



# Desert Health<sup>®</sup>

The Valley's Leading Resource for Health and Wellness

January/February 2024

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HEALTHY CELLS  
HEALTHY BODY  
HEALTHY AGING



When was the last time you heard the word “equanimity”? Most may ponder the question, while those who meditate softly smile and sigh. It’s a good word to know.

Equanimity is defined as mental or emotional stability or composure, especially under tension or strain. It’s the act of facing challenges with a calm clarity and open perspective versus reacting with unsettling emotions.

Mastering the art of equanimity doesn’t mean disconnecting from the world, but lessening the effects it can have on us mentally and emotionally. It’s not something you have or don’t have; it’s something you cultivate. And the focus doesn’t have to be on a global scale. It can start with your relationship with your immediate surroundings - what you see, hear and contemplate each moment of your day.

In fact, when you practice, its best to start small with something as simple as meditation. Equanimity is a core principle of meditation, like mindfulness, and while the two are connected, they are different. Mindfulness is being fully aware of your surroundings in each moment; equanimity is the ability to forego reaction and maintain calm regardless of external circumstances.

I use the Calm app for my daily meditation and love Jeff Warren’s description of equanimity in a recent Daily Trip: “It’s the subtle skill of being open and not getting uptight or annoyed about any imperfections in our immediate environment.”

How do you start cultivating equanimity? Sit in a comfortable space, close your eyes and take a couple of deep breaths. Try to relax your mind, clear your thoughts (that’s the hard part), and just be where you are. With these small steps, you’re meditating. You practice equanimity by not letting the barking dog, buzzing fly or itchy nose bother you; you simply notice them, accept that they are there, softly smile and return to your inner calm.

The more you practice, the easier it is to apply these same principals throughout your day. If something bothers you, you simply accept that it’s there, take a deep breath and return to your center.

What do you gain by practicing equanimity? Patience, clarity, compassion, grace, time, more smiles, better sleep. What do you lose? Stress, agitation, judgement, reactivity, restless sleep.

Let’s all embrace a little more equanimity this year. Just imagine what our collective efforts could do for each of us individually and for the world around us.



This year, our valley’s esteemed PGA TOUR golf tournament, The American Express, celebrates 65 years. The tournament originally launched in 1960 as the Palm Springs Golf Classic. It has seen its share of ups and down over the decades but has grown to become one of sport’s best special events, a nomination proudly received in 2023.

While many factors have changed over the years, one consistent remains: the tournament’s charitable contributions to our community. In fact, in that very first year, while the Golf Classic struggled to pay its debt, Arnold Palmer and other board members decided to hold a luncheon at the El Mirador Hotel to give proceeds to local charities. The success of that luncheon and the enthusiastic response from the community convinced the board that the tournament should continue.

With \$1 million donated in 2023, the tournament officially surpassed \$65 million in charitable contributions. Donations were made through the

event’s foundation, Impact Through Golf, to 16 local charities with a focus on legacy projects serving the entire valley in areas of health and wellness, youth sports, family support, education and homelessness.

“It takes a village to execute our high standard of charitable giving to our local desert beneficiaries through our tournament, and we are appreciative of the shared vision and partnership we have with our title sponsor, American Express,” said Foundation Chairman Frank Marzano. “We acknowledge all of our committed sponsors, local business partners, volunteers and fans as the collective which enables our tournament to raise funds and thrive in serving the Coachella Valley.”

2023 recipients include Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Desert; Boys & Girls Club of Cathedral City; Boys & Girls Club of Coachella Valley; Boys & Girls Club of Palm Springs; Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine; Desert Sands Educational Foundation; Family YMCA of the Desert; First Tee - Coachella Valley;

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RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR  
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Make it  
*Your '24*

Happy New Year, Everyone! We are so glad you are here. This edition is bursting with inspiration and tips to help set you on your path to greater wellness, and we *all* can use that.

In a recent conversation with my friend Dr. Susan Murphy, she said studies show that we are under more stress now than during the pandemic. I found that alarming and hard to believe, until a recent series of events brought it full circle.

As many of you know, Michelle Steadman and I started a fun little side business, Good Vibes Sound Bath. The opportunity to drift into pure relaxation while floating on water under the desert sky, surrounded by soothing sounds, soft candles and scents has garnered much praise by those who have enjoyed the experience.

What we didn't expect was the response our local business would have around the world. Some of our social media posts have received over 4 million views and have been shared over 10,000 times. With only 52 posts, we have over 11,000 followers and those numbers continue to grow. It's astounding and we feel very blessed.

People are stressed and obviously seeking opportunities to help them relax and embody a sense of calm and clarity. It starts with accepting that *self-care is not selfish*, as author Debra LaCoppola emphasizes in her wonderful new book *Care 360°* (p.7). With this mantra propelling you into 2024, you'll find further inspiration on our pages with *So Much More in '24* (p.3); *Freedom from FOMO* (p.8); *Stop, Challenge, Consider, Choose* (p.13); *Walking Towards Health One Step at a Time* (p.14) and more.

This year, let's embrace equanimity (p.1) and self-care. Replenishing your resources makes you a better person for everyone else, and most importantly, *for you*. These words are my final touches on this edition, so it's time for me to go practice what I preach. We can't wait to see you soon!

Make it Your '24 ~



Lauren Del Sarto  
Founder/Publisher

(Photo by Lani Garfield)





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# So Much More in '24

By Reverend Dale Olansky

The start of a new year is the ideal time to ask ourselves what we want to change about ourselves or our lives. There is something about a new year that gives us that extra motivation to start fresh and change our lives so we can experience something better. The usual resolutions are weight loss, getting in shape, changing jobs or quitting a bad habit. These are all wonderful areas on which to focus, but the unfortunate truth is that the majority of people abort their resolutions within one month of setting these lofty goals.

Perhaps the high failure rate is because we are taking the wrong approach to our new year's goals. As wonderful as these intentions are, we tend to limit ourselves to just one thing. Here are some questions to ponder: Do you just want to improve one thing in your life experience, or do you want something more? Is losing weight really the answer to the change you want to see in your life? If you quit smoking, will all your dreams come true?

Now, I am not discounting the benefits these behavior changes will bring; however, I think we can do better. The time has come for us to raise our sights a bit higher and figure out what we want our life to feel like - everyday. What do you want the overall feeling tone of your life to be? Do you want to experience consistent peace of mind, love or joy? This year, let's go bigger and break free from the limiting ideas we have about what is possible for us, and open up to a bigger field of what life can be like. It is time for us to go beyond weight loss and ending bad habits and call in the "more" we would like to experience in 2024.

So many people continue to suffer from the societal changes resulting from COVID, inflation and general uncertainty. This has caused many to live in survival mode, and this shuts down our creativity. We have lost our trust in our own ability to make life work on our terms, so we look to the outside world to tell us what is possible. The result is that we end up limiting ourselves because we don't realize that our creative impulse can lead us to an amazing life if we follow it. Thus, we end up compromising and living a life that is not fulfilling.

The human race did not evolve to where it is today by playing small. The creative spirit is what propels us to create something new that will further our life experiences by, not only improving the quality of life, but by giving ourselves an opportunity to grow and expand the potential that lies within us. Airplanes, cell phones and cultivating inner strength we never thought we had are all products of bringing the "more" into life.

So how do we begin to open ourselves up to having more in 2024? Here are some tools you can use to break free of the same old new year's resolutions and bring in your "more":

**Stop letting the world tell you what is possible.** So many of us shut ourselves off from the unlimited creative ideas that pop in our minds because we think they are impossible or too weird. What if the Wright Brothers let that stop them? Listen to yourself and trust what is coming into your awareness.

**Listen to your heart's direction.** If you can't hear it, meditate, go for a walk or just sit in a quiet place and ask for guidance.

**Start a list.** Write down the "more" you want to bring into your life and include qualities of life like more love or peace. Keep adding to it until you feel complete.

**Take it one step at a time.** Once we put our "more" out into the universe, we have started a chain reaction that will bring the more in. All you have to do is pay attention to the path that is taking you on your way.

**Don't give up.** Even if it seems like it is taking a long time, tell yourself that everything is unfolding in the perfect way and time.

Let's make 2024 the year of experiencing more. Even though you may not know exactly what that looks like, just start by imagining what "more" feels like, and you will attract it into your life. As this new year begins, keep telling yourself you are open and receptive to experiencing so much more in '24, and let the universe wow you!

Rev. Dale Olansky is the co-spiritual leader at Spiritual Center of the Desert in Palm Desert. She is also author of the book, *Fear to Faith: A Daily Guide to Finding Solace in and Uncertain World* and can be reached at [revdaleo@gmail.com](mailto:revdaleo@gmail.com).

# New Approach Excites Kids to Read

By Lauren Del Sarto

In December, Valle Del Sol Elementary School in Coachella unveiled a new vending machine operated by coveted golden tokens awarded to children for positive actions and good behavior.

Their prize? A chosen book of their very own to bring home and share with family.

The book vending machines are the innovation of Global Vending Group whose goal is to increase literacy by creating a rewarding experience. The concept was created by owners and friends while brainstorming how they could give back to the community. Contributing to the advancement of literacy among all students became the vending company's social responsibility campaign, and now Inchy's Bookworm vending machines are at work in schools throughout the country.

"There is a literacy challenge within schools, partially due to a lack of engagement and excitement in reading books," exclaimed Valle Del Sol Assistant Principal Jennifer Eyre who championed the project at her school. "Getting students excited to read by vending their favorite books and being able to take them home, will not only help increase a child's literacy, but also improve family relationships through reading."

Instead of coins, the machine uses a special golden token which the kids are rewarded for good grades, attendance, acts of kindness, accomplishments, reading efforts and other positive behavioral modifications. To add to the enthusiasm, the unit lights up and even talks. As books are distributed, new books take their place, creating endless opportunities for children to learn and engage.

The units start at \$5,300 for standard chapter books and can be customized to include picture books for younger students and older kids who struggle with reading. Exterior designs can also be individualized to include school imagery



Inchy's Bookworm vending machines combine reward and reading.

Continued on page 21

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### Coachella Valley's Health Care Industry MENTORING THE FUTURE

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### From High School to Health Care

Indio High Health Academy offers students focused skills that will help them become well-rounded professionals. Through their years in the academy, students learn biotechnology, health care and community service skills that prepare them to work in the health care industry and become active members of their community.

By the time they graduate from the program, students will be presented with the opportunity to earn the following certifications: HIPAA, Medical Ethics, Blood Borne Pathogens and CPR/First Aid, all which can be transferred to their jobs and post-secondary education.

Some of the biotechnology skills students learn include gene editing, DNA analysis through the use of gel electrophoresis and diagnostic laboratory testing. The vast medical skills taught include taking vital signs, phlebotomy, suturing, IV placement and management, how to perform a general autopsy and more.

One of the major opportunities offered to students through the health academy is the National Health Career Association Certified Clinical Medical Assistant preparation course and testing. Academy students are able to graduate high school as a certified medical assistant and seek employment within our community's health clinics and hospitals.

Academy students also gain community service hours through participation in local events such as the annual Ironman Triathlon, Palm Desert Half Marathon, STEM fair and Youth Task Force Clean Up of our valley. These events expand student experiences and teach the value of volunteerism.

The goal of the Indio High School Health Academy is to graduate students who are ready to improve our valley with the ability to care for community members and become part of our local health care industry.

For more information on OneFuture, contact Kim McNulty at [kim@onefuturecv.org](mailto:kim@onefuturecv.org).



Health Academy seniors show support for the California Baptist University Lancers after volunteering at STEM day in 2023.



Senior Javier Aguilera in the school's chemistry lab



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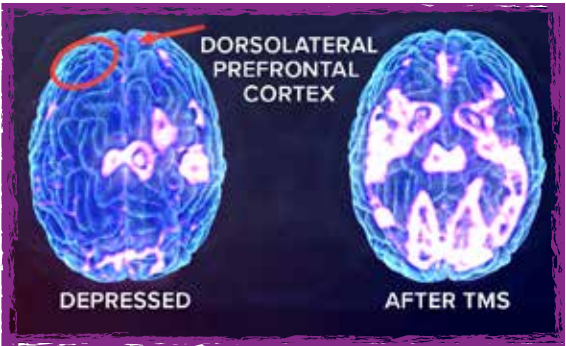
# Personalized TMS for Mood Disorders

By Keerthy Sunder, MD

Wandering through the tunnels of your mind, mood disorders create an emotional or physical upset, often impairing your ability to function at your peak. A mood disorder can take many shapes, from continued feelings of melancholy to experiencing emotional turmoil. Understanding and realizing these disorders is a giant leap toward ensuring mental wellness. The treatment for mood disorders, however, isn't a universal solution but a remedy tailored to an individual's specific need.

