



# Desert Health<sup>®</sup>

The Valley's Leading Resource for Health and Wellness

May/June 2021

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By Lauren Del Sarto

Something strange is happening with my social circle. We finally get the green light to gather, and many don't want to step outside. Even the most gregarious are experiencing a bit of apprehension at this unleashing we've all been anticipating – including me.

While excitement to hang out with old friends, support restaurants and return to normalcy is there, a part of me says, "Hold on. Not so fast."

Have we become too cozy in our quarantine cubbies? Have our new routines become the new normal we prefer? Or is the uncertainty surrounding us keeping us fearful of spreading our wings?

The apprehension hit me oddly. I've never had concerns about accepting invitations; my heart and head are usually in the same place, and if my schedule allows, I'm in. But I've come to realize that beyond the lingering fear of social gatherings is the dramatic change to my calendar. I've come to embrace the blank pages. No more FOMO here (fear of missing out in case you missed that one). I have come to relish

the personal time and space I've garnered during quarantine and wish to take that with me moving forward.

But I'm happy to leave the apprehension and fear behind. Of course, these feelings are necessary to help keep us safe, cautious and socially responsible but can't we do those things without the negative emotions?

"Too much worry can lead your brain to think that everything is dangerous, even when it's actually a safe place or a safe person," clinical psychologist Kevin Gilliland, Psy.D., told Shape Magazine in an article on the subject. "Your mind is trying to protect you and keep you alive," he adds, "but that protection can easily turn into hypervigilance."

Can you relate? We've all had a lot of worries lately, and there hasn't been much certainty in the world. Honestly, when was that last time you read or heard about something positive we could count on during the pandemic? The only things I can think of are the random acts of kindness that pop up on social media

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Frank Meadows was a high school track and field star with a promising future. He had a passion for running and dedicated himself to staying in shape. Raised in a military family, he entered the US Naval Academy Preparatory School at 17, looking forward to a naval career.

Unfortunately, life had different plans for Meadows. By 25, he had undergone six surgeries, was dependent on nine different medications, suffered from depression, anxiety and PTSD and was hospitalized for attempting to commit suicide.

While at the prep school, Meadows suffered two tragedies that would scar him for life. He was sexually assaulted, a crime he reported but found no resolve and then, in basic training, he suffered a severe foot injury which would eventually end his competitive running - and military - careers.

His boot camp injury didn't seem serious at first. He could walk on it, so his commanding officers pushed him to keep going. The pain became so severe, Meadows asked to see a doctor, but the X-rays showed no broken bones. After a week on crutches, a fluoroscope showed he had fractured his metatarsal bone and torn his Lisfranc ligament. The doctors recommended surgery.

"I was 17 and knew nothing about medicine, so I followed their lead," says Meadows. "If I knew then what I know now, I would have never had that first surgery." Mishaps with hardware installed led to a second surgery four months later with no physical therapy management. This was the military and he was expected to be tough.

To enter the Naval Academy, he had to pass a strenuous fitness test. "I was not going to fail. I trained hard, spent a lot of time in the pool and pushed to do all I could." He passed and began his plebe summer boot camp. But tragedy struck again. On an obstacle course, he jumped off a platform and heard a pop. The pain was agonizing and very familiar. He had re-torn his Lisfranc and was given the option to leave and return next year or have another surgery. He had no plans on leaving voluntarily and underwent a third surgery during which he contracted MRSA. He temporarily lost his vision from the infection and was back in the hospital for a month.

With his physical injuries, waning eyesight and a mental health label from the assault, the academy sent Meadows home to Long Beach, Miss., with an honorable discharge, and as a fraction of the enthusiastic young

Continued on page 21



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# Grateful

How are you doing? This past year has been such a crazy time, and so many are going through so much. What are you doing to keep that smile?

I'm practicing gratitude. And it is just that – a practice. Over the past two years, I beat cancer, lost my father unexpectedly, and most recently lost my furbaby. That's in addition to sustaining a business – and my sanity – through a global pandemic. The strange thing is I can name 10 friends who have experienced much of the same.

We are never alone in our struggles. And there is so much for which to be grateful.

I am grateful for 16 endearing years with my Little Bandito. He adored me more than anyone ever will, and I miss my precious shadow. He was full of character and heart and unquestionably grateful to be ours. Don't most rescue pups seem that way?

I am grateful that my mother made it through COVID unscathed and all in our family still have good health.

I am very grateful that *Desert Health* is still here. While many local publications have stopped printing, our health and wellness community has continued to support our work and to share valuable information to keep us all moving forward with vitality, strength and hope.

On pages 14 and 15, you will find words of wisdom from a few of our contributors, along with exclusive offers for your wellness journey. We encourage you to take advantage of these great deals and to try something new for yourself. And while you're there, please thank them for supporting *Desert Health*.

Most importantly, I am grateful for you. Thank YOU for reading, supporting our advertisers, and interacting with us on our website and social media. We are here to answer your questions and to help as we can.

We hope you enjoy this inspiring issue and can't wait to see you out and about again soon!

Here's to your health ~

Lauren Del Sarto  
Founder/Publisher



The Little Bandito



An Independent Publication

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See  
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p. 15



## Need Help Getting Your Vaccine?

By Lauren Del Sarto

With information on COVID-19 vaccinations ever-changing, securing an appointment can be challenging for many – especially those with a lack of internet access or technology. Fortunately, there is a new volunteer organization called VAXIE (Vaccinate Inland Empire) working to connect residents with vaccination resources in the Inland Empire.

To date, VAXIE has booked over 2,200 vaccine appointments for qualified individuals who needed extra help finding or booking a vaccine appointment. Leveraging their knowledge of the complex processes, VAXIE has developed a free service to get more qualified residents, especially those without computers, vaccine appointments. Staffed by a growing number of helpful volunteers, the VAXIE “warmline” currently supports both English and Spanish speakers. Callers can leave a message, and a trained volunteer will call back within 48 hours.

“Technology should not be the barrier to getting vaccinated,” says Rhea Hoffman, VAXIE co-creator. “We need to support our local residents who cannot make these appointments themselves. We are so proud of our volunteers who are stepping up to help others so that this service can be offered to all who need it, free of charge.” It is important to note that VAXIE volunteers are not medical professionals and do not offer medical advice.

Additionally, VAXIE offers appointment resources on their website, VAXIE.info, for individuals who can book their own appointments but need help navigating all of the options to find something that will work for them. The website has had more than 21,000 views since being launched on February 4. VAXIE also posts live appointment opportunities to their Facebook page to help alert followers when vaccine appointments are available to help alleviate the problem of spending hours searching for them for themselves and their loved ones. These Facebook posts have reached over 31,000 people.

### Have your vaccine and want to help?

As a fully volunteer organization, VAXIE can use help in spreading the word about their service. Sharing the warmline, website and Facebook page helps get the word out. Pick up their flyers and bring them to groups who may benefit. Help sign up a friend or neighbor who may need it. You can also share your vaccine experience with them via the contact form on their website. How long was your wait? Where did you park? Was the process easy? These are all helpful resources for their team.

As they grow their network, VAXIE is also accepting applications for additional warmline volunteers; forms are available on their website. The organization operates at a loss and does not make any money from this service, so donations which can be made via PayPal are always appreciated.

VAXIE: Vaccine Resource • Warmline: (760) 833.0569 • Website: [www.VAXIE.info](http://www.VAXIE.info)  
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**Coachella Valley's Health Care Industry**  
**MENTORING THE FUTURE**  
Brought to you by OneFuture Coachella Valley

### Interested in a Career in Mental Health?

Students of all ages, and especially those exploring health care careers, are invited to join the OneFuture Behavioral Health A-Team as we celebrate Mental Health Month with a six-part *Mental Health Matters* virtual webinar series launching May 4 and continuing every Tuesday afternoon through June 8. All sessions will be held at 3 p.m.

Each 30-minute episode will feature three segments centered around a mental health and wellness theme: Topic Introduction and Self-Care Tips, Career Insights Panel and Career Pathway Exploration using the [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) website tool.

Jazmin Rojas-Monarez, a peer-educator at UC Irvine and OneFuture scholar, will open each session with a 15-minute behavioral wellness segment. Topics covered will include: Communication and Conflict Resolution, Interpersonal Relationships, Testing Anxiety and Stress Management, Microaggressions, Self-Care and Mindfulness, and Self-Esteem and Body Image.

Ebony Staten, partnership manager with the California College Guidance Initiative, will host the Career Pathway Exploration segment and show students how to research careers and education pathway programs using the [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) website tool.

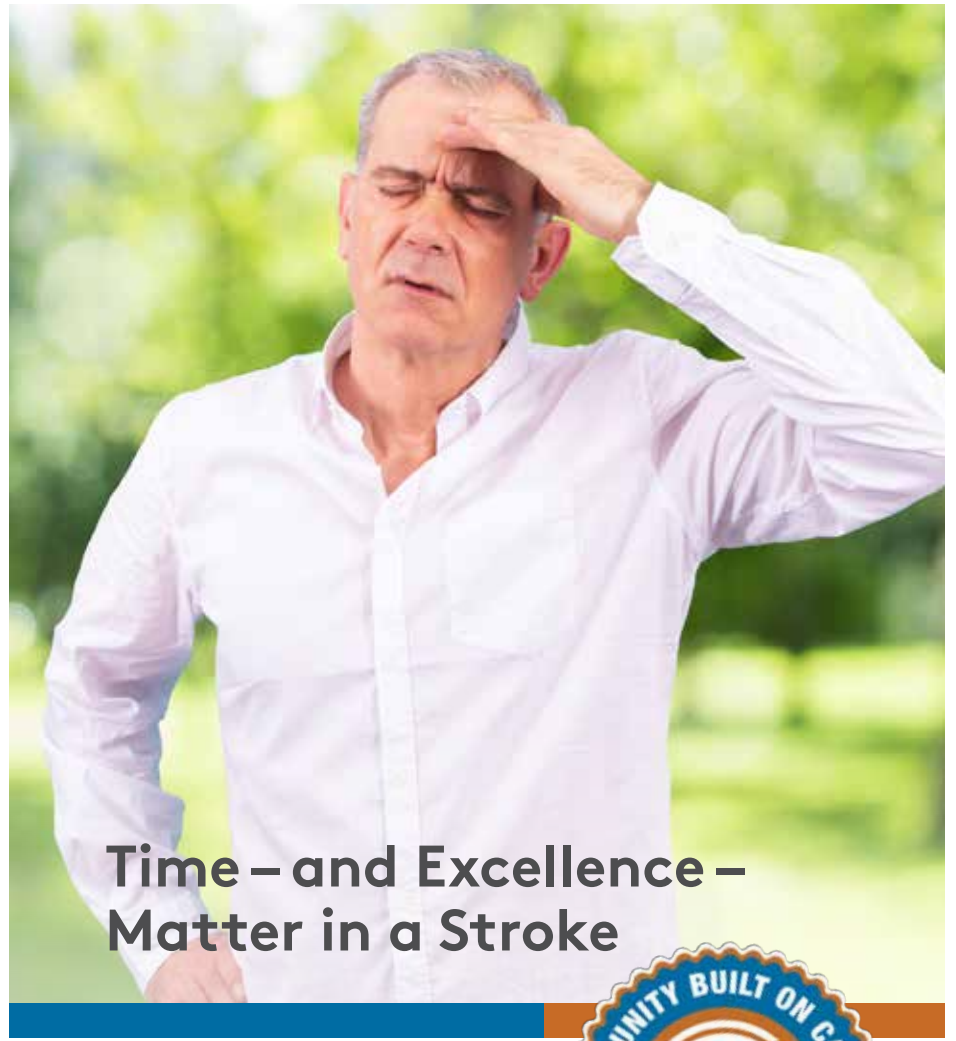
Each session will feature a panel of local behavioral health professionals and educators sharing insights about their work and personal career pathway journey. Panelists will include professionals from Riverside University Health System - Behavioral Health, Jewish Family Services of the Desert, Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo, SafeHouse of the Desert, individual private practice clinicians, UCR, College of the Desert, Coachella Valley Unified School District and Desert Sands Unified School District.

Sessions will be delivered live and recorded for future viewing on the OneFuture Coachella Valley YouTube channel and the Regional Plan Portal (<https://portal.onefuturecv.org/mindfully-resilient>).

All sessions are free and open to the public. The series is presented by OneFuture Coachella Valley in partnership with the California Community College Chancellor's Office Health Workforce Initiative hosted through College of the Desert.

OneFuture Coachella Valley is a 501c3 non-profit organization that partners with leaders in business, government and education to implement the Regional Plan for College and Career Success with the goal of preparing students for college, career and life. In support of the Regional Plan, OneFuture convenes and facilitates the work of 12 regional alignment teams (A-Teams), including the Behavioral Health Workforce A-Team, which works to assure that the Coachella Valley has an abundant supply of mental and behavioral health professionals who are from our own student population and are responsive to the needs of our community.

For more information, contact Kim McNulty, [kim@onefuturecv.org](mailto:kim@onefuturecv.org) or Eloisa Lopez, [eloisa@onefuturecv.org](mailto:eloisa@onefuturecv.org).



