The Reading Connection*  
*Reading Tutors*

### Become a Master Gardener Garden

### Help other disabled adults/seniors

*Area Neighborhood Villages*  
*Meals on Wheels*  
*Transport to doctor appts.*  
*Refugee Services-Mont Cty & Catholic Charities*  
*Jewish Social Services*  
*Widowed Persons Outreach-Sibley hosp.*  
*Martha's Table*

### Dance-take dance lessons at Glen Echo

### Book Clubs join

### Help the Earth/Environment

*Sierra Club*  
*Audubon Society*  
*Wilderness Foundation*  
*Legal Defense Fund*  
*National Wildlife Foundation*  
*National Park Service*

### Work on a Political Campaign

Use Weekender in Post  
 Join Meet-Ups online

*Take an Art, Pottery, Book writing, Cooking class (Rec Depts)*

---

*Name*

---

*Date*



**CONFIDENTIAL -LIVING HEALTHIER & HAPPIER IN RETIREMENT**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**1. What are you hoping to learn from this class?:**

---

---

**2. Are you retired \_\_\_\_\_ if so how long \_\_\_\_\_. Work part time? \_\_\_\_\_.**  
*yes/no* *yes/no*

**3. How would you rate your satisfaction in the following areas:**

	<i>poor</i>		<i>ok</i>		<i>great</i>
<b>Family Relations:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Physical Condition</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Emotional Mood</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Social Life</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Financial Situation</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Spiritual Life</b>	1	2	3	4	5

4. What are two things you are looking forward to or like about in retirement:

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.

5. How would you describe yourself as a person without mentioning your career?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

6. What would you like to learn or get better at?

\_\_\_\_\_.

7. If retired, how has the impact of retirement affected you?

\_\_\_\_\_.

8. What do you do that is creative?: (paint, dance, sing, pottery, cook, carpentry, write, photography etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_.

9. How much TV do you watch a day? 0-1 hours 1-3 hrs. 3 or more (circle answer)

10. How often do you exercise per week? once/week twice/week 3-4x/week daily

11. How many hours of sleep do you get most nights? 6 or less 7-8 9 or more

*Thanks*

*Brad Bickford, BCD, LCSW*