A constant imbalance in a person's mental state upsets the equilibrium. A mood disorder takes a toll not only on the individual but also on the people around them. Frequently changing energy levels, sleeplessness, loss of concentration, indecisiveness and isolation from social interaction are impacts that mood disorders can induce on an individual. Establishing a supportive environment becomes necessary in such cases, and seeking professional help should never be frowned upon.

Non-invasive therapies showing much success in treating mood disorders are Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) and Personalized Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (PrTMS). The broad term for TMS is known as neuromodulation - the modification of neural activity to stimulate specific neurological areas of the body through various methods, such as electric stimulus or stimuli through a chemical agent. TMS is a niche form of neuromodulation, in particular, a non-invasive method to stimulate the brain through electric stimuli. The underlying mechanism of TMS is based on the principles of electromagnetic induction, as theorized by pioneering scientist Michael Faraday. An electric current is induced in the cerebral cortex through varying electric and magnetic fields.



Brain stimulation through TMS and PrTMS has shown successful results in treating mental disorders.

Evolving from the traditional method of TMS, PrTMS is tailored to the patient's specific needs. The brain is mapped via spectral electroencephalography (Spectral EEG) and adjusts the parameters of TMS: intensity, frequency, amplitude and point of stimulation - as per the requirements after a spectral EEG.

### How does personalized TMS (PrTMS) work?

**Step 1: Brain mapping.** A human brain is home to billions of neurons, which align in patterned arrangements controlling brain functions: emotions, empathy, memory, etc. These neurons electrochemically coordinate with one another, giving rise to brain waves. The first step of PrTMS analyzes these brain waves through EEG to provide a detailed view of your neuron activity and to see the extent of disturbance in brain waves. It gives a clear picture of the health of the patient's brain.

**Step 2: Analysis and formulation of a treatment plan.** The data recorded with brain mapping is interpreted and analyzed by experts who then create a tailored treatment plan to help sort the disruptions observed in the brain.

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### \$65M @ 65: Golf Continues to Give Back

Continued from page 1

FIND Food Bank; Galilee Center; Girlfriend Factor; Hunter Lopez Memorial Foundation; Jewish Family Service of the Desert; John F. Kennedy Foundation/Ophelia Project; Martha's Village and Kitchen; and Pueblo Unido.

The American Express will take place January 18 - 21 this year and is certain to generate the same level of excitement and community support.

The American Express isn't the only tournament making an impact in our area. The Galleri Classic, now in its second year, not only contributes financially, but through innovative health opportunities as well. On the PGA TOUR Champions, the event features the seasoned players we all know and love and is named after title sponsor GRAIL's multi-cancer early detection blood test.

The Galleri test is the first in the growing category to come to market and is changing the way doctors and patients identify, address and treat cancer. Thus, it is fitting that their tournament's charitable giving focuses on organizations that support patients through all phases of their cancer journey.

From a simple blood draw, the Galleri test can identify if you have one of more than 50 cancers and where that cancer is located.

"We see The Galleri Classic as much more than just a golf tournament," GRAIL CEO Bob Ragusa shared last year. "At age 50 and older, PGA TOUR Champions players likely have personal experiences with cancer and can use this platform to inspire both their peers and fans to be more proactive about their health."

Ragusa adds that the company chose the Coachella Valley sponsorship because of our demographics and tradition of excellence in health care. Since last year's inaugural tournament, the company has begun working with regional providers including the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Desert Regional Medical Center and Halo Diagnostics which uses it as part of their multiomics approach to identifying cancers.

"In the U.S., we have testing for only five types of cancer," states HALO's Director of Neuroradiology Christopher Hancock, MD. "We recommend the Galleri test to all patients over 50 for its efficacy in identifying other cancers, as well as for younger patients who demonstrate risk factors."

The Galleri Classic returns to Mission Hills Country Club March 25-31 and will once again benefit Desert Cancer Foundation, Eisenhower Health, Hanson House, Pendleton Foundation, the American Cancer Society's local affiliate and Shay's Warriors Life After Cancer.

Whether you volunteer at these spectacular events or attend as a spectator, feel good in knowing that your participation is making a difference in our community as golf in our valley continues to give back.

Editorial by Desert Health Publisher Lauren Del Sarto. For more information, visit [www.TheAmexGolf.com](http://www.TheAmexGolf.com) and [www.TheGalleriClassic.com](http://www.TheGalleriClassic.com). (Front page photo by The American Express/Kyle McCune)



GRAIL CEO Bob Ragusa and 2023 PGA TOUR Champions Champion David Toms. (Photo by The Galleri Classic/Scott Avra)

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# Unlocking the Future: AI in Health Care

## Part 3: Bias Risks and Privacy Concerns

By Tammy Porter, DNP, MLS, RN-BSN, CPHQ, CCM

After exploring the fundamentals of AI in the first article and unraveling its benefits for patient care in the second, it is important to address the other side of the coin: the risks associated with using AI in health care and the essential measures needed to protect patients and their privacy.

Much discussion of the risks of AI in health care surrounds the use of algorithms to identify a person's health problem and how bias can enter the decisions. Remember, algorithms are like very smart computer programs that act as assistants to doctors, nurses and even insurance companies (some Medicare Advantage programs are already using them). These programs can sort through your lab work, x-rays and medical history in no time! The programs take your blood tests, heart rate, etc. and put all this information into a picture to give your doctor information so decisions can be made on what is best for your treatment.

However, what if all the information that is entered into this program (algorithm) is data from male patients and you are a female being assessed for heart disease? What if an AI-designed system is being used to detect skin cancer, but all the data entered into the program is based on lighter-skinned patients? Depression and pain tolerance vary greatly across different cultures and individual experiences; how adequate will your depression and pain symptoms be managed if the data in that treatment algorithm comes from only one or two ethnic populations and doesn't represent yours? Something called confirmation bias can also occur if doctors or nurses have pre-existing beliefs about a gender/culture's pain tolerance, depression or heart disease that are confirmed by the bias that exists in the algorithm.

Some insurance companies, including Medicare Advantage plans, use a computer program to estimate how many days in the hospital are sufficient before you are ready to go home or go to rehab - but what if the data in that algorithm is based on meeting all physical therapy goals and you have not, or living at home with a spouse, and you live alone with no savings? Patients often get discharged before they are ready, based on what an AI computer algorithm has concluded instead of what they can physically do to go home or to rehab. AI programs in health care also require access to a vast amount of personal and sensitive patient data. The risk of data breaches, unauthorized access or misuse of your data is a real concern.

Ensuring that a treatment algorithm in health care is unbiased can be challenging for a patient, as it involves understanding complex technical details often beyond the scope of public knowledge. However, you can take certain steps to advocate for yourself and seek unbiased treatment with privacy protection.

**Ask questions.** Patients should feel empowered to ask their health care providers about the tools and algorithms being used in their care. Questions can include how the algorithm works, what data it was trained on and whether it has been tested for accuracy and bias across different populations.

**Seek second opinions.** If a patient feels uncertain about a diagnosis or treatment plan suggested by an AI-augmented system, seeking a second opinion is a good practice. This can provide a broader perspective and confirm or question the initial recommendation.

**Understand your rights.** Patients should be aware of their rights regarding health care. This includes the right to informed consent, which means they should be given information about the treatments and any technologies used in their care.

**Understand consent forms.** When signing consent forms for treatment or data use, it's crucial to understand what you're agreeing to. If anything is unclear, ask for clarification. Be aware of how your data will be used, shared and protected.

**Use secure channels for communication.** When communicating electronically with health care providers, use secure channels. This might include using patient portals provided by the health care provider rather than email, which may not be secure.

**Regularly check medical records.** Regularly reviewing your medical records can help you spot any errors or inconsistencies, especially those After-Visit Summaries. This also includes checking the results of any AI-driven assessments or conclusions of which you may become aware.

**Be wary of third-party apps.** If using third-party apps or devices (like fitness trackers) that integrate with your health care providers' systems, understand how these apps use and share your data. Always use apps from reputable sources and check their privacy policies.

By taking these steps, you can help protect your personal health information and navigate the AI-enhanced health care landscape more safely and confidently.

*Dr. Porter is CEO and founder of MyHealth.MyAdvocate in Palm Desert. She is an experienced health care professional with over 30 years of nursing practice dedicated to unraveling the mysteries of health care processes and advocating for patients, families and caregivers. Immediate assistance is available by calling (760) 851.4116. [www.myhealthmyadvocate.com](http://www.myhealthmyadvocate.com)*

Sources: 1) <https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en-us/posts/technology/ai-usage-healthcare/>; <https://www.chartis.com/insights/ai-roundtable-building-trust-and-transparency-health-care-ai/>; 3) <https://www.statnews.com/2023/03/13/medicare-advantage-plans-denial-artificial-intelligence/>



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# Debra LaCoppola’s Care 360°

A Review by Lauren Del Sarto

Caregiving is hard, especially for those who circumstantially assume the role for a loved one or parent. Statistics show that family caregivers are at significantly higher risk of developing disease, depression, anxiety - and even dying before those for whom they are caring.

Why? Because when caregiving for someone who has given so much of their life to you, you often feel guilty taking time for yourself. However, self-care is not selfish, and this important fact is at the center of Palm Spring resident Debra LaCoppola’s 2022 book, *Care 360° A Handbook for Caregiving to Your Parent*.

LaCoppola is an accomplished photographer who started self-care practices early in life as her family of four struggled with the mental illness of her mother. However, it was during the four years of caring for her beloved father, Lenny, that she really honed those practices to help her get through; not only to survive, but to thrive with patience, laughter and appreciation for the opportunity bestowed upon her.

I loved this book and know it will be a treasured resource in my irrefutable future. The first half (180 degrees) is about Fueling the Well: Self Care First. LaCoppola offers tips, checklists, stories, experiences and inspiration to help ensure you are physically and mentally prepared for the job. What is successful caregiving? “Caring for your parent and yourself, keeping it together and avoiding getting sick in the process.” Sections include Calm, Nourish, Connect and Sound Rest and are all about you.

The second half rounds out 360-degree care with Fueled and Ready: Connected Caregiving which covers readying your home, establishing your “support squad,” budgeting, advocacy, care facilities, the hospital and last but not least, saying goodbye.

In addition to what she learned with Lenny, LaCoppola shares the perspectives of seven others who cared for aging parents to offer a variety of perspectives, situations and experiences. Each is introduced in the beginning of the book and their input is sprinkled throughout to be read or breezed over. Another aspect I love about this talented new writer is that she encourages you to skip around and read the sections that resonate with you. The well-organized layout easily allows you to do just that.

LaCoppola writes with a levity and positivity that is very inspiring. Her self-care recommendations, such as mantras, yoga/movement, sound sleep habits and juicing, are simple, cost-free tools anyone can incorporate. “Connected Caring” takes into consideration both the parent and caregiver’s well-being and how to make the little things - and the time together - count.

“Understand and accept that this is your time to be a caregiver,” she writes. “As hard as it seems now, you will not have regrets. And accepting this simple concept may help you continue your role with more ease.” This sentiment was inspired by Lenny who always said, “Just enjoy what you’re doing, and always bring laughter.”

There is so much more I'd like to say about this book and its author, but you'll just have to read it for yourself. If this precious position may be yours one day, do so now to change your perspective on the challenging, yet beautiful, gift that awaits. To learn more and to purchase the book, visit [www.DebraLaCoppola.com](http://www.DebraLaCoppola.com).





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## New Weight Loss Alternatives

### Semaglutide and Tirzepatide unveiled

By Pam Gossman, DNP, APN, BC-FNP, CPHQ

In the dynamic realm of weight loss and health, Semaglutide and Tirzepatide have emerged as transformative agents, offering renewed hope for individuals seeking effective weight loss solutions. Celebrities in Hollywood and the influence of social media have generated both excitement and misconceptions surrounding these new weight loss alternatives.

Let's delve deeper into the science behind these medications to better understand their potential and limitations.