## Time – and Excellence – Matter in a Stroke



### Signs of a Stroke

- B** – Balance off
- E** – Eyes blurry
- F** – Face drooping
- A** – Arm weakness
- S** – Speech difficulty
- T** – Time to call 911

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1. AUA policy statement on the use of multiparametric magnetic resonance imaging in the diagnosis, staging and management of prostate cancer. J Urol 2017; 198: 832.

## Reconditioning from Lockdown Deconditioning

By Vince Kambe PT, DPT, OCS

The COVID-19 pandemic has left no one unaffected. As of April 15, 2021, there have been over 31,200,000 cases in the United States<sup>1</sup>. The good news is many metrics, including the rate of vaccination, are improving in the US<sup>1</sup>. However, we will feel the lingering effects of the pandemic for a long while. Many who contracted the virus will deal with post-COVID syndrome, and the year-plus lock down in an attempt to slow the spread has had its own consequences. Deconditioning in the general public and many athletes returning to sport without proper time to prepare their bodies leads to injury and loss of function.

Post-COVID syndrome is an umbrella term that accounts for symptoms experienced for greater than 12 weeks after infection in some individuals<sup>2</sup>. Lingering symptoms may occur including general deconditioning, loss of appetite, pain, fatigue, delirium, muscle wasting, decreased endurance and depression.<sup>3</sup>

So how do you safely return to getting back in shape? After being cleared by your physician to return to activity, graded exposure to aerobic activity is crucial. Walking is an ideal place to start with the goal of progressing to 30-60 minutes (with rest breaks) per day for five to seven days per week at moderate intensity<sup>3</sup>. The American Physical Therapy Association has been establishing guidelines for return function after COVID, and a qualified practitioner can be beneficial in helping individuals meet their goals.

Many will deal with deconditioning even without a COVID infection. Over this past year, the increased sedentary lifestyle has led to reduced mobility, muscle weakness, joint pain and weight gain in many<sup>4</sup>. One in four older adults reports they are unable to walk the same distance they were prior to the pandemic<sup>5</sup>. This physical deconditioning can have a compounding effect with emotional tolls and cognitive decline. It has led to many dementia patients becoming more demotivated, socially disengaged and frailer<sup>5</sup>.

The pandemic has led to several new conditions as well, including "lock-down syndrome," the loss of confidence in one's function leading to an avoidance of exercise<sup>5</sup>. If you are still concerned about leaving your home, one place to start on your return to physical activity is via telehealth. Telehealth with a movement expert has been shown to improve exercise competence and adherence to a program<sup>6</sup>. It also provides social opportunity and motivation outside the immediate family.

Seniors are not the only group affected by the lockdown. The Bundesliga professional soccer league in Germany demonstrated a three times greater rate of serious injury with the return to play<sup>6</sup>. The effects of detraining became apparent in as little as four weeks, with the size of muscles being greatly decreased<sup>6</sup> and predispose many athletes to injury.

Whether your goal is to return to daily walks, recreational pickleball or professional sports, finding a graded return must be the cornerstone of your progress. Take it slowly and know that there are professionals who can safely help you achieve your goals.

Vince Kambe is a doctor of physical therapy, a certified orthopedic specialist and director of Movement for Life Physical Therapy. He can be reached at [vince.kambe@movementforlife.com](mailto:vince.kambe@movementforlife.com) or (760) 347.6195.

References: 1) <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>. Accessed 4/15/2021.; 2) <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng188>. Published December 18, 2020.; 3) PACER Series for Outpatient PT. APTA Learning Center. <https://learningcenter.apta.org>; 4) [https://cnpea.ca/images/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-older-people\\_age-uk.pdf](https://cnpea.ca/images/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-older-people_age-uk.pdf). Published 2020.; 5) <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.11.16.20231100v1>. Published January 1, 2021; 6) <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fspor.2021.604226/full>. Published February 1, 2021

## A Conservative Treatment Approach

By Dennis E. Spurgin, DC

Most people try to avoid surgery or aggressive treatment if possible. Conservative care, which may include physical therapy, occupational therapy, exercise therapy, nutritional counseling, chiropractic, talk therapy, home management and over-the-counter medications, offers less invasive options and may be beneficial as a starting point or in conjunction with more aggressive treatment plans.

Conservative care is appropriate when symptoms initially appear. It may also be considered as a later option when more invasive treatments fail to bring relief. Such intervention may modify symptoms and help the body heal properly.

When symptoms first appear, a practitioner should ascertain if the patient's condition indicates a "red flag," which may determine whether emergency hospital transport is necessary or whether treatment is contraindicated prior to further evaluation(s). A red flag does not necessarily indicate halting treatment but may call for ordering further evaluations (X-Rays, MRIs, primary, neurologic, or orthopedic evaluations, etc.). Examples of red flags include auto accidents, falls and other types of trauma with possible fractures, sprains, strains, confounding symptomatology, arm or leg numbness, tingling, pain, weakness, and or loss of control. Neurologic or internal disorder symptoms may range from minor to severe. It may be appropriate to seek evaluation from a specialist or an emergency facility.

If no red flags surface, home care such as over-the-counter medications, ice and wet heat, massage (always toward the heart), exercises, rest, and or modified activities may suffice. However, if the condition persists for more than a few days, the patient should seek professional evaluation from a qualified facility or individual such as a medical doctor, doctor of chiropractic, urgent care or emergency room.

A conservative practitioner may order diagnostic studies (X-rays, MRIs, CTs, ultrasounds, etc.) if their license and the patient's insurance allow. They also may refer to specialists in other disciplines.

Conservative care may also be helpful while awaiting diagnostic test results. For example, chiropractic care, which requires no prescription or referral, includes manipulation that can range from gentle to forceful; the less forceful the treatment, the more appropriate for use prior to additional diagnostic studies or evaluation. Chiropractic is an art as well as a science, and many chiropractors also incorporate physiotherapies such as myofascial release, massage, trigger point, acupuncture, electrical stimulation (such as TENS), ultrasound, nutrition, exercise therapy, ergonomics, spinal decompression and non-prescription medications.

Chiropractic treatment often includes rehabilitation, prevention and maintenance exercises, such as moving joints in all ranges of motion to increase flexibility and activate and strengthen muscles. To prevent reinjury, a patient should emphasize more repetitions and lower weights, use of antagonistic muscle groups beginning with lighter weights and cardiopulmonary exercises, including bicycling, walking/running, and using stair-climbing and elliptical machines.

The Hippocratic Oath is often summarized as "First, do no harm." Accordingly, a conservative approach to examination and treatment may fit the bill and is a good place to start.

Dr. Spurgin is a doctor of chiropractic with offices in Palm Springs and Indio and a member of Desert Doctors. He can be reached at (760) 327.9402. For more information, visit [www.DesertDoctors.org](http://www.DesertDoctors.org).



## Grief is Like Glitter

By Roger Moore

First, you fall in love.

Then you decide to adopt that adorable cat, dog, parrot, rabbit. So you set off together, learning to adapt to each other's expectations. Life is fun. Life is fuller. Your pet cheers you up in ways you never imagined possible. You catch yourself speaking in funny voices. You both grow older together.

And then one sad day, you must face that your beloved pet is in decline, and the end may be near. Part of the trauma is that it's also a reflection of your own mortality – if they're aging, then so are you, and it can be tough to look in that mirror.

Sometimes it happens fast, and your pet dies a good death, requiring no tough decisions on your part. But for most of us, the dreaded discussions with the vet come next, and so many decisions.

So what's a conscientious pet guardian to do when the end looms? The hard truth is, implicit in the agreement to adopt and care for any pet is also the agreement to allow them to die with as little suffering as possible – even if it increases your own.

My wife and I had to face that a few months back with the death of our beloved white Labrador, Luna. She wasn't the first dog I've had to put down, but she was the most difficult one for sure. Even after 13 wonderful years, you always want just one more good day, one more walk in the sun, one more cuddle on the floor.

Luna had a long, gradual decline, but I still wasn't prepared for the impact, though I had 18 months to face her death. She was the sweetest, most loving dog with both people and animals, and she walked with a big grin, butt wiggling and tail wagging. People constantly commented they'd never seen such a happy dog.

Her decline was more troublesome because of the quarantines, so we found a vet who came to our house. She was able to give an extra few months of Luna love by changing her diet and medications. But when the time finally came to say goodbye, the vet came to our house again, and Luna died peacefully in my lap. There have been 10 or so dogs and a few cats who have brightened my life, but Luna was my heart dog.

My profound grief was compounded with guilt and second-guessing. Guilt for choosing to end her life, guilt for wondering if we should have made the decision sooner, and guilt for grieving a dog when on that same day, 1,230 people died of COVID-19.

As a mental health counselor, grief counselor and medical hypnotherapist, I have many techniques to manage my thoughts and emotions, and these tools helped me get on with life, even though the pain in my heart is still strong and the void I feel is very real.

**These are some things you can try if you're dealing with grief:**

- Allow yourself to ride the emotional roller coaster without judgment.
- Be gentle with yourself and welcome the kindness of others.
- Accept the process. Over time, your memories will bring more smiles than tears.
- Never confuse acceptance with forgetting. You'll come to accept death, but that doesn't mean you'll forget.
- Practice self-hypnosis, meditation and other mindfulness-based techniques to find peace in your mind, heart and soul.
- Allow for the possibility to love another pet again.

"Grief is like glitter. You can throw a handful of glitter into the air, but when you try to clean it up, you'll never get it all. Even long after the event, you will find glitter tucked into corners. It will always be there somewhere." ~ Author unknown

Although I swore we wouldn't get another dog, a tiny mixed breed rescue pup popped into our lives, and we're now welcoming her into our home, though she won't take Luna's place in my heart. Luna taught me to be a better version of myself, and I hope I'll always be praying, "God, let me be the person who Luna thinks I am."

Roger Moore is a certified counselor and registered hypnotherapist with Palm Desert Hypnosis and can be reached at Roger@HypnosisHealthInfo.com or (760) 219.8079. For more information, visit [www.hypnosishealthinfo.com/medical-hypnosis](http://www.hypnosishealthinfo.com/medical-hypnosis). All sessions are online telehealth.



Moore's beloved Luna

## Who is Your Health Advocate?

By Patricia Ryan, RN, MSN, ANP-BC

What is a patient care manager or advocate? Webster's Dictionary defines advocate as "one who pleads for another's cause," and a manager is defined as "to direct or carry on business." Using these definitions, it is easy to see how a patient advocate/manager would be a great help to individuals needing to navigate our medical system.

For many, a spouse or adult child takes on this role with much success and often much frustration. In today's complicated medical arena, the system is a labyrinth of rules, regulations, exclusions and denials over and over. When it comes to pre-authorizations and limits on patient care and treatments, insurance companies appear to be practicing medicine more than doctors. The current atmosphere has made it even more confusing with rules that seem to change daily.

Where does the patient fall into all this bureaucracy?

That's where a patient care advocate/manager steps in to help question, clarify and stand up to insurance companies and providers for appropriate and safe care on behalf of the patient and their families.

A patient advocate sorts through all the nonsense so the patient can get the care they need. The patient is the focus, not the payment. When did that get lost? Why has it become something to accept? The manager can also direct, guide and assist in long-term planning for the patient. This role is best served by someone who is familiar with the course, understands the diagnosis and is hopeful for a positive outcome – all in the best interest of the patient.

Getting well is what health care should be – not prohibitive by the cost. Let's focus on preventative care, not profit. That seems incongruent for a "health system" when the system does not appear to be about health. A patient care advocate/manager is almost a necessity in today's complicated health care climate.

Here's to your good health and staying well!

Patricia Ryan is a board-certified adult nurse practitioner and founder of Crossroads to Care in-home medical and advocacy services. She can be reached at (760) 668.1654 or [www.crossroadstocare.com](http://www.crossroadstocare.com).



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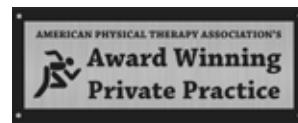


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# Lasers Light the Way in Dentistry

By Nick Baumann, DDS

Imagine being able to go to the dentist and not having to be numbed up or hear the sound of the drill. This scenario has become a reality with the advancements in dental lasers. Lasers can make many dental procedures much more comfortable and less invasive than traditional methods. There are multiple types of lasers available for dentistry, all with pros and cons. The primary categories of lasers now fall into a few main types: diode, CO2, Er:Yag and Nd:Yag. An excellent laser for the dental field is the Fotona LightWalker laser system. No, that's not a Luke Skywalker lightsaber, but it is equally big screen exciting. As an erbium laser, the Lightwalker device includes multiple features with different compositions and wavelengths that can improve many aspects of dentistry treatment - and the dental experience.

### Replaces needles and drills

The Lightwalker laser features both Er:Yag and Nd:Yag technology. The one thing that may excite many patients is that the Er:Yag laser can be used for hard tissue treatment, such as dental fillings. Because the energy prepares the tooth instead of a drill, in most cases, the patient does not even need to be numbed for the procedure. Furthermore, this laser eliminates the sound of the dental drill for a more peaceful office visit. So, fillings without a numbing injection or drilling sound are possible.