Semaglutide, initially designed to manage diabetes, has exhibited remarkable weight loss outcomes. Operating as a GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide) receptor agonist in the gut, it enhances insulin production, delays gastric emptying and reduces appetite. Clinical trials showcase its potency, with participants experiencing an impressive 15% reduction in body weight compared to 3% with diet and exercise alone. The innovative approach of Semaglutide extends beyond traditional weight loss methods, emphasizing appetite control to foster sustainable lifestyle changes.



Subcutaneous drugs are transforming the weight loss industry with some options that can be administered orally.

On the other front, Tirzepatide utilizes a dual action of both GIP (Glucose-dependent, insulinotropic polypeptide) and GLP-1 receptor agonist. By simultaneously targeting two key hormones involved in glucose and appetite regulation, Tirzepatide boasts impressive results in both weight loss and metabolic improvements. Its dual action not only aids in shedding excess pounds but also supports glucose control, making it an invaluable tool for those navigating the complexities of weight management and metabolic health. In clinical trials, Tirzepatide boasts even more impressive weight loss results with participants losing greater than 20% of body weight over the 72-week trial.

Now that we have explored the individual characteristics of Tirzepatide and Semaglutide, let's highlight their shared attributes:

- **GLP-1 receptor agonists.** Both Tirzepatide and Semaglutide belong to the GLP-1 receptor agonist class of medications. This commonality means that they work on the same biological pathway in the body.
- **Weight loss benefits.** The primary reason these medications have gained popularity is their ability to promote significant weight loss. They achieve this by reducing appetite and increasing feelings of fullness.

Continued on page 24

## Freedom From FOMO

Dr. Amy Austin, PSYD, LMFT

Before the days of social media (was there a time before social media?), there wasn't the constant and perpetual inundation of the "go here, see this, try that, buy it now" culture. Back then, "slowbriety," or taking things one day at a time, seemed to be more the norm because you had to wait to call, respond or RSVP. There seemed to be a more go-with-the-flow attitude about life and the way life was lived.

Declining an invite is tough because we visualize what fun it will be, and heaven forbid we ever disappoint anyone. This burdensome mindset can quickly turn into a 24/7 negative feedback loop of the dreaded FOMO (fear of missing out). The over bombardment of fun, glamour and amazement can wet the social appetite while creating unrealistic expectations. The pressure from overcommitting can lead to feelings of increased angst and anxiety, not to mention possible financial constraints.

So, how do you forego feelings of missing out on all the fun, and even worse, that dread of letting others down? I believe an in-depth look at what we deem important and what we can gently let go of may help. However, this is easier said than done in a culture of "more is better" instead of more is just more.

It might be a good time to explore what truly matters so that our lives and memories are not crowded together, but instead savored like a fine, aged wine. Here are some tips to forego FOMO:

- **Take a step back and breathe:** It's okay to delay a response. You don't have to reply as instantaneously as the invite was received. ASAP can then mean, After Some Appropriate Pondering.
- **Be more present and in the moment:** There's "great-full" abundance and enough in the NOW!
- **Consider future You:** You've RSVP'd to a potluck and the day arrives and you forgot you agreed to make the casserole. Where did the time go? Ann Marie Roepke, PhD, founder of Evoke Training and Consulting states, "Sometimes we overcommit because the future seems far off and abstract and we feel disconnected from our future self. They're a hypothetical stranger to us, and we're not invested in their needs." She advises you do some "mental gymnastics" and then respond accordingly, such as asking yourself what you'd decide if the event was today instead of a month from now.
- **Your children are watching:** How we live our lives teaches children the importance of being human beings and not *human doings*.

What a gift to replace FOMO with SOMO: Seek Only Meaningful Opportunities. Can life be reframed to embrace quality and not quantity? One, "No thank you - I'll kindly pass," and you're on your way.

Dr. Amy Austin is a licensed marriage and family therapist (MFC#41252) and doctor of clinical psychology in Rancho Mirage. She can be reached at (760) 774.0047.



Overcoming feelings of missing out can generate new appreciation for staying in.





# Adopting Healthier Habits this Year?

Don't forget your oral hygiene practices

By Sarah A. Khoshniyati, DDS

As we consider our fitness and nutritional goals for the new year, it's also important to review our oral hygiene practices which can greatly benefit - or deter - our overall well-being.

It is recommended to brush twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste for two minutes to help reduce the risk of cavities and periodontitis. Electric toothbrushes not only help with superior plaque removal but are also easier to use. They have a timer plus oscillating/rotating technology that helps clean the teeth much better than a manual toothbrush. Use a soft bristle, round toothbrush head as the round shape is smaller in size and allows for better access to different surfaces of the tooth. Some individuals may think that a medium or firm bristle toothbrush does a better job cleaning the teeth, however, they can be too abrasive and lead to recession and sensitivity over time.



New year health resolutions could include improving dental care.

Cleaning between the teeth daily is also important. Flossing is the best way to clean the interdental surfaces, removing food and plaque. Proper flossing technique includes wrapping the floss around each surface of the tooth and to move in an up-and-down direction 2-3 times. For those who find it hard to floss daily or simply dislike the activity, floss picks are now available and come with a nice grip, making it easier to clean between the teeth. Better yet, water flossers allow for easier removal of food particles, plaque and bacteria that get stuck in between the teeth and underneath the gumline. They also provide a "deeper cleaning," reaching further into the gum pockets. It is also a great practice for patients with periodontal disease since plaque and bacteria tend to get trapped in deeper gum pockets.

After brushing and flossing at night, it is important not to eat or drink any food or beverages other than water. The amount of saliva that we produce decreases while we sleep. If we consume sugary foods or drinks after brushing, our teeth are more susceptible to adhering plaque and bacteria since saliva's role is to buffer the acid created by cavity-causing bacteria.

Our diet also plays a crucial role in our oral hygiene routine. A diet low in sugars and processed carbohydrates can benefit our overall health, as well as our dental health. Foods high in sugar and carbohydrates tend to cause plaque development by sticking to the teeth for longer periods of time. The quantity and frequency of sugary or acidic food are also important to consider, as consuming sugar and acidic foods more frequently can increase the risk of developing cavities.

By following a proper oral hygiene routine and limiting the amount of sugar, acid and processed carbohydrates, one can maintain great oral hygiene. It is also important to visit your dentist and dental hygienist for regularly scheduled dental check-ups and cleanings. If it has been longer than six months since your last dental visit, be sure to schedule one as soon as possible.

Sarah Khoshniyati ("Dr. Sarah") is a dentist with Palm Desert Smiles and can be reached at (760) 568.3602. Visit [www.PalmDesertSmiles.com](http://www.PalmDesertSmiles.com).



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## A Guide to Healthy Weight Gain

By Delaney Quick, ND

While health conversations predominantly revolve around weight *loss*, there is a frequently overlooked group whose goal is to achieve healthy weight *gain*. This includes athletes or fitness enthusiasts, patients recovering from illness or surgery, some elderly individuals, people with medical conditions that contribute to weight loss (e.g. cancers, gastrointestinal disorders, hyperthyroidism) and those who are underweight due to naturally fast metabolism. The journey to healthy weight gain requires a thoughtful approach that prioritizes nutrition, exercise and lifestyle habits.

Healthy weight gain isn't merely about consuming more calories. It's about gradually increasing your body mass in a way that promotes strength and vitality while minimizing the risk of health complications. This is done by emphasizing whole-food ingredients and focusing on adequate protein intake.

Begin by consulting with a health care professional, such as a naturopathic doctor or nutritionist to determine your ideal weight gain range and individualized dietary needs. Establishing a clear plan will help track and keep you motivated throughout the process. Daily protein and calorie intake totals should take into account your height and weight, activity level and weight gain goals. Specific food choices and dietary requirements should be prioritized based on underlying health conditions, nutrient deficiencies and even personal skill level and time restraints.

It's essential to focus on nutrient-dense foods rather than empty calories and ultra-processed products. Whole foods are rich in protein, healthy fats, complex carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals that fuel biochemical processes in our body and keep us feeling nourished. Highly processed foods contribute to inflammation, lack the micronutrients that our bodies need to maintain health and hinder balanced digestive function.

Protein plays a pivotal role in muscle development. Muscles are essential tissue for maintaining strength and function, healthy blood glucose, preventing injury and bone health. Adults need approximately 1.4 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight for muscle mass gain. Top sources of organic protein include chicken and turkey, fish, eggs, nuts and seeds, tofu and tempeh, lean beef, legumes and dairy products for those who tolerate it. Protein shakes or bars can also *supplement* daily intake, however it's important to read nutrition labels and opt for the cleanest sources possible. Clean products have minimal additives, artificial ingredients, and fillers and are as close to the whole-food source as possible.

While nutrition might be the most critical component of health weight gain, lifestyle factors also play an important role. Chronic stress can hinder weight gain efforts by suppressing appetite, so incorporating relaxation techniques like breath work, meditation, yoga and journaling can help reduce cortisol overload. Daily movement is a crucial player in reducing stress, and strength training at least three times a week increases muscle mass. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night and stay hydrated to support overall health and muscle recovery.

Healthy weight gain is achievable through a balanced approach that prioritizes nutrition, exercise and lifestyle habits. It's not solely about the number on the scale, but rather about building a stronger, healthier version of yourself. Embrace patience, consistency and positivity in this journey, knowing that the effort invested in a healthy weight gain will yield lasting benefits for your overall well-being.

Dr. Delaney Quick is a primary care naturopathic doctor at Live Well Clinic in La Quinta. For more information, call (760) 771.5970 or visit [www.livewellclinic.org](http://www.livewellclinic.org).

## Dragon Dreams and Chinese New Year

By Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos

Do you remember "Puff the Magic Dragon" who lived by the sea in a faraway land called Honah Lee? The 1963 song by Peter, Paul, and Mary is about the ageless dragon playmate for little Jackie Paper and his imaginary dragon daydream adventures.

Well, you may hear more of Puff as we enter 2024, the Chinese Year of the Yang Wood Dragon which officially begins February 10. You or a loved one are a Dragon if born in the years 2024, 2021, 2000, 1988, 1976, 1964, 1952, 1940, or every 12 years earlier.

What do these mythical flying, fire-breathing creatures mean in dreams? They may symbolize everything from protection to wealth in your current and future life.'

The personalities of Dragon people may even be present in your dreams. Traits of Yang Wood Dragon people and characteristics for 2024 are charismatic, intelligent, confident, lucky and gifted.<sup>2</sup> Dragons have power, vigor and charm, and all of this can spill over into dreams.

Chinese zodiac compatibility rules show that Dragon people get along well with Rooster, Rat and Monkey signs. However, Ox, Sheep or Dog signs should be avoided when choosing a life partner. Watch for these animals in your dreams.

Many of us have animal or angel dream guides. Some of us have Dragon dream guides that empower us with Dragon energy. They come in various colors, shapes and sizes from the five Chinese elements of wood, fire, earth, water and metal. They are magical shapeshifters that take on different colors and shapes to hide in dream backgrounds while the Dragon's cousin, Lizard, can change color and blend into its surroundings, making it seem invisible.

The 2024 Yang Wood Dragon is green and symbolic of heaven, maleness, light, activity and penetration, which may appear in dreams, not as dragons but as dragon-symbolic objects. Green is health, wealth and energy. A Dragon spirit animal can symbolize self-love and empowerment to help you tap into your strength. Dragon dream energy is present in odd numbers, mountains, azure color and an unbroken line. Symbolic dragon dreams leave positive residual power energy felt by others.

You don't have to be born in the Year of the Dragon to have Dragon energy. People may be naturally attracted to your wisdom and trust your judgment because you can shift the shape of your perception to see both sides and offer a fair assessment. Look for the play on words in dreams because these legendary beasts have left a deep-rooted mark on our collective imagination that flows into our dreams.

Puff the magic daydream dragon gave out his final roar when little Jackie Paper didn't come to play anymore. However, Puff may be reawaken soon because what goes around comes around, and this year, the Dragon is back.

Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos of Rancho Mirage is a survivor, author, dream expert, speaker, TV/radio host/producer and has been featured on Dr. Oz and The Doctors. Her new book *Dreams That Can Save Your Life* is available now. For more information, visit [www.KathleenOkeefeKanavos.com](http://www.KathleenOkeefeKanavos.com).

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# The Tao of Winter

By Diane Sheppard, PhD, LAc

The sun sets with a beautiful orange pink glow as it is sitting closest to the earth this time of year. We can see and feel that early yin evening is upon us, as it now gets dark and chilly at 4:30 p.m. This is the time of year when nature retreats to build up reserves for the coming seasons, so following late summer, we can reap harvest energy in the fall. Chi (energy) is shifting inside and outside of our bodies to keep in balance with laws of the five elements, nature's seasonal changes. Winter is the time of year where yin energy is at its strongest.

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and five element theory, each season or cycle moves in phases throughout the year and is associated with organ functions. Each element represents energies that will act on each other either in harmony or dis-ease. Maintaining the flow of chi in our organs is essential for optimal balance and wellness to harmonize our body, mind and spirit.

Winter is associated with the water element, and the kidney meridian is known as "the controller of water." Water represents our ability to flow and overcome obstacles. Here are some tips to keep the kidney chi healthy, moving, thriving and rejuvenating during winter hibernation:

- ☯ Warming foods are essential for nourishment, so in winter, slow cooking is the way to go. Think casseroles, curries, stews, soups, bone and or vegetable broths. Most importantly, choose many foods that are dark: black beans, eggplants, olives, black sesame seeds, soybeans, black garlic, lentils, black rice, mushrooms, fermented veggies, meat, squash, etc.
- ☯ Fiery spices and pungent flavors add zing and great taste and are natural medicines, so incorporate garlic, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, turmeric, nutmeg, all spice, star anise, fennel and rosemary - so many yummy choices!
- ☯ Avoid cold foods like salad and raw vegetables as they are too cold and damage yang energy.
- ☯ In TCM, it is encouraged to migrate towards warm or room temperature drinks. Add a cup of hot tea, maybe chai or ginger, to your meal to warm your stomach, as the stomach is our gas tank and only warm fuel will get it going.
- ☯ Stay hydrated! Yes, even in winter you must drink your fluids and be sure to stay warm.
- ☯ Practice Pai Da, a patting self-massage therapy. Pat your body gently for three minutes along the inner sides of your legs up to your chest to activate the kidney channel. Then warm your hands by rubbing them and place them on your kidneys to warm yang.
- ☯ Enjoy warming therapies like hot Epsom salt baths. Add your favorite essential oils or a tea bag of rose or chai. A heating pad in bed can warm the kidneys, move blood and relieve pain such as common low back pain.
- ☯ Drink wine and or add vinegar to your dishes as it warms the blood and moves energy in the cold season.
- ☯ Last but not least, go to bed early and hibernate with deep restful sleep.

Diane Sheppard is a licensed acupuncturist and doctor of traditional Chinese medicine with AcQpoint Wellness Center and can be reached at (760) 345.2200 or visit [www.AcQPoint.com](http://www.AcQPoint.com).





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## Get Your Head in the Game

### The importance of mindfulness in golf

By Rich Goldberg, MD

What keeps golfers from reaching their potential and hitting more good shots? Most of the time, the problem is interference from intrusive thoughts and emotions. Golfers have a lot going on in their head. For example, while standing over a simple short putt, golfers may think, "Do I have the right line? The last thing I need is a double bogey." What golfers need to do instead is to be calm and fully present. The skills needed to achieve that calmness and focus can be developed through the practice of meditation.

Golfers' heads are usually filled with multiple swing thoughts such as, "Take the club back slower, stay on plane, don't move my head, keep my elbow in." On top of that, stream of thoughts are disruptive with emotions such as, "I would feel great with two more pars ... I'm afraid I'm going to hit into the water again...I hate this hole." It's no wonder that we so often hear golfers moaning, "I lost my concentration."

Too few golfers have thought about how to improve their calm and focus. It is increasingly common to hear high-level players praising meditation. Phil Mickelson credited meditation with helping him win the 2021 PGA Championship. Rory McIlroy meditates 20 minutes before every competitive round. And who has had the strongest focus in the history of golf? Tiger Woods, whose Buddhist mother introduced him to meditation early in life.

There is no shortage of advice on how to meditate, and those who want to learn can easily find instruction. Learning to focus attention on your breathing is a great place to

start. Take 15 minutes, three times per week and get started. Once a golfer learns the basics, it's possible to practice mindful breathing during the hours spent between shots.

So, when you are standing over that short putt, facing a carry over the water or feeling self-conscious in front of other players, the ability to become calm and focused will greatly reduce your percentage of poor shots. This is how good scores happen. Your meditation will also enhance your general health through stress reduction. Though results are not immediate, even three weeks of regular practice will bring noticeable benefit, and you'll see improved scores.

Meditation can help you better manage and persevere through all kinds of situations both on and off the course. It fosters equanimity, which is one of the most important foundations for good golf. You may even begin to smile more at the constant challenges that emerge on the course - and in life.

In your golf game, meditation skills will help you get out of your own way and allow your best natural swing to emerge. It will increase your ability to clear your mind and decrease the number of times you lose concentration.

In golf (as in life) so many things don't work out as we want them to. Meditation helps us stay present and reconnect with our best capabilities under adverse circumstances. Whatever else you're doing to play better golf, you cannot afford to forego learning about and practicing meditation.

*Dr. Goldberg is professor of psychiatry at Brown University, founder of Dr. Rich Golf and author of Better Golf Better Life. He provides mental golf coaching and spends a portion of the season in Palm Springs. For a consultation contact [drichgolf@gmail.com](mailto:drichgolf@gmail.com) or visit [www.drrichgolf.com](http://www.drrichgolf.com).*

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## Dry January Can Lead to a Fantastic February

By Bryan Paul Blackwell, CHC

By now, many of us know that making small dietary and lifestyle changes can have transformative effects on our overall health and well-being. One of these transformational changes, which has been gaining popularity in recent years, is "Dry January" - the act of abstaining from alcohol for the whole month. While many may undertake this challenge for various reasons, one of the most significant, yet often overlooked, benefits is its remarkable impact on gut health.



Abstaining from alcohol for the month of January is a growing trend.

Let's explore how a month free from alcohol can lead to a fantastic February, focusing on four critical gut health improvements:

**Restoration of the gut microbiome.** Alcohol disrupts the gut microbiome, leading to dysbiosis, which affects digestion, mood and immunity. Abstaining helps rebalance the microbiome, enhancing digestion, nutrient absorption, immune function and mental health.

**Healing of the gut lining.** Alcohol damages the stomach and intestinal lining, causing inflammation and a "leaky gut." A break from alcohol allows healing, reducing inflammation symptoms and decreasing risks of serious gastrointestinal conditions, improving overall physical well-being.

**Improved digestive function.** Alcohol impairs digestion, affecting enzyme secretion and gut motility, leading to issues like acid reflux and poor nutrient absorption. Dry January aids the digestive system's recovery, improving bowel regularity and nutrient utilization, contributing to increased energy and better skin health.

**Reduction in inflammation and bloating.** Alcohol-induced inflammation causes bloating and discomfort. Abstaining lessens these symptoms and has systemic health benefits, reducing the risk of chronic inflammation-related diseases.

The journey through dry January is not just about abstaining from alcohol; it's a journey towards better health and a new appreciation for the role of diet and lifestyle in your overall well-being. As you embark on this challenge, remember that the benefits extend beyond just one month. The positive changes in your gut health could even be the catalyst for a new holistic approach to health and wellness.

Imagine entering February with a rejuvenated digestive system, a more balanced mood, increased energy and a profound sense of accomplishment. This could be your reality after a successful dry January. Whether you're doing it for the first time or as part of an ongoing commitment to your health, the benefits of giving your body a break from alcohol are undeniable. I encourage you to embrace this challenge, not just as a one-month experiment, but as an opportunity to reset and reconsider your relationship with alcohol and its impact on your digestive health.

Here's to a dry January and a truly fantastic February!

*Bryan Paul Blackwell, a cancer patient and co-owner of Barefoot Balance Holistic Health, specializes as a certified health coach in digestive health and integrative nutrition. He can be reached at (760) 401.1568, [bryanpaul@barefootbalance.com](mailto:bryanpaul@barefootbalance.com), or through [www.barefootbalance.com](http://www.barefootbalance.com)*





# 2024: Stop, Challenge, Consider, Choose

## Navigating a year of intention

By Jennifer Yockey

As we usher in 2024, let this be the year that the rhythm of life is not dictated by *its* pace but by *our* deliberate actions—where each step is a conscious choice. By embracing "Stop, Challenge, Consider, Choose," we create thoughtful intention guiding us towards a more purposeful and hopefully, more peaceful existence.

### Stop: The Art of Pausing

In a world that celebrates perpetual motion, the first step in cultivating intention is the art of stopping. Pausing is not a sign of weakness or hesitation; it's a conscious act of reclaiming our time and attention. As a yoga teacher, I've witnessed the transformative power of stillness on the mat. Just as a yoga pose requires a moment of pause to find balance, so does life. In 2024, let 'stopping' become a practice—a conscious breath and intentional grounding before the next step.

### Challenge: A Thoughtful Pause

With the stillness of the pause comes the invitation and opportunity to challenge. Before we let thoughts solidify into decisions, challenge them. Ask yourself, "Is this decision aligned with my true self?" Challenge the assumptions, the norms and the automatic responses that may have become ingrained. Yoga teaches us the strength not only found in the challenging poses, but also in those most passive—the ones that push boundaries and redefine limits, the ones that require us to breathe and go inward.

Apply this principle to your thoughts in 2024; challenge them before they become actions.

### Consider: Exploring Alternatives

As we challenge our initial thoughts, the next step is consideration. Open yourself to alternatives and possibilities. In yoga, each pose has variations as we come to the mat each day with different mental and physical capabilities. Similarly, in life, consider the various paths available; pausing to consider the reality of *today* before committing. This year, let the landscape of your choices be vast and exploration be the compass guiding you to a well-informed decision.

### Choose: Intentional Decision-Making

In the culmination of the intentional process comes the act of choosing. 2024 encourages us to make decisions consciously rather than reacting impulsively. In the silence of the pause, after challenging and considering, make a choice aligned with your values and aspirations. Yoga teaches us that the power of choice lies not just in the pose itself but in the mindful intention behind it.

Take this principle off the mat – begin to make choices with clarity, purpose and a deep understanding of outcomes.

In 2024, let our actions be deliberate and guided by intention. Through the pauses, challenges, considerations and choices, may we shape a purposeful existence.

May this be the year we embrace each moment, each question, each assumption and explore diverse paths to consciously craft a life enriched with mindful intention.

Jennifer Yockey is owner of Gather Yoga & Wellness. She is an E-RYT yoga/ meditation teacher and wellness coach and can be reached at (760) 219.7953, [jennifer@gatherlaquinta.com](mailto:jennifer@gatherlaquinta.com). For more information, visit [www.gatherlaquinta.com](http://www.gatherlaquinta.com).



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## Walk Towards Health One Step at a Time

By Candice Nicole

It's a *brand new year* - time for new steps, strides and strolls. Let's get moving.

Getting healthy is literally a step-by-step process, and it can be easy with simple adjustments to how often you move - and making those moves count. So, let's get that blood flowing through our veins!

**Step away from the desk.** Many of us have desk jobs, careers that keep us seated behind a computer screen or at boardroom tables or even jobs that keep us standing in one spot for hours a day. These jobs aren't only demanding on our time, but can be brutal on our bodies as well. Believe it or not, sitting or standing in one place for too long puts undue stress on muscles, joints and nerves that are meant to help our bodies in motion. When these interwoven groups are kept in unnatural positions for too long, it stresses the body and can result in aches, pains and even long-term damage. Not good!

**One step at a time.** You might be stuck at your desk, but that doesn't mean you can't get up and move or engage in some leg or arm lifts. During your lunch break, take the time to eat (preferably a meal with balanced macros and a mineral supplement), but then also take the time to move. Walk the parking lot of the office

building. Take the elevator down to the bottom floor (or walk down) and walk back up the stairs.

Even if you don't have a desk job, just adding short bursts of walking throughout your day can help keep your muscles, joints and heart healthy. Better than that, you can walk for 30 minutes through the local park, through your neighborhood or from your house to the corner store and back. Even walking from the living room to the kitchen can be exercise if you do it purposefully several times in a set of repeated periods of time. Get your heart rate up, keep it up, and you will see and experience the difference over time.

Walking is an easy step towards health you can add to your daily routine. Be sure to support your active body with healthy nutrition, vitamins and minerals to keep muscles loose, joints pain-free and motivation high. Here's to walking through this spectacular new year!