### Reverses gum disease

Laser technology also can improve periodontal (gum) disease treatment. According

to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, almost 50 percent of adults over 30 and upward of 70 percent of those over 65 have some form of periodontal disease. Gum disease leads to bone loss and infection that can lead to loss of teeth. Treating gum disease with a laser can reverse some of the damage done to teeth and even possibly regenerate some bone that traditional methods are unable to do. Also, treatment is less invasive and healing time is shorter.

### Reduces snoring

The laser also has indications to help people who snore. Often times snoring is caused by loose and excessive tissue in the back of the throat and tongue. The laser can be used to painlessly stimulate and tighten this tissue, therefore opening the airway and helping to reduce snoring. This procedure is done without numbing or discomfort and patients notice the results almost immediately.

These are just a few of the ways dentists can use lasers to increase quality and patient comfort. I am impressed with the capabilities and results of this cutting-edge technology and prefer it over diode lasers. If laser dentistry is something you may be interested in, talk to your dentist and see what your options may be.

Dr. Nick is with Palm Desert Smiles and can be reached at (760) 568.3602.



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## Relieving Stress and Depression Post-COVID

Contributed by Alzheimers Coachella Valley

Not surprisingly, mental health providers cite a marked increase in clients reporting depression, anxiety and stress during COVID-19. The pandemic has affected many of us in ways we have never experienced before.

From being fearful of getting the virus, caring for someone who has COVID or other conditions such as dementia, being isolated at home, losing a job or income, to grieving the unexpected loss of a friend or family member, this past year has brought unprecedented physical, emotional, spiritual and financial challenges.

Now that the virus is abating because of continued safe health practices and widespread vaccinations, we collectively breathe a sigh of relief as social and in-public restrictions are lifting.

### Here are some healthy ways to relieve depression and stress post COVID:

- **Limit the news, including social media.** While you need to know what is going on in the world, constant negative news only fuels anxiety and depression. Just unplug for a while.
- **Read an engaging book,** watch a comedy or romantic movie, listen to uplifting music.
- **Keep moving.** Take a walk in the park, dance around the house or backyard, practice yoga or other meditative exercises. Stretch your limbs and strengthen muscles as tolerated.
- **Schedule time to play.** If in-person gathering is now possible, get out the cards, dominoes, board games and have some fun with family and friends.
- **Be creative.** Write that poem. Pick up a brush and start painting. Tell some of your favorite jokes or stories. Sing like nobody can hear you.
- **Eat healthily.** The food we eat affects our mental as well as physical health. Make sure meals are healthy and include a variety of fruits, vegetables and healthy proteins. Get creative with new recipes! And don't forget to have a special treat once in a while.
- **Follow a daily routine** for going to sleep, getting up, eating at regular times, personal grooming, exercise and social interaction. Routines help regulate our physical and mental wellbeing, providing a sense of balance and normalcy.
- **Seek help** if you feel overwhelmed or are diagnosed with a mental health disorder. A trained mental health professional can help ensure you are acknowledging and processing your stress and provide appropriate support. If you are in a treatment program, stick with it. You can safely refill prescriptions through a pharmacy drive-through or home delivery.
- **Connect with your community** or faith-based organizations. If not yet in person, connect through video chats, email, phone calls or even old-fashioned snail mail. A personal card or letter can be a delight to give or receive. A heart-to-heart conversation with a trusted friend can heal the soul.

For more information, contact Alzheimers Coachella Valley at (760) 776.3100 or online [www.cvalzheimers.org](http://www.cvalzheimers.org)

Sources: 1) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html#everyone>; 2) <https://www.apna.org/m/pages.cfm?pageID=6685>; 3) <https://www.mindsetsd.com/blog/the-affects-a-pandemic-can-have-on-your-mental-health>.



## Pebbles in Your Stream

### Reducing anxiety through craniosacral therapy

By Shari Jainuddin, NMD, BCB

Now more than ever, people are suffering from anxiety. In a time when our normal routine has been turned upside down and the ways in which we typically process our experiences (community, exercise, being outdoors, etc.) are less accessible, this makes complete sense.

Let's zoom out and discuss the perspective that makes up our experiences (physical, emotional, mental). Footprints of traumatic experiences (injury, illness, heartache, stress) can become stored in the body and manifest as restrictions for many reasons, especially when they aren't sufficiently processed. Craniosacral therapy (CST) is a gentle hands-on technique that uses a light touch to examine membranes and movement of the fluids in and around the central nervous system that can effectively assist our body in reducing anxiety.

I'll use an analogy of pebbles in a stream. Each restriction is a pebble thrown into a quiet stream of water (your body). The innately resilient body compensates by flowing around the pebble. The nervous system, which interconnects our entire body (the stream), is also affected as it takes in information and coordinates responses. Without taking measures to process these experiences (reducing pebbles in the stream) or if they happen at an overwhelming pace or scale, they accumulate, and so do the compensations made for each of them. If there are enough pebbles in the stream, rapids are created, and the once quiet stream gets noisy. Here the "noise" represents symptoms including chronic pain, headaches, TMJ, IBS, depression, anxiety, and more. It's our body's way of letting us know that self-care needs to be prioritized.

I first learned about CST as a medical student when a classmate asked if she could practice on me. I didn't know anything about it at the time but happily agreed. While she was working on me, I didn't think she was "doing" anything except holding my head. After several minutes, a wave of emotion bubbled up, and I wept. Then, after a minute or two, I felt a deep sense of calm. She continued what she was doing but also held the space for me, letting me know this response was okay and if I wanted to talk, I could, but if I wanted to remain silent, that was okay, too. It was at that moment that I knew this gentle yet profound treatment would be a form of healing I provide to my patients.

CST practitioners are trained to sense the subtlest movements, including the interplay between the cranial bones and the rhythm of the cerebral spinal fluid, which bathes our brain and spinal column. In a session, patients remain clothed, lying face up on a massage table. Areas of restriction (physical, physiological, energetic) are identified and treated accordingly. Treatment involves light pressure and movements in precise locations. Nothing is forced. After restrictions release, normal patterns of movement are restored, and the nervous system becomes calm. Patients usually feel a deep sense of relaxation.

Both natural and conventional medical communities recognize craniosacral therapy as a safe and effective approach to improve health and maintain a sense of calm, ideal during these challenging times.

Dr. Jainuddin is a naturopathic doctor at One Life Naturopathic and can be reached at (442) 256.5963. For more information on craniosacral therapy and a complete list of services visit [www.OneLifeNaturopathic.org](http://www.OneLifeNaturopathic.org).

Reference: 1) <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/17677-craniosacral-therapy>



## HOPE & FAITH for the Future

HOPE. This word has been in my heart since I heard a song at Sunday school as a young child. Growing up through the years, HOPE was something I said and heard many times, especially when people were sick. Throughout life, HOPE became something I said when I wanted a certain outcome to happen.

If you look up the definition of HOPE in the dictionary, it seems closer to wishing something to become or be true. In general, HOPE means a desire for things to change for the better and to want that outcome very much. When I was in the chemo chair, I had a sticker of a rainbow on my water bottle from a young girl I taught yoga. I loved that sticker because I remembered my dad telling me that rainbows were a sign of HOPE. A promise for a new day, a better day and a bright future ahead. That sticker soon became my visual reminder while I did my treatments that each time I felt fearful, it would remind me my treatments would soon be over.

Now, as a cancer survivor, I stay true to my faith, and I HOPE every day. I look up into the sky after a rainstorm to see if a rainbow will give me that sign everything will still be okay. That someday cancer will not exist. That my warrior friends will not suffer. That we will all have faith and live without fear by turning to HOPE. Whether you have faith or not, everyone HOPES for a better tomorrow in their lives, especially when there is so much suffering going on in the world today. Whether in cancer, or another type of tragedy, HOPE is a word we have embedded in our hearts and souls. Having something to HOPE for, like a cure to cancer or world peace, allows us to bear the day-to-day traumas of life. Whether we think about it or not, HOPE is a part of everyone's life. We all HOPE for something, and it helps us define our future by putting our FAITH into hoping for a better tomorrow. Putting our faith in HOPE keeps an open heart, and with an open heart, it is the yogi key to making each moment count.

Having HOPE stands for many things: Hold On, Pain Ends \* Helping Other People Every day \* Hang On, Peace Exists \* Heart Open, Please Expand \* Hold Onto Prayer Every day \* Helps Offer Peace Eternally

HOPE is the one thing every human being does and says with love. HOPE is the one thing we all look up into the sky for a glimpse of the color after a storm. To see that after darkness, there is light. As cancer survivors and thrivers, WE HOPE IN COLOR. Because someday, we have faith that someone will find a cure for cancer. We will have world peace. And the many hurt people will no longer be in pain. What is your story of HOPE?

Shay Moraga is a stage 3 triple-negative breast cancer thriver. She is the founder of Shay's Warriors - Life After Cancer and a yoga instructor for those who have gone through cancer. She can be reached at [Shay@shayswarriors.org](mailto:Shay@shayswarriors.org) or on Facebook or Instagram.



El Paseo mural honoring those who have overcome cancer by @LindsayMadeThis



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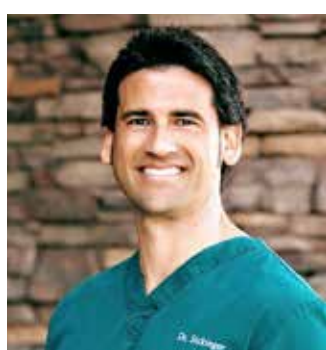
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## Calming Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

By Eric Sickinger, D.O. and Thalie Timsit, BS

As COVID-19 has shifted the world of work and school toward technology, many Americans find themselves on the computer all day and night. Excessive use of the computer mouse and keyboard can lead to carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS), one of the most common nerve disorders across America affecting approximately 3-6 percent of all adults. Luckily, it is generally very treatable. With a known root cause, providers can diagnose it and offer a variety of treatments to ease the symptoms.

CTS is caused by pressure on the nerve running along the forearm to the palm and the first four fingers called the median nerve. The carpal tunnel is an opening that houses the median nerve and several tendons that bend your fingers. Pressure to the median nerve can be caused by repetitive movements, an injury that causes inflammation or certain conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, hypothyroidism or pregnancy.

Symptoms include tingling and numbness down the forearm to the palm and first four fingers and increased pain with increased use of the wrist. Patients may also report weakness in the hand and wrist, a tendency to drop objects held in their hands and muscle deterioration in the thumb. Symptoms are often worse at night and can be exacerbated with daily tasks, such as driving or typing.

A provider can diagnose CTS by taking an extensive medical history and doing a proper physical exam, including several tests. One of the tests involves tapping on the median nerve to observe if the patient senses any tingling; another involves the patient pressing their hands together and testing if the symptoms are reproduced.

The primary treatment is to modify activity to reduce the repetitive motion that is causing the condition. Other conservative treatments such as rest, ice, steroid medications or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can be extremely beneficial as well. Exercises can also be performed to strengthen the area. Some helpful exercises include flexing and extending the wrist, pressing your fingers back towards your wrist, or squeezing a rubber ball to improve grip strength. A wrist splint or brace can also be used to protect the carpal tunnel from any pressure. More invasive treatments such as steroidal injections or even surgery may be recommended.

Ergonomics can play a major role in the prevention and treatment of carpal tunnel syndrome. Setting up your workspace in a way that prevents repetitive pressure on the wrist can lower the risk of developing uncomfortable symptoms. Some tips include keeping hands and wrists in line with your forearms, using proper hand and wrist position for certain tasks, avoiding leaning on your palms or wrists and taking occasional breaks throughout the workday. These small changes in daily work life can lead to big changes in your lifestyle and health.

If you find that you've developed any tingling in your wrist or fingers, try changing up your workspace or incorporating exercises to help relieve the symptoms. It is best to discuss any treatment options with your medical provider if you are feeling any symptoms.

Founding physician Eric Sickinger, DO and medical assistant Thalie Timsit, BS are with Advanced Center for Sports & Musculoskeletal Medicine. For more information, contact their Palm Desert office at (760) 636.1067 or the San Clemente office at (949) 388.1060, or visit [www.SportsandMSKmedicine.com](http://www.SportsandMSKmedicine.com).

THE Paradigm Shift in Medicine Today  
By Jeralyn Brossfield, MD



### Spring Cleaning: Lowering Your Toxic Load

Spring is often a reminder of the annual cleaning of our homes, but what about our bodies? We accumulate environmental by-products and toxins throughout our lives, and over time, we carry a load of unwanted baggage that may take special attention to eradicate. I'm noticing that most of my patients have toxins hidden away in their tissues that are draining their energy or diverting the attention of their immune systems. It's a great time to metaphorically "take out the trash!"