*Candice Nicole is a health advocate and founder of HUmineral food derived mineral nutrients. She can be reached at [info@HUMineral.com](mailto:info@HUMineral.com) or (818) 400.7657. For more information, visit [www.HUMineral.com](http://www.HUMineral.com).*



*An easy resolution for 2024 is to increase the number of steps you take.*

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## Living Wellness

with Jennifer Di Francesco

### The Uninvited Guest: Stress

There is considerable discourse these days about longevity and its correlation to how we manage stress. Stress seems like a conditional part of day-to-day living. It is natural to have intermittent tension in life, yet incessant stress seems the new norm and ultimately creates risks for health decline.

When chronic stress elevates, we find ourselves in a rumination loop where cortisol levels remain high. When this happens, the body is never allowed time to recover, and the damage that ensues starts at our chromosomes. There is an enzyme at the end of our chromosomes preserving our telomeres, the caps protecting DNA. When telomeres no longer protect chromosomes, they become too short. This poses a threat for cells which stop dividing and disease can creep in.

When our adrenaline is constantly pumping, it manifests in a weakened immune system and various health issues. Heart disease, memory loss, vision loss and an aftermath of unhealthy choices unfold. How do we stop this cycle? We can learn from the behavior of our elders. As Theodore Roosevelt said, "Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, you've got to start young."

Upon speaking to my 90-year-old mother about this topic, she reflected on a self-preservation hypothesis as to why our elders might sometimes exhibit intolerance. Often there is a stigma about older people showing restriction and short response in communication. We may refer to such a person as a curmudgeon. However, the behavior might not be just grumpiness. Older people do not want to be bothered with stress and have learned a preservation mechanism for filtering stress by being somewhat curt. Studies show our happiness and experience of stress lessens as we age. One study found that centenarians reported using three coping strategies to deal with adversity: acceptance, not worrying and taking things one day at a time.

As we navigate adulthood, we spend time trying to fix others or change situations, putting the brain under undue stress. There is both self-inflicted and externally imposed stress and knowing our role to navigate stress reduction is imperative. If it requires cultivating some curmudgeon approaches towards allowing stress in, then perhaps we should adopt this lesson from our elders.

For a large segment of the population, personal finances are a leading cause of stress. Approximately 4 in 5 Americans are stressed about the cost of living. This stress can cascade to affect mental health, physical health and even our relationships. These are weighty issues and there is no perfect solution, yet what we choose to do on a moment-by-moment basis either helps or hinders our stress reduction.

Choose purpose driven intention, connect with others and take self-care. Working in a charity role may provide an immediate surge of well-being and these small wins produce positive modifications in our brain.

As we enter the third act of life, we can cause others less stress, take in less stress for ourselves and know that our health and life span depend on this self-preservation. *Jennifer Di Francesco is a wellness explorer and desert adventurer and can be reached at [www.coachellabellaboho.com](http://www.coachellabellaboho.com).*

Sources available upon request.



## Nature’s Medicine All Around Us

*A look at Bougainvillea spp.*

*By Shari Jainuddin, NMD, BCB*



In this series on the medicinal value of local vegetation, I have discussed *Fouquieria splendens* (Ocotillo) and *Larrea tridentata* (Creosote bush). Now, we'll look at *Bougainvillea*, one of the most decorative plants in the area.

Unlike the previous two plants, *Bougainvillea* is not native to the desert. This shrubby vine comes from South America and its beauty has spread among tropical and warm climate regions of the world. Botanically, people awe over their abundant, almost continual, vibrant foliage. Fun fact: It is not their flowers that are colorful, but petaloid bracts, a type of modified leaf which can appear in red, magenta, orange, pink, rose, white and mauve. Their flowers are actually very small and white-cream-yellowish in color. The bracts can be round or more triangular in shape and will stay colorful for several months after the flowers are finished. Over time, the vibrancy of the color fades and the bracts texture start to resemble that of paper, hence its common name, Paper Flower.<sup>1</sup>

This plant has natural botanical insecticide properties. However, regular pruning not only provides the ability to shape the plant and direct its growth, it also can prevent overcrowding that can lead to pests and diseases. In fact, the trunks can be braided, and shoots trained into various shapes. Care should be taken whenever handling this plant as it has very impressive thorns, which also make it a great security fence!

Historical medicinal uses of *Bougainvillea* include antibacterial and antiviral activities used as treatment for coughs and respiratory issues.<sup>2</sup> Highlights of modern research suggest properties that fight cancer, diabetes, high cholesterol, liver toxicity, inflammation, oxidation, ulcers and microbes to name a few.<sup>3</sup> A study on its anti-inflammatory effects showed comparable effectiveness in an oral dose-dependent manner to positive controls of indomethacin, aspirin and dexamethasone.<sup>4</sup>

What is even more notable is it has been used among tribal people of many countries as a form of birth control - for both women and men. A *Pharmacognosy Review* article stated studies that support its antifertility properties. For males, it reduces sperm count, impairs sperm viability and motility, and potentially increases the negative charge on the sperm surface, thereby inhibiting its capacity of fertilization. Other histological changes of male reproductive organs are noted as well. For women, it disrupts various phases of the menstrual cycle. For both males and females, testosterone and estrogen levels were significantly decreased.<sup>3</sup> In a world where the burden of birth control has been placed almost exclusively on females, this may provide an avenue for future generations to share that burden more evenly.

Again, it is my hope that these articles give you pause, and next time you see the *Bougainvillea*, appreciate not only the beauty of its bracts, but also the many medicinal benefits that nature provides us.

*Dr. Shari Jainuddin is a naturopathic primary care doctor at One Life Naturopathic and also offers biofeedback training and craniosacral therapy. This article is intended to be informative and is not provided as medical advice. For more information, call (442) 256.5963 or visit [www.onelifenaturopathic.org](http://www.onelifenaturopathic.org).*

References available upon request.

## Aging Doesn’t Have to be a Pain

*By Lewis Lustman*

As we age, many parts of our body wear out. Bones become more brittle. Muscles aren't as malleable as they used to be. We ache after playing pickleball. We hurt after a round of golf. We pull muscles just getting out of bed or bending to pick up something.

And our choices to relieve the pain? Good old aspirin or Ibuprofen, opioids for more serious issues, injections and even surgery when other options are insufficient.

Fortunately, an increasing number of doctors are recognizing the efficacy of cannabis products in helping alleviate pain, as opioids are no longer a first-choice treatment due to the risk of dependence leading to misuse. Some of these doctors refer their clients to us for education on using cannabis products as pain relief is driving research and studies continue to show positive results.

Chronic pain is the most common reason people use cannabis for therapeutic purposes. Cannabinoids are strong candidates for use in pain relievers and other medications used for the treatment of symptoms of aging.

Cannabis provides many natural compounds that work together, activating one another. There are hundreds of different varieties of cannabis, each containing varying amounts of cannabinoids, terpenoids and flavonoids. These chemicals interact with the brain and body chemistry to cause certain effects. The correct selection of strains, cannabinoids and dose can lead to the most effective regimen; however, this can be challenging to find.

For general pain, we suggest looking at cannabis products containing CBD, THC and CBG. Terpenes - the elements that work with cannabinoids and offer distinctive aromas - include pinene, linalool and myrcene.

Having tested many products to address arthritis and bursitis, we have found that balms can deliver significant temporary relief. P's ProMax is unique in blending emu oil with CBD - no THC involved - which enables it to quickly permeate skin and reach painful areas deep within our muscles and joints. Simply rub a small into the painful area and relief may take only seconds and last for up to six hours.

Balms can be used on local pain such as arthritis, rashes, and psoriasis or eczema. In addition to balms, pain-relieving cannabis may be enjoyed in a variety of ways:

**Tinctures.** Cannabis concentrate infused in an oil. Just put a few drops under your tongue and hold it there for 30 seconds. Onset within 15-60 minutes. Dosing is easily measured and controlled. CBD is suggested for occasional pain although for chronic pain, the more powerful CBG may prove more effective.

**Edibles.** Cannabis infused into gummies, brownies and even beverages. As we have repeatedly cautioned, edibles can take hours to kick in. We are aware of numerous seniors - and even younger people - who expected immediate results and when they didn't happen, took more. The first serving kicks in, then the second, and the user may experience extreme discomfort, possibly requiring a trip to the emergency room. Edibles may take up to eight hours to wear off.

**Vapes.** Like smoking a joint but without smoke, aroma, flame and ash. Vape pens are easily portable, and discreet. A hit can take effect within 2-10 minutes and last up to four hours. We suggest inexperienced users look for vapes containing under 30% THC.

As always, we suggest newcomers start off with low doses and slowly increase use if necessary.

*Lustman is chief marketing officer with Senior-High which offers education and resources on medicinal marijuana via private consultations and complimentary seminars to communities. He can be reached at (760) 459.4593 or visit [www.senior-high.com](http://www.senior-high.com).*



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# Goal Setting and Career Transition in the New Year

By Chris Carter

As the calendar turns to a fresh year, many of us take the opportunity to reflect on our lives and careers. For those experiencing a career transition, this period of introspection is particularly emotional. Whether the transition was voluntary or the result of a layoff, the new year presents a chance to redefine goals and carve out a new path.

The exercise of goal setting during a career transition can be as daunting as it is necessary. It involves taking stock of, not only your professional skills, but also your passions, those activities that make you lose track of time and fill you with purpose. You may refer to this as “being in the flow.” In the quiet after the holiday bustle, take a moment to consider what you truly love to do and how that aligns with your career aspirations. At the same time, be pragmatic. What is happening in the marketplace? What jobs do your skills match? Are you bound to a specific geography? To specific working hours? As you look at specific openings, would you hire you?

Take time to engage in a few thought-provoking exercises which help you through this introspection time.

Some of these exercises might include:

- If you had a day to spend all to yourself, what would you do?
- If you could pick your perfect customers, who would you serve?
- What breaks your heart?
- What were the top 10 accomplishments and highlights of last year?
- What do your friends come to you for?
- What comes easy to you that you might take for granted or that doesn’t seem to come as easy to others? These are your superpowers!

The new year is the perfect time for a resume update and LinkedIn profile refresh. Update your photo, revise your summary to reflect your current goals and add any new skills or experiences. Don’t forget to prune older, less relevant information that might dilute your core message. If you are applying for jobs online, make sure your resume is ATS (Applicant Tracking System) compliant. Your resume and LinkedIn profile are often the first impression you make on potential employers, so ensure it’s an accurate representation of your professional self.

Moreover, as you enter this period of transition, consider the power of networking. Reconnect with past friends and colleagues. These are individuals who know your work ethic and strengths and can offer support or even introduce new opportunities. However, don't stop there! Forge new connections by attending industry events as well as professional networking organizations such as Women Leaders Forum of the Coachella Valley or a local chamber of commerce, where you can meet fellow professionals, exchange ideas and expand your circle.

These connections can be crucial, as they often lead to what's known as the "hidden job market." Did you know that 70% of positions are filled through referrals or connections rather than public job postings? By expanding your network, you increase your visibility within your industry, making it more likely that opportunities will come your way.



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One final component to your New Year - New You: when networking, the dreaded "tell me about yourself" becomes more than just an interview question; it's a prompt to articulate your personal brand. This new year, make it a goal to refine your branding statement. This is a concise, compelling narrative that captures your unique value and professional desire. It should be clear, consistent, and ready to be shared. Follow it up with “who do you recommend I speak with?” with the desired outcoming being a connection for a potential opportunity.

As you set your sights on a new career, remember to maintain a balance between personal aspirations and practicality. Consider the lifestyle you want and how potential jobs fit into that picture. Whether you seek flexibility, creativity, leadership or stability, let these preferences guide your job search.

Lastly, embrace the journey itself. Career transitions can be periods of significant growth and self-discovery. They can challenge you to learn new skills, to step out of your comfort zone and to reinvent yourself professionally. Consider an accountability partner, career coach or mentor during this transition time. Sometimes having someone to talk with during this challenging time can make all the difference in your outlook, approach and attitude.

As we usher in the new year, set your goals with intention. Be open to new possibilities, be active in your pursuit, and be ready to embark on a fulfilling path that aligns with both who you are and who you aspire to become. Here's to new beginnings and to a year of health, growth and professional success!

*Chris Carter is a career consultant with LHH Career Transition & Mobility, vice president of Women Leaders Forum and founder of Start Strong professional resources. She can be reached at [chris@startstronglife.com](mailto:chris@startstronglife.com). For a free goal setting guide and more information, visit [www.startstronglife.com](http://www.startstronglife.com).*



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# Does NAD+ Really Work?

By Lauren Del Sarto

NAD+ (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide) is a popular supplement in the anti-aging realm, as significant research supports its effectiveness in enhancing energy production. My husband's integrative doctor, Joe Scherger, MD, has had him taking it orally for several years. But because it works at the cellular level, it's hard to directly measure its efficacy, and while it's available at stores like Clark's Nutrition, it's not cheap.

Now, it is also readily available as an IV drip. When I saw Restore Hyper Wellness co-owner Jeff Smith, DO, an integrative sports and pain medicine doctor, getting an NAD+ IV at Restore, I was interested to learn his protocol and the effects he experiences from this more direct form of supplementation.

NAD+ is an essential coenzyme that supports our energy powerhouse cells (our mitochondria) and cleans out damaged cell components.<sup>1</sup> It is produced naturally and required by every living cell in our body,<sup>2</sup> but as we age, our natural production declines. Dr. Smith is an ultra-athlete and certainly on the cutting edge of "body hacks," so I am delighted to share our conversation as I learned quite a bit:

**Why do you recommend supplementing with NAD+?** Modern life. The stresses and exposures we all face today, coupled with diminishing abilities to replenish via natural resources (i.e. depleted soils), are good reasons to supplement important nutrients, like NAD+, required for optimal performance.

**What benefits have you seen from IV supplementation?** Overall, I just feel more vitality, more youthfulness. My sleep and athletic recovery have improved, and while I didn't notice increased energy immediately, my endurance has definitely improved. I also feel less discomfort and aches and pains.

**What is your dosing protocol?** Restore Hyper Wellness's established protocol is a loading dose of 500 mg administered over four consecutive days, followed by regular maintenance which can either be one 250-750mg IV monthly, or weekly 125mg IM [intramuscular] shots administered equally apart (i.e. every Tuesday). I did the initial loading doses and waited a few months before returning as the regiment is recommended, but not required.

**How can we replenish NAD+ naturally?** Healthy foods containing macronutrients like tryptophan and B3 [niacin] that are made into NAD (minimally processed eggs, broccoli, beans, avocado and lean grass-fed meat) all help fuel your body. Managing stress and sleeping well also aid in decreasing oxidized stress which depletes our mitochondria of their energy.

**Who should not supplement?** NAD+ is not recommended for those with a history of seizures, kidney or liver disease, allergies to niacin or B vitamins, or women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. It is also suggested that increased levels of NAD+ can boost the breakdown of glucose [glycolysis] and allow for the proliferation of cancer cells, so it is not recommended for those with recent cancers [within five years of treatment].

NAD+ supplementation is just another tool in our vast tool box of anti-aging modalities that help our body repair, recover and rejuvenate, he adds. They should all be supported by healthy lifestyle habits and balanced nutrition.

*Del Sarto is founder and publisher of Desert Health and can be reached Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com. For more information on NAD+ supplementation, visit [www.restore.com](http://www.restore.com) or call (760) 505.3000.*

References: 1) <https://www.restore.com/blog/how-can-nad-iv-drip-therapy-help-me>; 2) [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7963035/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7963035/)



Jeff Smith, DO

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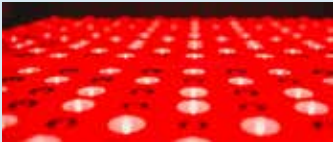
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## Dr. Walker's Why We Sleep

A Review by Joseph E. Scherger MD, MPH

In his new book *Why We Sleep*, Matthew Walker, PhD gives us the hard truths about sleep, stating that if we do not get a full night's sleep, we will be impaired, even at the level of a drunk driver. The science says we need 7-9 hours of restful sleep a night to be healthy, and at least one-third of Americans fail to get this amount regularly.

Walker is professor of neuroscience and psychology at UC Berkeley and the director of the Center for Human Sleep Science. He was previously a professor of psychiatry at Harvard where they invited him to leave after he openly criticized the university for what they were doing to students during finals' week. We all remember the "all-nighters" and how we felt afterwards; some students die from this.

Unfortunately, for physicians, medical training requires repeated sleep deprivation. Many health care workers often work through the night and do not get the required restful sleep during the day. Our 24-hour society requires this of many other shift workers, as well as people working multiple jobs to support their family. We are a society of sleep deprivation, adding to many health problems, both mentally and physically.

All mammals require sleep. As humans, our sleep changes across our life span. From my days of delivering babies, I found it useful to know that newborns will sleep 20 hours in the first two weeks of life and 16 hours as infants, usually overnight and with two naps. Daily sleep time reduces to 12 hours with one nap as young children. All the way through adolescence, 10 hours of sleep is the norm, although school schedules and the lack of desire to go to sleep often interfere. Many junior high and high schools have wisely delayed the start of school to allow students to get an additional 30-60 minutes of sleep.

Trouble sleeping, or insomnia, is one of the most common health problems. Insomnia has many causes and many solutions. Prescription medications for sleep are not a healthy solution and only add to the problems. Sleep hygiene captures the art of good sleeping behavior and Walker goes into solutions in detail. Blue light from our electronic devices interfering with the brain's release of melatonin is one of the most recent problems. Through evolution, we went to sleep when it became dark and darkness releases melatonin in our brain. Our indoor world with lighted bedrooms, and even television, will interfere with sleep.

Sleep is about letting go of that we are dealing with mentally and putting our thoughts and problems away, much like our clothes. The idea of "let me sleep on it" is not to be taken literally in that we are not meant to think about and solve problems when we sleep. Rather a good night's sleep should refresh us for better decision making in the morning.

Some of us think that wine or other alcohol may help us sleep. That may be true initiating sleep, but as alcohol wears off, we usually wake up with some arousal interfering with a full night's sleep.

Sleeping through the night without getting up to go to the bathroom is a luxury not common to middle-aged adults and especially seniors. We should have the skill of going back to sleep with such interruptions.

Meditation and breath work can help with this. "Four square breathing" is becoming popular. This is a slow inhalation through the nose over about four seconds, hold the breath for about four seconds and then exhale through the nose for the same amount of time. A brief pause before the next breath completes the four parts of the cycle. A focus on that breathing is an easy form of sleep meditation.

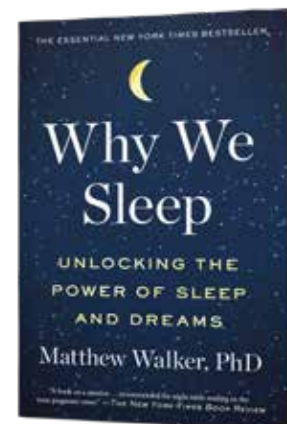
As seniors, our pineal gland that produces melatonin becomes calcified. That may be the main reason many seniors have trouble getting a full night's sleep. Melatonin is not only a sleep hormone, but has been shown to have anti-oxidant and anti-aging benefits. It is safe even up to high doses.

My sleep routine is as follows: I initiate sleep at 9:30 or 10 p.m. and arise eight hours later at 5:30 or 6 a.m. I do this seven days a week. About two hours before I go to bed, I wear blue light blocking glasses. I can feel my eyes relax. Approximately 30-60 minutes before sleep, I take a Sleep 3 supplement by Nature's Bounty. This is a time-released tablet that has 10 mg of melatonin along with four herbs and an amino acid known to help with sleep. At the bedside, I have available two 5 mg sublingual melatonin tablets to use as necessary to get back to sleep if I am disturbed or need to go the bathroom. I also use four square breathing to help me get back to sleep. Overall, I am sleeping well and feel rested and productive the next day on this routine.

Everyone should develop a good sleep routine. There are lots of options for sleep and Walker gives many suggestions in his book.

Getting regular restorative sleep means that we will spend about one-third of our life sleeping. This is not a waste of time, but rather a recipe for a healthy, productive life. I encourage you to use this book as a manual for healthy sleeping.

Dr. Scherger is founder of Restore Health Disease Reversal in Indian Wells, a clinic dedicated to weight loss and reversing chronic medical conditions. To schedule a consultation, call (760) 898.9663 or visit [www.restorehealth.me](http://www.restorehealth.me).



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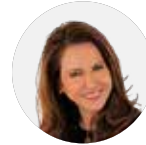
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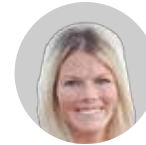
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SCAN ME



## The Successes of Sages and Seekers

By Lauren Del Sarto

California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) Palm Desert Campus is implementing an important class that teaches things not learned in books: intergenerational communication.

The national program, called Sages and Seekers, brings seniors (sages) and students (seekers) together for one-on-one interaction, group discussions and collaborative activities in a structured and supportive environment. The eight-week pilot program, which finished last fall, exceeded expectations, and various departments within the college are now exploring how similar programs can be included in their curriculum.



Seeker Diana with Sage Berneil Mroz



Sage Marcy Welland and Seeker Cassandra

since the pandemic, is a leading concern; feeling marginalized is another. "This program provides both students and seniors an alternative to isolation: a sense of purpose and a connection to the larger picture of society and the world."

Sages and Seekers also fills a gap in educational institutions, where faculty and administrators focus on course requirements and devote little time to promoting communication skills and social emotional learning, adds Allen. "This innovative program not only encourages the exchange of knowledge, but also promotes empathy, respect and appreciation for different perspectives."

"My sage provided insight on the valuable relationships we can build if we don't consider age first," said one participating student. "It showed me that a range of people can connect and share common interests."



Sage Rick Ferra and Seeker Karyame



Sage Doris Steadman and Seeker Yaneli

Doris Steadman, my mother, was one of the first to sign up. "I have always enjoyed being around younger folks and was curious to see their reaction to interacting with someone my age for more than a brief time," she explained.

She cherished the sharing of ideas and the students' enthusiasm about the future. "We not only shared experiences about education, but also about growing up, and the differences from then to now." Helping the next generation through sharing life experiences generated a profound sense of value for her. "And I enjoyed feeling a part of the younger generation through their sharing."

CSUSB alum Amanda Reigle, who graduated with a BA in relational and organizational communication and is currently pursuing a master in communication through the university, was the pilot program facilitator and student program coordinator under the guidance of Robert Leo, PhD. "The success of the program has become the basis for my ongoing graduate plan of study," Reigle enthused. "I am exceptionally interested in understanding and fostering intergenerational communication while enriching our community. The benefits of our connectedness are at the core of my academic pursuits."

"By fostering relationships between generations, we hope to create a supportive environment where wisdom is shared, stories are celebrated and lifelong friendships are formed," adds Allen. "Launching the program embodies CSUSB Palm Desert's commitment to building strong, interconnected communities."

For more information on joining OLLI and participating in the Sages and Seekers program, visit [www.csusb.edu/olli](http://www.csusb.edu/olli).



CSUSB's inaugural Sages and Seekers class displays the school's Coyote mascot sign, "the yote."





# Benefits of Socialization for Those with Dementia

## Compliments of Alzheimers Coachella Valley

Socialization is important for everyone; but for those with dementia, it takes on an even more critical role. Socialization provides a controlled, yet varied experience of both human and environmental interaction. Some are intended to spark the senses, such as experiencing a new location or smelling fresh flowers in a garden. Others may involve exposure to new faces in the form of other adults, younger people or even animals. All are important to provide memory impaired individuals with a sense of connectedness.

Socializing helps people living with dementia both physically and emotionally in many ways:

**Supports brain health.** Engaging with other people helps keep the brain active and to maintain memory and manage emotions. Socialization has even been shown to slow the progression of cognitive impairment.

**Provides a feeling of self-worth.** Interacting with family, friends and meeting new people gives everyone a sense of personal worth. The process of interacting with others can result in feelings of belonging rather than isolation.

**Enhance and maintain focus.** Cognitively impaired individuals have more difficulty transitioning between daydreaming and focused states of mind. The more time they spend mentally active and socially engaged, the easier that transition becomes, which helps them to perform daily tasks.

**Creates happiness.** Dementia is very frustrating for the patient. It is a loss of control and can make a person feel helpless. Some people with dementia will lash out in anger. When a person with dementia is kept active and socializes with others, they are given back control over their thoughts, and this in turn, creates happiness.

For people living with Alzheimer's and other related dementias, socialization can be a challenge. Some experience increased anxiety, making them uncomfortable about interacting with others. Many feel self-conscious about their memory loss or struggle with language, making social gatherings intimidating. Scheduling social activities can also be difficult for caregivers who may not be sure of the best way to find a safe and supportive social environment for their loved one. This is why the Alzheimers Coachella Valley developed its Club Journey program, which is offered twice a week for persons with dementia and their care partners at no charge.