I like the analogy of a bucket that gets filled with the garbage in our system. Our environments are filled with a myriad of toxins. Car exhaust is in our air; mold is growing anywhere water has collected, pesticides and herbicides are sprayed on our golf courses and lawns, plastic is everywhere. As we inhale, eat, or expose our skin, we take in these environmental elements. The "bucket" gets filled with more garbage. If our system is working well, we detox easily, and the trash is removed. However, with certain genetic mutations, prolonged exposures, elevated stress and a lack of vitamins and nutrients, our trash buckets can overflow and make us sick in ways we don't realize are related to these toxins.

Our body has an intricate system for sounding alarms if there are toxins in the system. Signals called cytokines, and complement factors circulate through the bloodstream to call for help and start the inflammatory response. The liver identifies the toxins - I like to say it "tags the trash" and starts the detoxification process. Phase one detox changes the toxin into a metabolite or intermediate molecule. This step is run primarily by glutathione and folate. In phase two, liver detox, the intermediate metabolites are processed to make them water-soluble or ready for elimination. The final step is elimination through our skin and sweat, our kidneys and urine, or our intestines and feces.

To assess immune function and toxin load, start by looking at markers of the body's alarm system - such as Transforming Growth Factor beta 1 (TGF-B-1) and Complement 4a (C4a). If elevated, a deeper laboratory workup is indicated and needs to include virus loads (including the herpes family and markers like EBV-EA for recurrent Epstein Barr infection), mycotoxin testing for mold toxins, heavy metals and non-metal toxins.

Healing starts by supporting your body with the needed ingredients to detoxify. The most important source of these ingredients is colorful fruits and vegetables. Cruciferous vegetables are the best source of glutathione and its pre-cursor N-acetylcysteine (NAC). Based on your blood work, you can make sure you have optimal levels of minerals and vitamins, so your system is able to "tag the trash" and metabolize toxins for removal. It is vital to be sure the elimination systems are open and functional. Regular sweating either with work, exercise or sauna supports the removal of toxins. Hydration supports our kidneys in removing toxins through urination. Fiber and hydration, and, if needed, magnesium or other intestinal supports, promote daily stooling to remove toxins from our intestines. Our system is made to wonderfully support us if we support it!

Jeralyn Brossfield, MD is the founder and physician of XO Health and medical director of Brain Treatment Center both in Rancho Mirage. She can be reached at (760) 573.2761 or [www.BrainTreatmentCenter.com](http://www.BrainTreatmentCenter.com) and on Facebook @XOHealth.





## Peripheral Artery Disease

*The traffic jam in your body*

By Anna Gasparyan, MD, FACS

Picture yourself driving down the highway on a sunny afternoon, when all of a sudden, a sea of brake lights appears in front of you: a traffic jam! This slowdown is something most of us Southern Californians experience regularly. Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) is like a traffic jam; however, it takes place in our arteries.

The Society for Vascular Surgery estimates that PAD affects over 10 million people in the United States, and the CDC estimates that at least 10 percent of those over the age of 60 will develop PAD. This traffic jam may be caused by a variety of things, but most commonly atherosclerosis: a sticky blob made of fat and cholesterol taking up precious real estate in our inner arterial walls. This slowdown of blood flow may occur in any artery in our body, but most often in the legs.

Many lifestyle choices and medical conditions increase the risks of developing PAD including smoking, uncontrolled high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, living a sedentary lifestyle, and being above the age of 60.

In my traffic jam analogy, cars and people can be viewed as the vital red blood cells carrying oxygen and other nutrients, while the highways are our arteries. A common symptom for PAD is pain in the legs with physical activity. When there is narrowing or occlusion of an artery, not enough oxygen and nutrients reach the muscles that are working harder; hence, pain and cramping commonly occur. Other symptoms include hair loss with smooth, shiny skin, cool to the touch extremities, decreased or absent pulses, cold or numb feet and toes and sores or ulcers on the legs that do not heal.

If your doctor suspects PAD, they will order vitals test to diagnose the problem, such as an Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI) test, to measure blood pressure in the legs and arms and provide a ratio. A low ratio is indicative of PAD or an occlusion. Another exam that can aid in diagnosing PAD is a duplex ultrasound. If further studies are needed, your doctor may order a CT angiography.

Treatment varies depending on the severity of the disease. Smoking cessation, lifestyle modifications and better control of medical illnesses are of utmost importance for the best outcome. The first and best step in treating mild-moderate PAD is with an exercise therapy program to help make new arteries (side streets) and re-route the oxygen-rich blood to bypass the traffic jam. Prescription medication may also help.

However, more severe cases of PAD, such as non-healing foot ulcers, will require intervention. In these cases, there are numerous treatment options and each has its advantage. If the narrowing in the artery is a short segment, then balloon angioplasty or stent placement can be utilized, which opens up the diseased segment to allow more blood flow. We also can "rotor-rooter" through the blood vessels to shave the plaque circumferentially through the arterial wall. Yet, another option of treatment is to place a graft to bypass the stenosis or obstruction. This method is more extensive as it is a longer surgery with a few days of hospital stay. Essentially, the bypass allows blood to flow through an alternate pathway bypassing the area, which is irreversibly and severely diseased.

Treatment combined with exercise and lifestyle modifications should improve blood flow through our highways and allow for better traffic flow.

*Dr. Gasparyan is a board-certified vascular surgeon with Desert Vascular Associates in Palm Desert. She can be reached at (760) 902-1511 or at [www.desertvascularassociates.com](http://www.desertvascularassociates.com).*

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## The Therapeutic Use of Light

*An integrative approach to chronic disease*

By Sonja Fung, ND

Light therapy, which is now referred to as photomedicine, has been utilized in ancient civilizations for over 3,000 years. One of the latest advancements is photodynamic therapy (PDT) which combines laser light with a photosensitizing agent (topical, oral or IV drug or supplement) to prepare the treatment area for greater light penetration. It was first utilized in 1978 to treat lung cancers in dogs, confirming the safety and efficacy of the treatment. In 1994, the first-generation infusion photosensitizer, Photofrin, gained approval for PDT use in Japan. Since 2003, 76 clinical trials have been registered in Europe, and PDT is now used worldwide to treat multiple types of cancers and chronic diseases.

In the United States, PDT is used primarily for dermatological treatments of actinic keratosis, acne and some skin cancers such as basal cell and squamous cell carcinoma. PDT can also relieve symptoms of esophageal and lung cancers that obstruct airways. The technology has also been used in trials for non-operable biliary, ovarian, bladder, breast and early prostate cancers. Other conditions PDT may help include arthritis and joint pain, acute infections, Lyme and other chronic infectious diseases, Alzheimer's and mood disorders, to name a few. PDT also has anti-aging applications.

### How does it work?

PDT utilizes a multidisciplinary approach, applying chemistry, physics and pharmacology to the clinical healing sphere. Using a photosensitizer prior to applying low-level lasers makes tumor tissues, or pathogens, more sensitive to the specific light waves applied. In the presence of oxygen, the photosensitized targeted tissues form reactive oxygen species (ROS) leading to apoptosis (cell death) and cellular immune modulation.

First- and second-generation FDA-approved photosensitizers include Photofrin (infusion), Levulan (topical) and Foscan (injection). Third-generation nanoparticles are being studied and developed for more targeted treatment. Other natural sources of photosensitizers can be taken orally or given via IV, such as Indocyanine green, chlorin E6, riboflavin, curcumin, Epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) and hypericin. PDT can also be used in combination with photosensitizing chemotherapeutics, such as 5-FU, Xeloda (Capezitabine)- a 5-FU prodrug and Cisplatinin.

PDT applies light-emitting diodes (LED) with wavelengths mostly within the visible spectrum (380-800 nanometers). These lasers differ from sunlight or lamp light with their ability to emit one stable color. Treatment can be with one or more colors with a photosensitizer. PDT employs ultraviolet, green, blue, red, yellow and infrared lasers, each designed to provide distinctive benefits:

- **Ultraviolet** - Enhances oxygen absorption into targeted tissues while breaking down viral, fungal or bacterial presence.
- **Blue** - Enhances strong anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties while promoting pain relief, wound recovery and anti-aging effects through activation of telomerase and mitochondria.
- **Green** - Improves oxygen uptake while decreasing discomfort caused by swelling or acute inflammation. Helps improve glucose metabolism.
- **Yellow** - Increases production of serotonin and vitamin D, providing antidepressant properties, as well as strong antibacterial, antiviral, and antiparasitic properties. It can be used for certain cancer therapies as well.

• **Red** - Provides energizing effects while strengthening immunity, increasing cellular activity and promoting wound healing. It can be used for certain cancer therapies as well.

• **Infrared** - Promotes wound healing, reduces pain and inflammation and increases mitochondrial production of ATP. IR has deepest penetrative power of the laser spectrum and can penetrate up to 7cm, thus utilized for neurological disease.

Before 2000, PDT was mostly limited to topical and superficial uses due to the limited penetration of light waves, even with a photosensitizing agent. However, newer technology allows for the insertion of fine fiber optic wires interstitially (within the tissue). Interstitial laser therapy was first utilized in 2003 by Vogl et al. in Frankfurt, Germany, to treat metastatic liver tumors. Intravenous laser therapy or "systemic PDT" was first introduced by Kaplan et al. in 2008 for the treatment of metastatic malignant melanoma. PDT is an in-office treatment (20-60 minutes), is minimally invasive and can be safely utilized concurrently with other cancer therapies, such as surgery, radiation therapy or chemotherapy.

One of the positive distinctions of PDT is its safety and low side effect profile. Common side effects are skin photosensitivity for three days up to six weeks depending on the area and transient localized tenderness. Topical PDT does not break the skin; however, the darker the skin type, the lower the intensity of the treatment and the increased number of treatments are needed to minimize damage to the dermal tissues.


Intravenous PDT utilizes an IV catheter, and interstitial PDT uses specialized guide needles that allow for the insertion of the fiber optic lines to the targeted area. Treatment length and intensity depend on the individual, the condition treated and the patient's skin type.

*Continued on page 10*

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## Your Health Matters with Janet Zappala

### How Are You Sleeping These Days?

If there were ever an event that could throw us completely off track, it's a pandemic. A once-in-a-lifetime occurrence that we can only hope will soon be over!

Thankfully, the COVID vaccine is providing that light at the end of a long and distressing tunnel. We will get through this and enjoy life again. Perhaps with more appreciation for all of our blessings and life's little pleasures like hugging family and friends. Wow, what a concept!

One of life's greatest pleasures, and most important for our health, is sleep – a time when our bodies re-boot, recharge and keep us well by helping to boost our immune system. According to sleep specialist Clark Taylor, MD, DDS at Cosmetic Surgery Institute in Palm Desert, "Restorative sleep is critical to numerous systemic body functions." Restorative sleep is REM sleep, rapid eye movement, the phase of sleep where we dream. "Lack of restorative sleep, we now know, contributes to many medical issues including diabetes, heart attack, stroke, depression, and even a higher risk of dementia."

"Your immune system is affected in a negative way when you don't get restorative sleep. At least 40 percent of your sleep time should be spent in REM sleep to have a positive effect on health," says Taylor.

The average person needs seven to eight hours of sleep a night. "There are those outliers who require far less, but we don't fully understand why. Perhaps they're spending more than 40 percent of their sleep time in REM sleep, so they require less," explains Taylor.

Personally, my sleep habits have been dramatically altered since the onset of

the pandemic. Previously, my bedtime was 11 p.m.; now, it's more like 2 a.m. or later. Yikes! Right?

I blame monkey mind for my insomnia; it seems my brain just won't turn off no matter how hard I try. And, of course, that next episode of Ozark that I just can't miss! Yes, I'm blaming binge-watching. At least that WAS my issue. I can now share with you what's helping. It's no cure, but at least I'm getting to sleep before the sun comes up and getting eight hours of shut-eye.

I'm actually forcing myself to get up earlier than normal. So instead of getting up at 10 a.m. after hitting the hay at 2 a.m. or later, I'm up at 8 a.m. Not easy at first, but I'm sleepy earlier now, so getting to bed at a decent hour is more a necessity than a choice. My head hits the pillow, and I'm usually out within minutes. If not, I find that taking a magnesium supplement provides a calming effect.

But a better way to absorb enough magnesium is by eating a balanced diet. Spinach, avocados, almonds, peanut butter, eggs, milk, yogurt and bananas all contain magnesium. If you're not getting enough of these foods in your diet, then check with your doctor about taking a magnesium supplement.

These are trying times, and quality sleep can certainly help get you through. Changing patterns and habits to ensure you are giving your body what it needs to reboot and recharge is an important step. Sweet dreams~

Janet Zappala is a certified nutritional consultant, an Emmy award-winning news anchor and reporter, and the creator and host of Your Health Matters. Find her on Facebook @ JanetZappalaYourHealthMatters.

Hello, World!  
 or close the evening news. (Let's keep those going).

Continued from page 1

These next few months are sure to be an adjustment period for us all. "You know when you come out of a movie theater, and your eyes need time to adjust to the light?" says Rancho Mirage therapist Amy Austin, RN, PsyD, LMFT. "This is the same concept with coming out of quarantine. We are coming out of a dark time and need to give ourselves time to not only adjust to our new normal but to embrace it. Every struggle is an opportunity."



I see a light, a little grace, a little faith unfurled. Well, hello, world. - Lady A

Palm Springs psychologist Simone Ravicz, PhD agrees. "At this juncture, opening our hearts and minds to change, to the new, is the way through. We must meet the changes in the outside world with an evolution within. By allowing and accepting any fear and anxiety about re-emerging, we open the path to possibility, connection and joy."

I've begun a daily routine that really helps incite enthusiasm and minimize negativity. Upon waking, I walk outside in my jammies and greet the morning with open arms and two simple words, "Hello, world!" With warmer mornings, I've also moved my daily meditation outside to the grass. It's good to start your day with a little grounding, and it feels like I'm placing my brain in a larger arena, preparing it for our "coming out" and reassuring my whole being that this

is what we've been long awaiting. All will be ok.

My greeting was inspired by the Lady A song of the same name: *Hello, world. How've you been? It's good to see you, my old friend. Sometimes I feel as cold as steel and broken, like I'm never gonna heal.*

As we emerge and come together, I certainly hope we do so with less judgment. We've all been through a lot, and you have no idea what others have endured over this past year. Even beyond the pandemic, it seems there has been so much loss. We should be as soft with each other as we are with ourselves.

*I see a light, a little grace, a little faith unfurled. Well, hello world.*

Lauren Del Sarto is founder and publisher of Desert Health and can be reached at [Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com](mailto:Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com).

References: 1) <https://www.shape.com/lifestyle/mind-and-body/social-anxiety-after-covid-quarantine>;

### The Therapeutic Use of Light

Continued from page 9

Photodynamic therapy has shown remarkable potential for a broad scope of therapeutic effects ranging from anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, to anti-tumoral. The majority of current clinical trials for PDT are for cancer, demonstrating its potential efficacy in oncology. As awareness of this low-risk therapy increases, PDT should become more available in outpatient clinics across the US.

Dr. Sonja Fung is a primary care naturopathic doctor with a focus on integrative cancer care and PRP regenerative joint injections. She is the founder and medical director at the Live Well Clinic in La Quinta which now offers photomedicine. For more information, call (760) 771.5970 or visit [www.livewellclinic.org](http://www.livewellclinic.org).

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## Meditation: A Natural Process of Rebalancing

By Jens Christian Springmann



Meditation is a means of consciously executing the natural process of rebalancing.

If we look at the practice of meditation from a distance, we notice that this process of rebalancing our body, mind and spirit is something natural. In fact, it is the most natural process for us human beings to recharge and recover. It takes place every night while we sleep. We rest our mind and body so that our spiritual body can connect and commune through a deep state with a power that has a great refreshing effect.

This daily reconnection with our inner source of life energy takes place unconsciously and has an utmost revitalizing impact. Many also know that a short nap or break throughout the day, where we close our eyes or gaze into a treetop in silence and privacy, can infuse peaceful energy and even ignite a spark of blissfulness inside of us. Without this natural process of rebalancing our mind and body, life would be impossible and a constant struggle.

Regeneration clearly is accessible to all of us, not just to those who actively practice a specific meditation routine. Yet, life and sleep can turn into a struggle as we start living too fast, too reckless, and clutter up inside with meaningless content following poor desires and goals. This inattentive living is then the opposite of rebalancing, caused by a behavior where we focus mainly on the outside, only on things and expressions around us. We compare and judge, not noticing that we have lost track of the most important connection: with our spiritual selves. Anxieties then find fertile soil, and suffering must occur to make us aware. This is entirely human; however, the possibility and choice of slowing down and rebalancing are as present and simple as they have been before.

Finding our inner calm again doesn't necessarily take mindful practices, just because our "mind is full." It is then more about practicing mindlessness in a way that we "mind less," meaning worry less about too many things with fear or excitement as their foundation.

Nobody chooses and absorbs information for us, and nobody steers our actions; we might be sensitive, but nobody can believe in something for us - our will and our belief are still our choices.

Meditation is a method of consciously executing the natural process of rebalancing body, mind, and spirit. It helps to nourish ourselves with creative and blissful life energy during challenging times. Nevertheless, we still have to slow down, let go, cleanse our inside and disconnect from the world, at least for a moment. Sometimes, the best meditation is to intuitively sense the right moment, then sit in stillness and enjoy your inner peace, simply letting the process of rebalancing happen by itself.

Everyone can easily start to implement 10-minute breaks into their daily routine, closing their eyes or contemplating the vastness of the sky while repeating simple words like: "Now, I want to be happy and free. I want to clear my sight and relax. I want to feel the bliss of my true spirit." This practice almost seems too easy, and yet, it is through our willingness and in the stillness of our mind that our spirit can unfold its beauty, energy and delightfulness.

Jens ("Yenz") Christian Springmann is the founder of Satisfied Being Meditation & Mindfulness studio in Rancho Mirage and can be reached at (760) 636.0557. For more information visit [www.Satisfied-Being.com](http://www.Satisfied-Being.com).

## 3 "Easy-Access" Tools for Drug-Free Pain Relief

By Laya Raznick

Has the stress of the past year left you feeling tight and achy? You're not alone. For most of us, isolation has meant less movement, more stress, and fewer moments of joy.

When heavy energy builds up with no way to release it, pain is often the result. Just as the ancient practice of acupuncture teaches us, when energy becomes stuck in the body it must be released to re-establish balance. The good news is, you have three "easy-access" tools at your fingertips you can use to release your tension, return to balance, and lessen your pain almost instantly.

Let's begin with the most powerful easy-access tool for pain relief...your breath. A rhythmic breath practice shifts your nervous system from a "fight or flight" response into "rest and digest," reducing your stress chemicals and replacing them with chemicals of relaxation.

Try this rhythmic breath practice: inhale through your nose for a count of five, hold for five, exhale for five, then hold the breath out for five. Repeat for four cycles. Instant relaxation!

Simple movement is the second easy-access tool for pain relief. The body holds old, protective patterns of tension that limit your range of motion and increase your pain. Gentle movement, modified for your unique condition, releases pain by stretching and releasing the patterns of tension in your muscles, nerves, tendons and ligaments.

Try this simple movement exercise: sit upright, face forward, shoulders dropped and chin slightly tucked. Inhale deeply. Exhale dropping left ear to left shoulder. Inhale head back up to center. Exhale, dropping right ear to right shoulder. Repeat three times then inhale deeply, hold and release. Ahh...relief!

The last easy-access tool for drug-free pain relief is developing inner focus. Weaving inner focus with breath and modified movement is the key. To develop your inner focus, notice what you're experiencing in each moment without trying to change anything. This practice increases self-compassion and guides you to become curious, interested, and aware. When you are aware, you are present.

Try this inner focus exercise: close your eyes and take a breath. Bring your attention to the brow point, the place where the bridge of the nose meets the forehead. Let your attention rest at the brow point. Breathe. Just watch your experience from within with your mind's eye. Your mind will be busy thinking. That's okay because thinking is the nature of the mind. But don't let the mind carry your attention away for too long. When you notice your attention has wandered, bring it back to the brow point. Breathe and focus at the brow point for just a few minutes.

Now you have three powerful easy-access tools at your fingertips for less pain, more energy and increased joy. With a little regular practice over time, they can be your go-to for drug-free pain relief.

Laya Raznick is the resident health coach for NBC Palm Springs and the lead instructor for The Daily Reset Class online. She can be reached at [Laya@LayaRaznick.com](mailto:Laya@LayaRaznick.com) or for

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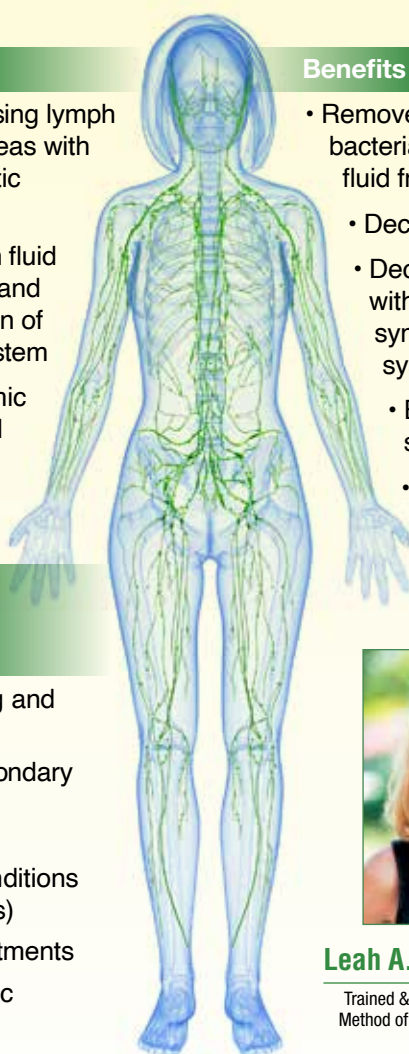
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## Cultivating Patience and Self-Discipline

By Dipika Patel, CHHC

In a world of instant gratification, I have learned that developing patience can be short-lived and cause you to throw self-discipline out the window. And, yes, sadly, those two ways of being go hand in hand, regardless of the perspective you may hold.

Many people are more likely to give up or suppress an emotion than make an effort to develop what it takes to get the results they want. But as we allow the discomfort of new, healthier change, and observe our judgments toward the discomfort, we can consciously cultivate patience over time from days into weeks, weeks into months, and months into years. This process permits us to resume our growth as healthy human beings no matter what cards we were dealt in our past and without fear of the future. There is trust in the process as we trust in who we are becoming.

I have had plenty of life experiences when I felt like something was not working because of my own self-doubt and weaknesses. It was necessary for me to build the muscle of self-discipline. The deeper I went into self-discipline, the more I became aware of the importance of being patient with myself. I came to accept and recognize my internal dialogue; this was key to healing negative thoughts and reactions.

Whether we decide to take action or not, things will still change. Unfortunately, in most cases, we have good intentions; we want something better, but because it doesn't happen in the now, we suppress or ignore those needs, only to become something we are not, and the spiral of self-deprivation begins. Your journey of self-exploration begins here.

### My top five benefits of cultivating patience and self-discipline:

- It will assist you to have a better focus on long-term outcomes and goals, rather than short-term fixes that can leave you in a repetitive state of disappointment and hopelessness.
- Supports you to make better choices in life instead of being in a state of impulse, which is an animal instinct of fight or flight.
- It can assist you in managing your stress, anxiety and overwhelm, as you will have the patience to put things into perspective and know that you are building toward it by not being in a constant state of urgency.
- Cultivating patience encourages healthier behaviors toward ourselves. Over time, this will improve self-confidence, self-worth and self-value. Patience grants the opportunity to be more compassionate, loving, kind and forgiving toward ourselves and others. In return, this will empower you to have and maintain better relationships.
- Cultivating patience requires self-discipline. Self-discipline can lead to improvement and success in all life endeavors. It gives you the power and the inner strength to overcome addictions, procrastination and will leave you feeling good about who you are and who you are becoming.

Dipika Patel is a certified holistic health coach and lifestyle practitioner who empowers her professional clients to activate an overall balanced lifestyle of mind, body and soul. She can be reached at (760) 821.3119 or [www.LoveYourLifeHealthy.com](http://www.LoveYourLifeHealthy.com).

## What is the Best Drinking Container?

By Jessica Needle, ND

With temperatures rising in the Coachella Valley, it's important to stay hydrated. Drinking enough water – at least 60 oz per day – is critical in this regard. But just as important as how much water you drink is the container from which you drink.

The convenience of bottled water has helped Americans increase their consumption, but drinking from plastic comes with negative effects on human health and, as we've all seen, the environment.

Reusable water bottles are recommended over disposable containers and there are plenty of choices in the market. Below are pros and cons for various types you may be considering.

**Plastic** is lightweight, cheap, and versatile. Unfortunately, however, plastics leach endocrine-disrupting chemicals into the water you're drinking, and this hazard increases when the plastic is heated (i.e., left outside during the distribution process or your car). Heat allows small particles to contaminate the water through direct contact and vaporization. If you must use plastic, avoid bottles with #3 and #7 recycling labels as these contain BPA, a chemical which has been banned from use in baby bottles and thermal paper receipts.

**Aluminum** is lightweight, making it a popular choice for backpackers. However, aluminum is not a food grade metal, meaning that trace amounts of heavy metals are mixed into the finished product. Therefore, aluminum vessels require a liner, which is likely made of plastic and subject to the hazards mentioned above. It can be difficult to clean the corners of the liner, and odors and flavors cling to it, making the taste of your water unpleasant if you've had other beverages in the container.

**Glass** is dishwasher safe, has no adverse health effects, and does not retain taste or smell. On the downside, glass is heavy, making it best for times you don't have to carry your water, such as when you're engaged in desk work. Glass breaks easily, so manufacturers often encase their bottles in silicone sleeves to offer a buffer. You may also need an external insulating sleeve or your beverage will not stay cold.