Losing memories is devastating and many may feel as if the loss of these memories also caused the loss of themselves. Family members can become distant because of the heartbreak that the loss of memory causes. Making sure your loved one is receiving a steady, yet fresh exposure to opportunities for socialization is important to keep them as healthy and connected as possible. Remember, keeping your loved one interactive without causing anxiety is the goal. Do this consistently and you will notice the difference.

*Editorial provided by Patricia Riley, board member of Alzheimers Coachella Valley, a community resource for dementia support and education. For more information, call (760) 776.3100 or visit [www.cvalzheimers.org](http://www.cvalzheimers.org).*

### New Approach Excites Kids to Read

Continued from page 3

or mascots, bilingual copy and more. Schools commonly fund this program via grants, community sponsorships, foundations and clubs, crowdfunding, fundraisers and parent teacher organizations and associations. Global Vending Group has many resources on their website.

Valle Del Sol secured their Inchy's Bookworm via Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) they had earmarked as part of their Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support program (PBIS), an evidence-based initiative for supporting students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional and mental health. The national program aims to develop a more positive school culture and has proven beneficial to both students and faculty.



The vending machine dispenses books kids can take home.



Valle Del Sol kindergartners watch as their elementary class friends take part in the unveiling.

Schools provide the books via donations, book fairs and school libraries. Valle Del Sol obtained many of theirs from Scholastic Books with whom they partner on annual book fairs.

"This combination of vending books and a reward system could bridge the gap between literacy and engagement," adds Eyre. "And increased reading comprehension and engagement will seriously impact our students and their future."

For more information on Valle Del Sol Elementary School's book vending program, contact Jennifer Eyre at (760) 398.1025 or [jennifer.eyre@cvsd.us](mailto:jennifer.eyre@cvsd.us). For more information on Inchy Bookworm vending machines, visit [www.bookvending.com](http://www.bookvending.com).



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## Digestive Reboot Blend

By Cindy Light

Are you ready to start the New Year off fresh, clean and balanced? Because digestive health is the basis for whole body health, it's worthwhile to utilize juice fasting protocols and herbs that cleanse each part of your digestive tract. At one point or another, repairing your digestive health will be the only way for you to restore balance to your body, so let's get started!

This is one of my favorite recipes from my alma mater, The Juice Guru Institute. The phytonutrients in this blend have an amazing ability to heal digestive issues. It also provides an abundant amount of protection against disease including breast, prostate and colon cancers. Remember to thoroughly clean your fruits and veggies before juicing. Helpful tip: soaking fruits and vegetables in highly alkalized, ionized water can effectively help remove pesticides.



### Cabbage Cucumber Spinach Kale Juice

This juice tastes fresh, flavorful and mild. Cabbage adds a slightly sweet and zesty taste that blends nicely with the other ingredients for an earthy and smooth finish.

**Yield:** about 4 cups • **Prep Time:** 15 Minutes • **Serving Size:** 4 cups

#### Ingredients and their health benefits:

- 2 medium-large cucumbers sliced (antioxidant and anti-inflammatory)
- 3 large kale leaves (anti-cancer, cholesterol fighting)
- 2 medium fuji apples, cored and sliced (blood sugar balancing, antioxidant)
- 1 large handful spinach (high vitamin K, carotene, chlorophyll)
- ½ very small head of cabbage (about 1 cup) (for weight loss, hormones and gut)

#### Directions:

In a low speed RPM juicer, alternate pressing cucumbers, kale leaves, fuji apple slices, spinach leaves and cabbage. Stir and serve immediately.

Cindy Light is founder of Wellness Wave and a two-time cancer survivor and kidney transplant recipient. Her successful health transformation inspired her to help others in their wellness journey and she is certified as both a juice therapist and holistic health practitioner. For more information, visit [www.wellnesswaveusa.org](http://www.wellnesswaveusa.org) or email [cindy@wellnesswaveusa.org](mailto:cindy@wellnesswaveusa.org).

## Zucchini Cauliflower Soup

From Barbara Rogers' *It's a No Grainer*

This time of year we should consume plenty of warm comforting foods and liquids as Dr. Sheppard recommends in "The Tao of Winter" (p.11). Ensuring those foods nourish us is also key to maintaining strong immunity.

This light and zesty soup is just what the doctor ordered! Snuggle up and enjoy with family and friends as this recipe makes 6-8 servings.

#### Ingredients:

- 3 small zucchini, trimmed and shredded
- 1 head cauliflower, stem and leaves removed, and broken into medium-sized pieces
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 3 tablespoons olive or coconut oil
- 4 tablespoons salted butter
- 2 medium onions, finely minced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 5½ cups chicken stock or broth (sub vegetable stock)
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon white pepper
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 tablespoon dried Italian seasoning
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- ½ cup almond or coconut milk, unsweetened
- 4 tablespoons heavy cream (option)

#### Directions:

Shred zucchini after removing stems with a cheese shredder or mandolin.

Place the shredded zucchini in a colander over a bowl and sprinkle with salt and allow to drain for about 30 minutes.

In the meantime, cook cauliflower in a saucepan with water for 15 minutes or until tender.

Transfer cauliflower to a blender and add coconut or almond milk and the butter. Puree and set aside.

In another saucepan, add olive or coconut oil, and cook onion and garlic over medium heat for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Dry zucchini on paper towels and add to the onion mixture.

Cook over low heat for about 5 minutes and add the stock.

Simmer for 15 minutes, then add the coconut mixture, salt, herbs and lemon juice.

Using an immersion blender, puree the soup in the pot or add all of the ingredients into a blender, and pulse until desired consistency.

Adjust seasonings to your liking and enjoy this delicious and healthy belly warmer!

Rogers' *It's a No Grainer* features over 180 delightfully gluten-free, grain-free, low-carb and keto-friendly recipes and is available on Amazon. For more information, visit [www.ItsANoGrainerLife.com](http://www.ItsANoGrainerLife.com).







# Nostalgic and Nutritious Wally's expands offerings

By Lauren Del Sarto

Wally's Desert Turtle is one of our valley's most revered establishments. Built in 1978 as Wally Botello's lifetime legacy, the elegant restaurant has served many desert legends including Frank Sinatra, Bob and Dolores Hope and President Gerald and Mrs. Betty Ford, to name a few.

A trip to Wally's is always a special treat, but fine dining can be a challenge for those who favor vegetarian and gluten-free selections. After all, a primary reason patrons return year after year is to enjoy the classics that have marked memories throughout their lives - succulent steaks, slow braised short ribs and exquisite baked Alaska.

Today, you can enjoy both thanks to the third generation - Wally's granddaughter Madalyn Botello, now at the helm. Wally's remains a local treasure because of Madalyn, and if you haven't been lately, it's time to return.

Madalyn graduated from the Nolan School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University and worked with the Four Seasons, a job she loved, for three-and-a-half years. When the pandemic hit, the hotel sent guests and staff home for "a couple of months."

Back in the desert, her father, Michael, was overseeing Wally's "farewell year" as the family had decided to sell. Once home, Maddy (as she is warmly called) had a change of heart and couldn't imagine the family restaurant changing hands. She told her father she would take the reins - as long as he allowed her the space to usher in the next generation. With much confidence, Michael chose to retire.

Honoring Wally's 5-star rating, timeless design and long-term clientele, only small changes have been made; just enough to feel that a full refresh has taken place. The creative blend of contemporary and antique, originally designed by renowned architect Steven Chase, remains.



Fall vegetable salad, cauliflower steak, Cape Cod scallops, Chilean sea bass and baked Alaska



"Stepping into Wally's is like going back in time," says Maddy who has added touches with no intention of making change. "I think it's important to our guests and the valley that the history and look remain the same."

Other elements that haven't changed are the exceptional service and dedicated staff. Maddy proudly shares that of her 50 employees, 80% have been there for more than 30 years.

You can enjoy some of her influences on the dinner menu. Classic dishes remain alongside creative new vegetarian offerings. All dishes, excluding the pasta and short ribs, can be made gluten-free and soft and steamy gluten-free rolls are served upon request. Only healthy oils are used and meats and seafood are sustainably farmed.



On our most recent visit, we enjoyed the fall vegetable salad with baked tofu, both plentiful and savory, topped with honey poppy seed dressing. For my entrée, I ordered the cauliflower steak brimming with a variety of different flavors from grilled zucchini, roasted corn, sautéed mushrooms, asparagus, carrots and seasoned quinoa. It was exceptional and fun to explore the combination of tastes.

My husband, Tommy, enjoyed his favorite - the pan seared Chilean sea bass. Served with Swiss chard, shitake mushrooms and black rice, he added it to the top of his list.

Another of Maddy's touches can be found on the newly launched wine list. She directed a focus on boutique and women-owned wineries, along with a larger selection of noted organics, which she notes will continue to grow from season to season. While the list is extensive, the layout and selection are not overwhelming.

Wally would be very proud of his granddaughter, and we are grateful she is preserving this valley treasure for us and future generations to enjoy. Their menu has something for everyone. So, if you haven't been in a while, stop by to soak in the nostalgia and relax into the memorable evening you're about to enjoy.

Wally's Desert Turtle is located at 71775 Highway 111 in Rancho Mirage. They are open Tuesday through Sunday and reservations are recommended. For hours and availability, visit [www.wallysdesertturtle.com](http://www.wallysdesertturtle.com) or call (760) 568.9321.

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## YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

By Michele T. Sarna, CFP®, AIF®



### Re-Solution

As we enter another new year, many look to this opportunity with excitement to start anew; refresh their outlook and create goals or new aspirations of achievement. However, it's important to reflect on and remember the past as to not make the same mistakes or fall into the same rut after the new year's excitement has passed.

Reflecting on what has worked and what hasn't may help you stay on track for the future. For one, did you make spontaneous decisions during market fluctuations? Although it might have proven to be fruitful, most emotional reactions end up derailing goals and realizing losses, more so than having stayed the course. Second, did you stick to your budget or overspend? Is your emergency fund sufficient or do you need to replenish it? Is your retirement goal on track?



*Lessons from the past should be taken into financial planning for the future.*

**Reboot.** The new year is a great time to review your financial goals, update your financial plan and rebalance your investment strategies to align with your goals. First, review your budget and make adjustments if needed. Is there a big expense you need to budget for? A new car or appliance? If you plan to make a big purchase, will this deplete your savings? Hopefully, you have set funds aside or earmarked the amount needed and not used your credit cards. If the large purchase can wait, hold off until you have enough saved for the purchase. Do you have subscriptions or memberships that you no longer need or use? Cancel them as soon as possible. Did you get a raise? If so, increase your retirement savings or your 401k contributions.

Another important task in the new year is to check your credit. You are entitled to a free report each year. Make sure the report is accurate, and if you haven't done so already, freeze your credit with all three reporting agencies: Transunion, Equifax, and Experian. The service free, and you may unfreeze it anytime.

Finally, refrain from any judgement on yourself. You can't change the past, but you can make better financial decisions in the future. Stick to your budget, save as much as you can and be mindful of what you are spending your money on. It's ok to treat yourself, but don't go into debt doing so. Let 2024 be the year you stay the course for a successful financial future.

*Michele Sarna is a certified financial planner™ with Beacon Pointe Advisors and can be reached at (760) 932.0930 or [msarna@beaconpointe.com](mailto:msarna@beaconpointe.com).*

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#### Personalized TMS for Mood Disorders

*Continued from page 5*

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#### How can PrTMS help alleviate mood disorders?

TMS treatment for major depressive disorder has been FDA-approved, specifically for scenarios where traditional medication proves ineffective. PrTMS is an advancement as it helps to customize treatment plans on case-by-case scenarios. TMS is also being explored for other mood disorders such as persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia), cyclothymic disorder and substance/medication-induced mood disorder.

In conclusion, PrTMS is a transformative therapy that acts as a guardian angel for those struggling with a mood disorder, anxiety or depression. As technological research continues to evolve, PrTMS applications will be applied to treat complex neuropsychiatric disorders. Even still, PrTMS serves as a beacon of hope for those affected.