**Stainless steel** is very durable. A steel bottle can last a decade, but it dents easily, which detracts from its appearance. Stainless steel has no known health risks as long as the bottle is made of food grade metal known as 304 or 18/8, making it safe at any temperature. Stainless steel transfers heat, so it can burn when containing hot beverages. Manufacturers make consumer-safe double-walled vessels with vacuum insulation to solve this problem (best to hand wash). It also prevents condensation on the outside of the bottle when cold drinks contact warm air.

**Silicone** is a man-made product considered non-toxic and composed of silica from sand, carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. It withstands freezing and heating, and doesn't leach or off-gas chemicals. Because it is heat-resistant to 500 F, you can sterilize your water bottle by boiling it. Silicone has a soft, rubber-like texture and is available in collapsible designs that fold or roll up. This type of product is a good choice for putting in your carry-on bag when traveling and filling up at water stations in the airport.

In my opinion, reusable silicone water bottles are the most versatile and safest option for on-the-go summers in the desert.

Dr. Needle is a licensed naturopathic doctor with Optimal Health Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 568.2598.



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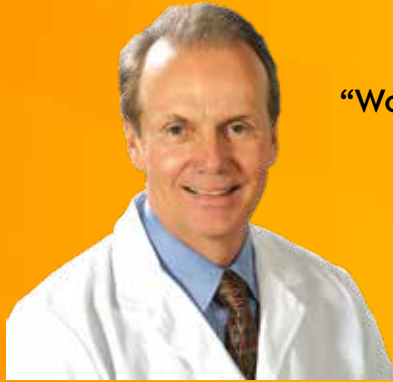
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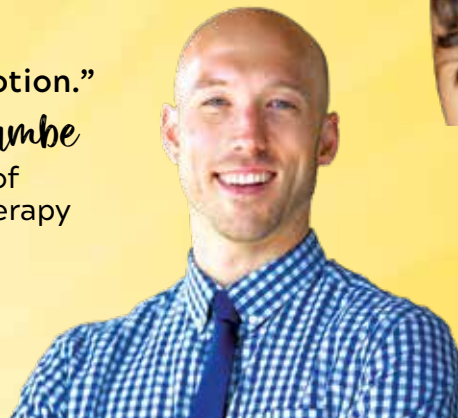


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## The Art of Relaxation

By Diane Sheppard, PhD, LAc

The art of relaxation comes naturally for some people, while for others, it is hard to turn off the chatter in their minds. You don't need to sit in a lotus position and meditate; however, this is one way to start the feeling of easing out of fight or flight and into the parasympathetic response of relaxation.

We are hard-wired in our DNA to react to stressful situations physiologically. Our heart races, breathing becomes shallow, blood vessels constrict, pupils dilate, muscles tighten, and we become short-tempered. We may even explode with an explicative or two when we are triggered. Our parasympathetic nervous system, on the otherhand, is our built-in stress defense mechanism to calm us down.



As we transition out of quarantine, it's important to maintain quiet time for ourselves.

As Americans, we are go-getters. We work more hours and take fewer vacations than people in other countries. European countries, which offer significantly more vacation time than the standard two weeks we are standardly granted, tease us that we are all about work and take little time for pleasure in our workday. We don't have siestas or tea time.

This pace can truly affect our health, and those of us who find it hard to carve out "chill time," now, after this COVID year, realize just how important doing so is.

How do we find time?

Try getting up early; the morning is the best time to do nothing. We need to stop - or work to not return to - the robotic cycle of getting up, brushing our teeth, drinking our coffee and dashing out the door.

If we can take time to just be, instead of checking our texts, email and social media first thing - to just sit, breathe and clear our mind, we will become conscious of our environment, able to enjoy watching the birds outside the window for a moment before we turn to the newspaper and newsfeed.

By doing this simple act, we do so much for our health, including reducing blood pressure, clearing a cloudy mind, increasing focus and creativity, improving digestion and increasing oxygen levels and circulation. We become better at problem-solving and can repair some damaged telomeres to slow down the aging process.

Sure, we know how to do nothing and lay around, but we often feel like we are wasting time. That perspective needs to change. It is a process.

During the beginning of the COVID break, I took some virtual chair yoga meditation classes with Laya Resnick. At first, I thought, "I don't need a class," but I had fun and reaped benefits from being in a group - even on Zoom. I also took virtual tai chi classes with Robert Haberkorn. These classes helped to relieve COVID stress and redirect me back to quiet time.

Now that we are in season and business is busier, I have to carve out time in different ways but have maintained my practice of self-care, and wish to share a few tips.

**Schedule a quiet time.** Start small; take 10 minutes in the morning before you leave for work. If possible, find a quiet place in your home, cozy chair, couch or a made bed - not in a cluttered space, or in nature where there are not a lot of distractions. NO phone! Now, close your eyes and do nothing; just breathe, either sitting or lying down.

**Focus on breathing and release body tension.** Start to focus on your breathing, slowly breathing in, then out and do a "HA" breath. Breathe in and exhale, saying, "HA" to release pent-up emotions. You can also scan your body, feel where it is tense and actually tense up that muscle, then release it. Start with your feet, then your legs and work your way up to your eyebrows.

**Soak away stress in the tub.** Baths are not just for the end of the day; try one in the morning or afternoon with aromatherapy salts or oils, maybe even bubbles!

**Sip and savor a moment.** Another way to relax is to enjoy a cup of tea and or some of nature's fresh fruit; chew slowly, take your time.

In my clinic the other day, I had patients in many rooms and heard the soothing melody of snoring; this was the impetus to write this article. Sometimes patients come to our clinic, not only for pain relief or any specific issue, but just to turn their phone off and take an hour to relax and reset their body, mind and spirit. Some people need to have acupuncture needles to force them not to move around and to relax!

I have found that when you set aside time to do nothing, so much more can be accomplished when you are rested and relaxed.

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

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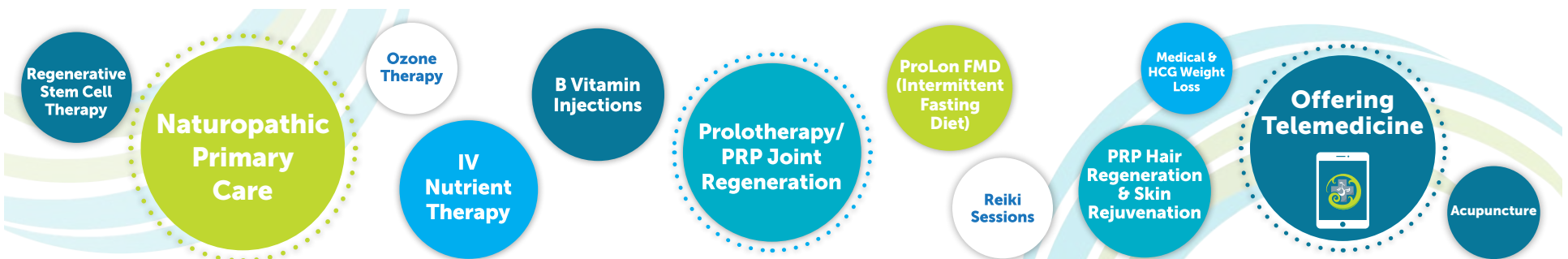
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# Gluten-Free with Tiffany



## Why Everyone Should Use Glucometers for Better Health

Blood sugar testing with a glucometer is a great tool for anyone to assess their body's unique response to food and lifestyle choices. We normally associate blood sugar testing with diabetes, but this tool can be helpful to support health goals such as improving body composition, making exercise and diet changes, identifying your carbohydrate tolerance, and connecting your mood and energy changes to your physical needs. This type of specific information can be very motivating and even feel like a relief, as it is often the missing piece of the "what should I eat?" puzzle.

To make glucose testing work for you, it is important to understand how blood sugar (glucose) works in your body. In simple terms, all carbohydrates, sugars and even excess protein can break down into glucose and flow through your bloodstream to provide energy to cells. Humans have a negative feedback system with internal sensors to release hormones to keep us in an optimal glucose range. Insulin, the hormone released in response to a blood sugar spike from food (or stress!), has the job of placing glucose into cells; any extra is generally stored in our fat tissue, or in undesirable circumstances can remain elevated in the bloodstream.



Glucose monitors are not only beneficial for those with diabetes.

You will want to test your glucose at a few specific times: Upon waking, and one to two hours after a meal. It is also helpful to test whenever you feel an energy/mood change – this can help connect physical and emotional feelings to any blood sugar swings. By aiming for a narrower optimal range of glucose versus the "standard acceptable" range, it is easier to avoid any borderline highs or lows. Please discuss these optimal ranges with your doctor:

The optimal fasting glucose range (upon waking): **80-90mg/dL** (standard = 70-99mg/dL)

One to two hours after meal glucose range: **90-120mg/dL** (standard 90-140mg/dL)

To find your carbohydrate tolerance, let's say you had a high reading at a meal. Eat that same meal again, but lower the carbohydrate grams to determine how low you need to go to get within the optimal range. Note: there will be short periods throughout the day when even healthy people are out of range.

Here are the key factors to consider when analyzing your glucose readings:

**Sleep quality.** Anything less than eight hours of high-quality sleep can affect your ability to manage blood sugar.

**Exercise.** High-intensity exercise can cause a *temporary high spike* of glucose as the body releases sugar stores to fuel your activity, but this a healthy response that will return to normal and offers long-term improvement in insulin sensitivity, so keep exercising.

**Stress levels.** Emotions, deadlines and even fear can trigger high glucose and increase hunger. Try eating your meals in low-stress environments and take a walk after meals to lower your glucose levels.

**Food combinations.** As a general rule, avoid eating starchy carbohydrates alone. This concentration spikes sugar levels quickly, but you can mitigate this effect by adding fiber, fat or protein to make it a balanced meal.

Once you know how to interpret the influential factors above, you can make effective choices that offer rapid results. You can purchase a glucose monitoring kit online or at a drug store for under \$30. It should include the glucometer, lancets (for poking your finger) and test strips. Be sure to journal your numbers, meals, sleep and moods; note their times to correlate it all to your health and discover what is best for you.

Tiffany is a certified nutrition consultant and functional diagnostic nutrition practitioner and can be reached at (760) 285.1221. For more information, visit [www.tiffanydalton.com](http://www.tiffanydalton.com).

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## Transforming Your Well-Being with Positive Psychology

By Darrell Price, FMCHC

There is a relatively new segment studying human behaviors, happiness and overall well-being referred to as positive psychology. Defined by the Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania, it is the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. In other words, focusing on the positive side of the human life experience.



Who thought of this way of looking at things?

According to the book *Character Strengths Matter, How to Live a Full Life*, Martin Seligman, PhD known as the father of positive psychology and then president of the American Psychological Association, and psychology professor Christopher Peterson, PhD wanted to collaborate on an effort to advance science and the practice of character. The year was 1999, and until this time, social sciences' primary focus was on understanding human suffering. Seligman and Peterson thought it was time to look at things through a different lens and introduce a different game plan for the picture of human personal growth.

I started my professional career in mental health but have worked as a health and life coach for the past decade, so I have seen and practiced this enlightened shift firsthand. Previously, a lot of time was spent focusing on what's not going right, procrastination due to feelings of inadequacy and worrying about what is wrong with the patient. Practicing positive psychology allows you to coach clients to focus on what is going right for them at the moment, to celebrate strengths, and provide tools that will assist with their success. Realizing your positive strengths is truly a breath of fresh air in human growth potential. For me, there is no doubt that positive

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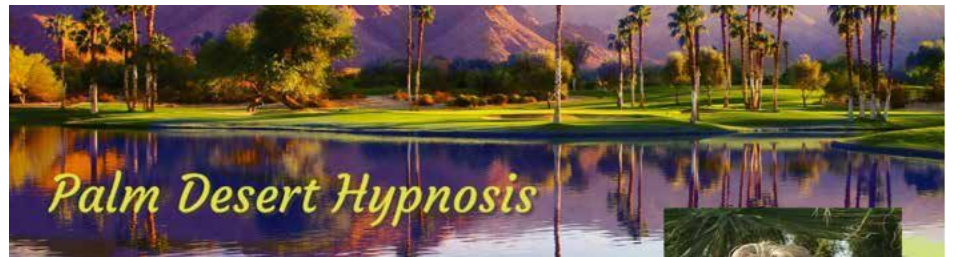


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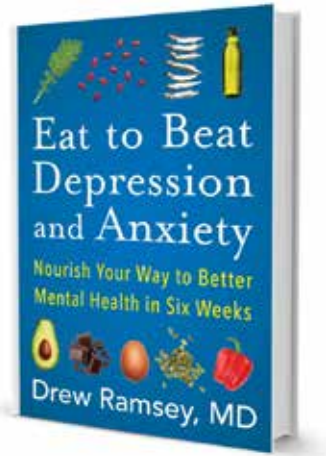
## Eat to Beat Depression and Anxiety

### A Book Review

By Joseph E. Scherger, MD, MPH

Drew Ramsey, MD, a psychiatrist in New York who lives on a family farm in Indiana, introduced me to nutritional psychiatry. I did not realize such psychiatrists existed; it turns out they have international meetings. Leading the way is psychiatrist Daniel Amen, MD, who has authored over 30 books and established more than 7,000 clinics. I give him credit for being an “out-of-the-box” thinker and his work is outstanding.

Dr. Ramsey's *Eat to Beat Depression and Anxiety* specifically addresses the two most common mental illnesses and how we can eat to avoid and treat them. Ramsey started out in traditional psychiatry, prescribing drugs for mental health conditions. The results were disappointing. He found that healthy foods were much more powerful for healing the brain, and he is now a leading practitioner of nutritional psychiatry.



The emphasis in the book is on what foods to eat, which are summarized below. Ramsey does not place as much emphasis on what *not* to eat and assumes that people are unwilling to give up their favorite foods. My knowledge suggests that consuming sugar and lots of high glycemic carbs leads to mental health problems. The same may occur with inflammatory foods such as those that trigger gluten sensitivity. To his credit, Ramsey mentions such foods in the last part of his book.

The best foods to eat to beat depression and anxiety are:

- **Leafy greens.** Ramsey power player: kale
- **Rainbow-colored fruits and vegetables.** Power players: red peppers and avocados
- **Seafood.** Power players: wild salmon, anchovies and mussels
- **Nuts, beans and seeds.** Ramsey power players: pumpkin seeds, cashews and red beans

I think there are healthier seeds like flax and chia, healthier nuts – especially walnuts – for brain health, and healthier beans than red beans, which can be dangerous if not cooked.

- **Grass-fed or pasture-raised meat.** Look for regenerative farms.
- **Eggs and dairy.** Quality eggs are a brain superfood; eat the yolks. All dairy should be organic and full fat.
- **Dark chocolate.** Must be 70 percent or more cocoa, a good source of flavanols, magnesium, zinc, iron, protein, fiber and potassium.

Dr. Ramsey encourages his patients to transition to these foods gradually to avoid a sudden disruption to the gut microbiome. He emphasizes that a healthy microbiome is critical for brain health since this “organ” has a major impact on our moods. There are more neurotransmitters in the gut than in the brain.

*Eat to Beat Depression and Anxiety* is a fun read from a very likable psychiatrist and may be helpful in not only getting someone to eat healthier but also getting those affected off medications.

Dr. Joe is founder of *Restore Health in Indian Wells*, a clinic dedicated to weight loss and reversing disease. For more information, visit [www.restorehealth.me](http://www.restorehealth.me) or call (760) 898.9663.

*Transforming Your Well-Being with Positive Psychology*

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psychology proves to be the most effective method.

**How does change from negative to positive occur?**

Seligman selected five components individuals seek that involve intrinsic motivation and contribute to overall well-being. He used the acronym PERMA and described these components as “a passion and desire from within with no outside incentive.”

**Positive emotion.** Gratitude, smiling, laughing and fulfillment. Increasing positive emotion fuels resilience and reinforces internal joy to self and others, therefore creating better health.

**Engagement.** Research on engagement found that people who try to use their strengths in new ways each day for a week are happier and less depressed after six months.<sup>1</sup>

**Relationships.** Belonging to something impacts our mind and body and relationships increase our sense of purpose, role and identity as part of a community. Choose relationships wisely, especially remembering you only have so much energy in a day. Thus, you should choose people who provide you energy versus take it.

**Meaning.** Having a sense of purpose and meaning in our lives is the Holy Grail. It is a question we should all ask ourselves. When you serve others and start to see the art of giving, you can even experience that “helpers high.”

**Achievements.** Setting and achieving SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timetable) goals leads to larger gains in well-being than external factors such as money and fame.

**How do I determine my strengths?**

Character strengths are the positive parts of your personality that impact how you think, feel and behave. The book *Character Strengths and Virtues* by Peterson and Seligman outlines the results of a three-year project by the authors and identifies 24 character strengths we have the capacity to express. The book is the leading literary resource on positive psychology and their work represents the most significant effort in history to review, assemble, research, and classify positive strengths and traits in human beings.

The authors and their team have established the VIA Institute of Character, which offers a free self-assessment survey to discover your unique character strengths profile. It is available at [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org).

Remember to think positive, get positive and stay positive! Identify your strengths, use them wisely and go after your passions. Get awesome today!

Darrell Price is a *Functional Medicine Coaching Academy* health coach and life coach with *Stone Functional Medicine*. He is also a certified workshop facilitator and can be reached at (919) 810.6235 or [yourfreedomjourne@gmail.com](mailto:yourfreedomjourne@gmail.com) [www.stonefunmed.com](http://www.stonefunmed.com)

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**Michael K. Butler**  
B.A.;P.T.A.;CSCS\*D RSCC\*D PES;NMT

## Returning to the Gym Safely

By Michael K. Butler, BA;PTA;CSCS\*D;RSCC\*D NMT

It's been a very challenging time for our world, especially when it comes to our fitness. Over the past year, individuals and businesses have been trying to adjust to ever-changing CDC recommendations and requirements and attempting to adapt to new and different situations and environments. Many of us have been in lockdown and unable to go to work. Not only was our physical wellbeing challenged, but also our mental wellbeing.

Now that some normalcy has been restored, and most of our nation has been vaccinated, there are few excuses for avoiding the gym or your fitness routine any longer. We all look forward to the June 15 date when California plans to reopen fully (if numbers keep improving), but now is the time to ease back into your workout regime.

For those who haven't been working out since COVID first started, there are a few things to consider before jumping back in. Even if you've been doing a modified version of your standard pre-COVID routine, starting slowly and cautiously will be beneficial for long-term success.

For those who still have fatigue or a cough after being infected with COVID, I recommend seeing your physician for clearance before starting any exercise regime as your symptoms could worsen. COVID fatigue is real, and there are many walking around still coughing after just walking a couple of blocks and some that get exhausted from just going to the grocery store.

So what type of exercises and cardio should you do if I haven't worked out in a year? To answer this question, you need to pay attention to how you feel and how fast you recover. Always play it smart and don't spend any longer than 30 minutes in the gym for at least one month. The initial goal should be to start moving and build up your immune system. Don't worry about your weight or overall strength; that will come; just focus on feeling good again and working out.

In the gym, remain cautious and considerate. Pay attention to your surroundings, keep a safe distance from others, wear your mask, wipe down equipment after use and drink plenty of water. Stay focused on what you are doing by warming up slowly on a bike, treadmill or elliptical, then move to weights, starting light and doing several repetitions of each exercise. It will take a couple of weeks to become accustomed again, so take your time and play it smart.

Recovery is probably the most important element to avoid injury or become ill from a weakened immune system. Plenty of rest, vitamins and healthy food is a recipe for success. Start by going to the gym two to three times a week, then increase as you adapt.

With a careful, slow and well-thought-out plan, you'll be back in pre-COVID shape before you know it!

Michael Butler is owner of Kinetix Health and Performance Center in Palm Desert. He holds a state license as a physical therapist assistant, national certification of distinction through the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) as a strength and conditioning coach, and a Poliquin International certification as a Full Body Active Release Techniques Practitioner. He can be reached at (760) 200.1719 or michael@kinetixcenter.com.

## The Back Nine

Fitness for senior golfers

By Michele McCord, CPT, CMT, RYS-RYT

The importance of fitness training has become wildly accepted in the modern-day sport of golf. In past generations, there was a bit of stigma in the game with lighthearted teasing for "spending too much time in the gym and not enough time playing golf."

All golfers benefit from cross-training, especially seniors who need to maintain strength and flexibility to avoid injury and continue the game they love. If you've made it to the time in your life where playing golf is a priority, you've probably brought a few aches and pains with you. That's why it's important that your routine be prescribed with your limitations and goals in mind, preferably by a professional trainer or physical therapist. To prevent injury, it is important to practice a routine that is safe, effective and tailored to you and your game.

If we unpack the biomechanics of the golfer's swing, we discover rotation, flexion and extension. To create more ball speed, we restrict the pelvic turn while increasing thorax rotation in the backswing. However, as we age, we lose range of motion in the thoracic spine, restricting rotation. Targeted exercises can help us regain our full range potential.

If you've had knee pain from an injury or degenerative joint disease, it might be best to avoid deep lunges or squats; flexibility should be the focus of your workouts. Biomechanics specialist Greg Rose says that every decade of your life represents the percentage of your fitness program you should dedicate to flexibility. So, if you're 70 years old, 70 percent of your workout should be dedicated to flexibility. This percentage may sound daunting, but you can achieve it with any dynamic moving stretches that improve mobility, flexibility and strength all at the same time. That is why yoga is one of the most effective exercise disciplines for golfers, as it incorporates all three.

Meditation is another powerful benefit of yoga for golfers. Illustrious golfer Sam Snead's words of wisdom include, "Of all the hazards, fear is the worst." Practicing meditation can improve your game by making it easier to quiet emotions and calm the mind so you can relax and take it easy, improving concentration and boosting confidence. Some athletes have seen their game improve with just 10 minutes of meditation a day!

"I just don't have time" is the number one excuse I hear for not staying fit. The truth is most of us can find 15 minutes a day for some kind of routine. My philosophy is, "you can exercise everywhere, and the best exercise is the one you do." My client Robert Mack, MD, generously offered to share one of his "exercise everywhere" routines...

"Waiting for coffee to brew, stand facing the coffee machine, feet positioned 4 - 5 feet away. Do vertical push-ups. Start with hands on the counter edge and arms fully extended, ease forward touching chest to the counter edge. Keep your body straight. Try to keep heels on the floor to accentuate the heel cord stretch."

Making time to incorporate a tailored fitness routine will help keep you playing golf longer, healthier, happier and better.

Michele is a certified personal trainer and yoga instructor, nutritional consultant and founder of the Michele McCord Method. She can be reached at (310) 923-3237 or me@michelemccordmethod.com. For more information visit www.michelemccordmethod.com.

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# Slow Down Your Workouts

Slow-motion strength training can speed up results

By Arnel Sator

Is weight lifting only for the young? Not at all! Even those 50 and older can enjoy weightlifting, especially lifting weights in slow-motion. Slow-motion strength training involves 10 seconds of lifting and a 10-second lowering phase. The exercise's ultimate goal is to gain momentary muscle failure. Slow-motion strength training is an example of a brief "high-intensity" exercise. It has several health benefits, including stronger muscles and bones, weight loss, better function and balance, improved immune function, increased energy and increased cardiovascular health.

**Use it or lose it – some startling statistics.** At the age of 50, an individual loses 1-2 percent of their muscle strength every year. After 60, they lose about 3 percent of their muscle strength, approximately 4.5 pounds. Slow-motion strength training helps a person regain the muscle strength they have lost and helps their cells remain younger because exercise slows cell aging<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, strength training is essential for individuals above 50 because it fights age-related muscle loss, improves an individual's mobility, reduces bone loss, and helps fight depression and cognitive decline.

**Big benefits, less time commitment.** Slow-motion strength training strengthens muscles more efficiently by recruiting all the muscle fibers within the targeted muscle and only takes 20 minutes two times per week. As an individual slowly lifts, the lifting speed reduces momentum and instantly activates the muscles on each repetition. As a result, an individual uses more (deeper) muscle fibers to strengthen the muscles, and by slowing down the lifting phase, they reduce the chance of injury, making these extremely safe for those 50 and older. Also, the body best responds to short, brief and intense strength training exercises and needs ample time to rest, recover and grow in between sessions. Anything beyond that can hamper results, which is why doing slow-motion strength training two times a week is all you need.

**Your heart will love you.** Slow-motion strength training also improves weight loss and cardiovascular health. When an individual exercises, they increase blood flow, resulting in stimulation of the capillaries, making them expand. This expansion creates room for more oxygen to enter the bloodstream, causing the heart to be more effective in removing toxins and waste from the body<sup>2</sup>. Other cardiovascular health benefits of strength training include lower blood pressure, lower bad cholesterol and increased insulin sensitivity.

**Staying fit helps reduce chronic diseases.** Slow-motion strength training helps older adults stay fit and adopt a healthy lifestyle. Staying fit means that the individual is able to reduce symptoms associated with chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart diseases<sup>1</sup>. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends individuals engage in 150 minutes of exercise every week, including cardio exercises as well as bodyweight exercises.

In conclusion, slow-motion strength training offers many health benefits and helps seniors maintain their independence.

Arnel Sator is a kinesiologist, exercise physiologist and founder of PerfectlyFit in Indian Wells. He can be reached at (760) 408.2720. For more information visit [www.PerfectlyFit.me](http://www.PerfectlyFit.me).

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## From Hopeless To Happy

Continued from page 1

man who left years earlier.

His journey would take him to several states where VA doctors prescribed additional medications and three more surgeries for his chronic pain. "Many doctors told me it was all in my head or that the depression and anxiety I was feeling were making my pain worse." Psych counseling led to more medications, and side effects from one drug led to others to help him sleep, to go to the bathroom, even to perform sex. Before he knew it, he was taking nine including oxycodone and hydromorphone.