*Dr. Sunder is board-certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in psychiatry and neurology. With integrative psychiatry, he combines the power of the mind and cutting-edge neurotechnology to help patients achieve optimal mental wellness. Learn more at [www.karmatms.com](http://www.karmatms.com).*

#### Navigating New Weight Loss Alternatives

*Continued from page 8*

- **Blood sugar control.** Both Tirzepatide and Semaglutide help regulate blood sugar levels, making them suitable options for individuals with type 2 diabetes.
- **Possible cardiovascular benefits.** In clinical trials, individuals showed a reduction in cardiovascular events by 20% and lowered cholesterol levels compared to the placebo group of diet and exercise alone.

While Tirzepatide and Semaglutide share several similarities, they also have distinct characteristics that may influence your choice between the two:

- **Administration.** Tirzepatide is administered as a subcutaneous injection, typically once a week. On the other hand, Semaglutide is available as both an injectable and oral medication, providing flexibility in how it can be taken.
- **Dosage frequency.** Tirzepatide requires weekly injections, whereas Semaglutide's injection frequency varies, with a once-weekly injection option or a more frequent daily oral option.

Ultimately, the choice between Tirzepatide and Semaglutide should be made in consultation with a health care professional who can assess your individual needs and goals. Utilizing these effective alternatives to achieve your desired weight and improved overall well-being begins with informed decision-making.

*Dr. Gossman is a doctor of nursing practice and owner of Desert Glow Medical Aesthetics and Wellness. She offers medical wellness programs and aesthetic procedures and can be reached at (760) 565.3990 or [pam@desertglowspa.com](mailto:pam@desertglowspa.com). For more information, visit [www.desertglowspa.com](http://www.desertglowspa.com).*

Sources available upon request.





# Aging + Big Beauty: The Expensive Myth

By Brook Dougherty

Does expensive equal good? Do more steps equal better results? Can you *fix* your aging skin? These are the questions the skincare industry often lobs at the post-menopausal crowd. Then they offer us miracles to calm our panic. Aging women (as well as young consumers who could rub dirt on their faces and still look good) need to speak truth to big beauty and learn a bit about the industry.

There is a certain type of customer who would rather read the price tag while shopping at Saks than the ingredient list while shopping at Trader Joe's. It's just so comforting to feel that big beauty understands us, and that all we must do is spend a lot of money at a fancy place on a tiny jar with a French name and voila, our skin will magically improve. If only beauty were that easy.

A product doesn't need to be expensive to work. What works are ingredients. Many affordable products contain the same or more active ingredients as their pricier counterparts, and there are very few ingredients that can actually make a difference. Some are expensive, like Retinol, or its kinder cousin bakuchiol, and some are less expensive like hyaluronic acid. Peptides work. Old-fashioned oils and butters work if they're not processed to death. There are powerful ancient extracts that have been around forever, and then there is the newest, greatest extract of-the-month that calls to us, but may be no better than a good dose of vitamin C.

Keep in mind that no matter how expensive an ingredient is, there is zero reason for any company to engage in the expensive-equals-better myth just for the sake of financial gain. The beauty industry offers plenty of room for a healthy bottom line without crippling our wallets. This is especially true for mature women on fixed incomes who may be made to feel that the beauty industry has abandoned them.

Then, how do you choose a skincare brand? Research both ingredients *and* corporate philosophy. Be sure you know the ingredients you plan to apply to your face and skin. Remember, ingredients are listed in order of amount. Ingredients like Retinol are used in small amounts, while vitamin C should be near the top. Hyaluronic acid should be plentiful, while peptides may be further down the list.

Visit the brand's website, click on "About Us" and see if you resonate with the founders and their principles. When a company is at the beginning of their journey, if they are still independent and have not yet been sold, there's a better chance of their integrity and enthusiasm for their product still being intact. It isn't until they scale up that they become attractive to the big guns. And that's when the compromises may start to happen until the brand you once knew and loved becomes a ghost of its former effectiveness.

Next time you're about to impulse buy, do your homework. An expensive marketing strategy should not be enough incentive for you to reach for your wallet. The goal is healthy, comfortable skin achieved through your informed choices.

Brook Dougherty of Indio is the founder of JustUs Skincare and welcomes your questions. She can be reached at (310) 266.7171 or [brook@justusskincare.com](mailto:brook@justusskincare.com). For more information, visit [www.justusskincare.com](http://www.justusskincare.com).



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Sponsored by Cruise Planners. Classic Club Palm Desert 5:30 - 7:30p. Tickets include dinner and a glass of wine. Members: \$45/Non-members: \$65. [www.WLFDesert.org](http://www.WLFDesert.org).



### JANUARY 16

#### Ringing in a Healthy New Year

Stride into the new year at a free health fair by the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Desert Regional Medical Center from 8a-12p. Learn time-tested ways to find the key to happiness, how vitamins really work and other wellness tips. Enjoy food and vendor booths. Desert Regional Medical Center. Reserve your spot today. [www.DesertCareNetwork.com/Events](http://www.DesertCareNetwork.com/Events)

### JANUARY 18-21

#### The American Express

The valley's 65th-annual PGA TOUR tournament returns to PGA WEST and La Quinta Country Club for four days of world-class golf. Fans can enjoy free access to select hospitality venues, and post-round concerts on Friday and Saturday. 20% discount when using your American Express card to complete ticket orders at [www.TheAmexGolf.com](http://www.TheAmexGolf.com).



### JANUARY 31

#### Living Well Speaker Series: Managing Stress Naturally

Join us for these complimentary events including a morning yoga and sound meditation session (10-11a) with Michelle Galaz, and an evening presentation exploring the intricacies of stress with functional medicine physician Kinder Fayssoux, MD (5-7p). Restore Hyper Wellness in Palm Desert. Please RSVP as space is limited: (760) 505.3000.

### FEBRUARY 1

#### Women Leaders Forum Let's Interact: P.S. I Love You

Discover the hidden gems and unique finds in Palm Springs known for its luxurious lifestyle and natural beauty. There is so much happening and so much to explore in this world-class destination. Sponsored by Pure Barre. Classic Club Palm Desert 5:30 - 7:30p. Tickets include dinner and a glass of wine. Members: \$45/Non-members: \$65. [www.WLFDesert.org](http://www.WLFDesert.org).

### FEBRUARY 9

#### Friends of the Indio Senior Center Health & Wellness Fair

This annual event is free, open to all and features health resources, nutrition services, giveaways, and more. Friday, 9a - 12:30p. To participate or attend, contact Sylvia (760) 668.0395 or [stenorio54@hotmail.com](mailto:stenorio54@hotmail.com).

### FEBRUARY 17

#### 16th Annual Desert Woman's Show

A fun day of shopping, fashion shows, health speakers and fabulous food featured at the Greater Palm Springs Food & Wine with a cornucopia of local restaurants, wine and beer. First 500 to register online receive free tickets compliments of Desert Care Network. Classic Club Palm Desert 10a-4p. Tickets start at \$15. [www.MarloProductions.com](http://www.MarloProductions.com).

### FEBRUARY 28

#### Living Well Speaker Series: The Power of Your Breath to Heal

Learn how healthy breathing habits are the key to overall well-being and how specialized breath work can be a path to addressing health issues from Certified Breathwork Facilitator Susan Dunn of Elements of the Desert. Restore Hyper Wellness in Palm Desert. Please RSVP as space is limited: (760) 505.3000.



### MARCH 25-31

#### The Galleri Classic

PGA TOUR Champions event returns to Mission Hills Rancho Mirage for its second year featuring the seasoned players we all know and love and presenting world class sport for Easter weekend in the desert. Tickets start at \$30 and are available at [www.TheGalleriClassic.com](http://www.TheGalleriClassic.com). (Photo by The Galleri Classic/Scott Avra)



2023 Champion  
David Toms

### MARCH 27

#### ACV's "Endless Possibilities"

Alzheimers Coachella Valley's annual fundraiser honors local leader Howard Lincoln and guests will enjoy delicious food, cocktails and entertainment. Desert Willow Golf Resort 6-8p. Tickets \$250. Call (760) 776.3100



### FEBRUARY/MARCH

#### Good Vibes Full Moon Floating Sound Baths

Drift away with soothing movement, sounds, scents and candlelight for the ultimate relaxation under the full moon desert skies. Come early to soak in the healing mineral waters before boarding your raft for a transformative experience like no other. January 28 • SOLD OUT  
February 25 • 6-8p (Oasis Pass 4-6p)  
March 24 • 7-9p (Oasis Pass 5-7p)  
Azure Palm Hot Springs. Tickets/info: [www.goodvibessoundbath.com](http://www.goodvibessoundbath.com).







# Desert Woman’s Show Turns Sweet 16

The Desert Woman’s Show celebrates its 16th anniversary on Saturday, February 17, at the Classic Club with a full day of health, beauty - and plenty of shopping!

Presented by Desert Vein & Vascular Institute, this festive event features local fashion boutiques, anti-aging specialists, fitness and wellness experts, and leading health care providers, offering a full day of beauty makeovers and complimentary health screenings.



Designer Michael Costello

The first 500 people to register online will receive their general admission ticket to the Desert Woman’s Show free, courtesy of long-time sponsor Desert Care Network. Attendees can also purchase a combination ticket that includes the ever-popular Greater Palm Springs Food & Wine tasting area featuring your valley favorites.

Headlining this year’s event is fashion designer and reality television personality Michael Costello. With the encouragement of his mother, Costello started designing clothes at the age of two by drawing dresses on his bedroom walls. By the age of 15, he opened his first store on North Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs, and before long, was making custom pieces for celebrities such as Celine Dion, Jennifer Lopez, Toni Braxton, Barry Manilow, Suzanne Somers and Faye Dunaway, to name a few.

In 2010, Costello appeared on the 8th season of Project Runway where he placed fourth before moving on to place second in the Project Runway All Stars. A major turning point that garnered nationwide attention for the rising star was when he dressed Beyonce in a white lace and nude mesh dress for the 56th annual Grammy Awards in 2014. Today his clientele includes Lady Gaga, Kate Hudson and Mariah Carey. His brand is available at Saks Fifth Avenue, and he recently launched a new summer collection with online retailer REVOLVE.

Be sure to gather at the event’s main stage Saturday afternoon for MICHAEL COSTELLO: Empowering Women Through Fashion, celebrating women from all walks of life and making them feel confident and beautiful. ShopCostello.com POP UP will follow the fashion presentation.

The Desert Woman’s Shows third annual charity golf tournament tees off on Saturday morning, February 17. Open to both women and men, the event will benefit The Unforgettables Foundation, dedicated to helping families after the loss of a child. The fabulous day in the sun will conclude with a cocktail awards celebration, and golfers can shop and sip before the day is done.

The 16th annual Desert Woman’s Show opens for VIP guests on Saturday, February 17, at 9:30 a.m. with general admission at 10 a.m. and runs until 4 p.m. This annual event is graciously sponsored by Desert Vein & Vascular Institute, Desert Care Network, Spotlight 29 Casino, Hightower Financial, Clark’s Nutrition and Barbara Rogers. Media partners include CBS Local 2, Desert Golf & Tennis Magazine, CV Weekly and Desert Health. We hope to see you there!

Visit [www.MarloProductions.com](http://www.MarloProductions.com) or contact Event Producer Diana Marlo at [Diana@MarloProductions.com](mailto:Diana@MarloProductions.com).



## DESERT WOMAN’S SHOW

A Marlo Productions Event

CLASSIC CLUB, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH



## GREATER PALM SPRINGS FOOD & WINE

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DESERT VEIN AND VASCULAR INSTITUTE

SPOTLIGHT CASINO



TICKETS AND INFORMATION: [MARLOPRODUCTIONS.COM](http://MARLOPRODUCTIONS.COM)

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### LIVING WELL SPEAKER SERIES

JANUARY 31 • Managing Stress Naturally



Morning: 10-11 a.m.

Yoga Teacher, Certified Reiki Practitioner and Sound Meditation Guide Michelle Galaz will lead a full body yoga flow followed by a short sound meditation.



Evening: 5-7 p.m.

Functional Medicine Physician Kinder Fayssoux, M.D. explores the intricacies of stress along with actionable tools and holistic methodologies.

FEBRUARY 28

The Power of Your Breath to Heal

Evening: 5-7 p.m.

Learn how healthy breathing habits are the key to overall well-being, and how specialized breath work can be a path to addressing health issues from Certified Breathwork Facilitator Susan Dunn of Elements in the Desert.



All are welcome to join us for these complimentary presentations at Restore Hyper Wellness

73-567 Highway 111, Suite G-1 • Palm Desert

RSVP required (760) 505.3000

For more information, visit [www.deserthealthnews.com/events](http://www.deserthealthnews.com/events)



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