His life began accommodating the medications. Enrolled in nursing school, he was told he couldn't take his clinical tests while on prescribed narcotics but felt he couldn't function without them. So, he switched his major to medical administration.

In April 2019, Meadows moved to Palm Springs. By 2020 his pain had become unbearable. "I was so desperate for help. I considered reinjuring my foot purposely so I might be



Frank Meadows six months ago at almost 200 pounds and today holding a 5-pound model of fat of which he lost 12.

given the opportunity for amputation. I was thinking so irrationally and hated who I had become. I was an athlete, but now I was fat and didn't look good in anything. I didn't like how I felt and was very suicidal." At 26, his 5'4" frame was now carrying 199 pounds.

One night while scrolling on his phone, an ad for colon hydrotherapy caught his attention. "My mom was into gut health and always doing cleanses. So, I decided to give it a try."

That's when Meadows met Carol Christian, RN, of California Wellness Institute (CWI), a functional medicine clinic in Palm Desert. She

could hear his cry for help and spent much time reviewing his history and developing a plan. She said, "Give me 60 days and let us help you with a medically-supervised program." Meadows was skeptical. "She told me I didn't have to be on any of these medications," he says. "But it was inspiring to hear someone in medicine talking me out of medication."

"I knew that with all the meds he was on, he was very toxic and couldn't eliminate on his own," said Christian. "So, cleaning out his gut was a good place to start."

Her plan was to cleanse his colon and liver, replenish nutrients and apply an HGC diet, including injections and caloric restriction. The cost was \$925 to start a comprehensive program. "I was unemployed and it was the middle of a pandemic. I couldn't afford this kind of care. The care I was receiving from the VA was free, but look where that got me. The traditional medical community had no more they could do for me, so I knew I had to do it."

After just one hydrotherapy session, the change was night and day. "I had no swelling, no pain in my foot, no bruising, and I thought, 'Oh my gosh, this might actually work!'"

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Christian scheduled comprehensive labs with CWI Medical Director Gene Rajaratnam, MD ("Dr. Raj") that were more extensive than anything Frank had ever done. His body was so depleted, they began him on IV nutritional therapy drips and hormones for adrenals and thyroid to boost his immune and endocrine systems.

"Frank started to come to life within a week," says Christian. "The change was pretty incredible. He was losing weight, his skin and eyes became clear, the bloating disappeared, and the swelling and pain in his foot dissipated." She adds that detoxing the gut, liver and gallbladder also helps the body process emotions and directly impacts a person's mental state; she could see the change in Meadows.



California Wellness Institute's Carol Christian, RN helped Frank transform his health.

Dr. Raj and Christian made small recommendations to encourage Meadows to gradually wean down his medications. Within a month, he was free of the array of drugs he had been on for almost a decade.

Over three months, Meadows lost 50 pounds and a significant amount of pain. He began to feel like himself again. "For the first time since 2013, I felt truly happy. It took a different approach from medical professionals who look beyond the medical system and knew holistic therapies that could turn my health around, not just put a Band-aid on the pain. And it is delivered with empathy, care and support that inspired me to do this for myself."

To celebrate his newfound freedom from all that was weighing him down, Meadows went skydiving. "I told the skydiving team my story, and they were in tears. They encouraged me to jump to help others and thus, the 'Beat Anxiety' on my hands."

One of Meadows' favorite quotes is now, "Don't trust your fears; they don't know your strengths."

"I invested in turning my life around and challenged myself to step out of my comfort zone. I went from fearful of everything to doing the most fearful thing you can do - jumping out of a plane! It was the most empowering thing I have ever done."

Meadows feels his purpose now is to share his story and to help others. "I know what it's like to be in that place where there is no hope, and it seems no one cares; to hate where you are and how you feel. It takes a lot to be vulnerable, but sometimes it takes breaking down those walls to build yourself back up. Do I still suffer from anxiety? Yes, but I know how to manage it, to face it and to be ok with it. Do I sometimes have flare-ups? Yes, but it is nothing like it used to be, and I know how to manage it without the medications."

His decision to major in medical administration paid off and this past spring, Meadows joined the CWI/LUZwave team. "I feel so blessed to be a part of a medical team that genuinely cares and offers hope through a variety of modalities which can turn people's health around, and in turn, turn lives around."

Editorial by Lauren Del Sarto, founder/publisher of Desert Health. To see Frank Meadows' inspiring skydiving video, view this article at [www.DesertHealthNews.com](http://www.DesertHealthNews.com). Follow Frank on Facebook @frank.falesmeadows and Instagram @grenci29. For more information on California Wellness Institute/LUZwave, visit [www.cwi.la](http://www.cwi.la).



## Coming Together for the Greater Good Community benefits from new farmers markets

By Lauren Del Sarto

Last fall, Christina Green organized 25 local farmers and artisans to deliver a farmers market for the Desert International Horse Park's seasonal events. Then COVID restrictions changed, and so did the opportunity. In an effort not to let down her vendors, she reached out to local cities to find an alternate location.

The first to welcome them was the City of Indian Wells, which opened the Village parking lot on Highway 111 at Cook. Then representatives from the City of Rancho Mirage contacted her to repeat the success at The Atrium Center on 111 near Frank Sinatra.

These collaborations are great examples of local organizations coming together for the greater good during these challenging times. The partnerships are a win-win for local farmers and artisans, surrounding retailers and restaurants, and the community, which now has increased access to fresh, organic produce and artisan creations.



All exhibitors either make or grow their wares.

"Things always happen for a reason," says Green, "and I am so glad that we are here helping the larger community." She adds that many of the shopping center tenants have reported market days as their strongest since COVID began.

With a growing number of farmers markets in our valley, Green worked to secure unique vendors. "You can go to the Wednesday market in Palm Desert and then the Thursday market in Indian Wells and find different products and produce," she says. They currently have 10 certified organic farmers, 20 artisan food products and 10 artists; all either make or grow their wares.

Green's two markets currently run from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. in Indian Wells on Thursdays and Rancho Mirage on Fridays. COVID protocols are in place, and masks are required for vendors and visitors. In June, the Rancho Mirage location will move inside The Atrium from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. She is currently searching for an indoor option for Indian Wells, noting that they will continue to run the market from 7-11 a.m. outdoors, if necessary, for as long as weather permits.

Green is grateful things have worked out and still hopes to add the horse park next season. "I have never enjoyed a job as much as I am enjoying this one," she says. "The cities have been wonderful to work with, and we [the vendors] have become like a little family. The best part is that in coming together, we are making a difference for each other and for the community."

For more information, contact Christiana Green at (951) 551.6233.



Christiana Green of Epic Health Co. brought the new markets to Indian Wells and Rancho Mirage.

## Lemon Poppy Seed Bites

By Elena Wilkie

Makes: 16 bites · Prep: 10 minutes

### Ingredients:

- 1-½ cups almond flour (168g)
- 3 tablespoons coconut flour (22g)
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric (optional, creates yellow color)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon poppy seeds
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- Zest of 1 lemon

1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon of lemon juice

1 teaspoon almond extract

¼ cup coconut butter, softened or coconut oil, melted

### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, whisk almond flour, coconut flour, turmeric, salt and poppy seeds.
2. Add in maple syrup, lemon zest, lemon juice, almond extract and coconut butter. Stir to combine.
3. Once the mixture forms a dough, scoop about ½ tablespoon or use a cookie scooper and roll into balls.
4. Place in a glass storage container lined with parchment paper. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
5. Store in the fridge up to 3-4 weeks.



Elena Wilkie of La Quinta is a foodie at heart and health enthusiast. She focuses on creating real food recipes with simple ingredients that are gluten-free and deliciously healthy. She can be reached at [afoodiesbliss@gmail.com](mailto:afoodiesbliss@gmail.com). For more recipes, visit [www.afoodiesbliss.com](http://www.afoodiesbliss.com). Instagram and Pinterest @afodiebliss

## Shrimp Cauliflower Rice Stir-Fry

By Dipika Patel, CHHC

In keeping with my low-carb meal plan, I'd like to share my version of Shrimp Cauliflower Rice Stir-Fry. This meal is easy to make, full of flavor and great texture. In place of animal protein, you can also make this recipe with shiitake mushrooms, tofu or just by cutting the additional veggies into larger pieces – your choice!

Serves 4 people

### Ingredients:

- 1 medium cauliflower, largely grated
- 3 carrots, small diced
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- ½ cup finely diced red bell pepper
- 1 pound wild-caught shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 cup of fresh garden peas
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 green onions, whites and greens
- separated
- 3 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce or Bragg's Aminos
- 2 tablespoons sesame seed oil
- Salt to taste and white pepper (optional)
- Cilantro or basil for garnishing (optional)
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds (optional)

### Directions:

1. Largely grate the cauliflower (or pulsate in a food processor).
2. Heat the sesame oil in a large skillet or wok. Toss in the carrots and the whites of green onion and sauté for about 2 minutes.
3. Add in the garlic and ginger paste and shrimp and sauté until the shrimp begin to turn pink, about 5-7 minutes.
4. Add the peas, red peppers and cauliflower rice and mix until the cauliflower has warmed through.
5. Move the contents of the pan to the side to create a well in the center. Pour in the eggs and slowly scrape the cooked bits off the bottom of the pan to scramble the eggs. Once the eggs are almost finished cooking, mix everything in the pan together.
6. Season the mixture with white pepper and soy sauce. Give one last good mix to combine and serve with a garnish of sliced green onion, cilantro or basil and toasted sesame seeds.
7. Enjoy!



Note: You can food process your cauliflower to make cauliflower rice, but I prefer grating as the texture gives a better overall flavor. Frozen garden peas will also do. Presoaking them will help remove the frozen flavor.

I can't wait to hear from you. Let me know any personal touches you added to this dish!

Dipika is a holistic health and lifestyle coach who empowers clients to activate a balanced lifestyle of the mind, body and soul. She can be reached at [health@loveyourlifehealthy.com](mailto:health@loveyourlifehealthy.com) or [www.loveyourlifehealthy.com](http://www.loveyourlifehealthy.com).

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## A Sweet Spot

Comfort and creativity greet you at Sweet Basil

By Lauren Del Sarto

Since they opened in November, I've been eyeing *Sweet Basil California Eatery*. As you cruise down El Paseo, the brilliant white building with teal blue lettering beckons the casual diner with a cozy welcome as if to say, "Stop in. We've been expecting you."

I've now returned numerous times. Meeting friends for lunch one day, I was pleasantly surprised at their healthy offerings. My husband and I returned for a delightful date night on the patio under the twinkle lights, and my third visit to finally try the cauliflower "naanwich" inspired an even greater love.



El Paseo patio at night



Grilled "naanwich"



Roasted beet and quinoa salad

*Sweet Basil* is the perfect spot to enjoy a glass of wine with friends or a romantic evening with that special someone. The air is relaxed, the staff friendly, and the pace calm. While many restaurants these days are eager to turn tables, *Sweet Basil* invites you to relax and enjoy yourself.

The modern eatery is the second restaurant from Chef Sally and her husband, Martin, who ran *Sweet Basil Bistro* in Big Bear for 13 years. Too many cold winters sent them searching for the perfect spot for their second establishment in Palm Desert. They signed the lease on the prime location just before quarantine, giving them "quality time" to design and build out the space themselves. Reclaimed wood with wine box inlays adorns the walls; wine barrels hold tabletops and bottles, and fresh flowers serve as décor throughout.

"It was a labor of love, and we had a lot of fun," says Sally on their summer spent building their new dream. "Since we had time, we did all the woodwork ourselves, refinishing wood from a friend's fence and buying wine cases and other special pieces." The City of Palm Desert was very helpful in making things work during the challenging time. "What a beautiful place to live," adds the consummate optimist. "None of us knew what to do and we were all doing the best we could. They were so generous with their guidance and resources. I have so much love and respect for this city."



Chef Sally's healthier shrimp and grits



Sand dabs on cauliflower rice

Chef Sally's motto is "simple and clean," and her enthusiasm, love and creativity go into her dishes. Lunch offers a variety of colorful starters, salads, sandwiches and a build-your-own pasta selection; main courses are available after 5 p.m. Sizzling garlic shrimp and grilled artichoke stand out as the healthiest starters, while the eggplant cigars (deep fried with sausage, goat cheese and tomato basil sauce) are a tasty splurge.

Salads come in two sizes, large or small, with the option to add grilled or blackened salmon, grilled shrimp, marinated flank steak or grilled chicken. I love the roasted beet and quinoa salad uniquely seasoned with mint and pistachios. Ingredients are locally sourced when possible but not organic to keep prices reasonable, which they are.

Gluten-free and missing sandwiches? *Sweet Basil* serves theirs on grilled naan bread with the option of a cauliflower crust version. The alluring selection includes grilled portabella mushroom, Tuscan tuna and chipotle and maple pork tenderloin, to name a few.



Chef Sally, Martin and family

Valley diners have been supportive and Sally says she feels blessed to be doing better in their first year than they ever thought possible. Put *Sweet Basil California Eatery* on your list of local restaurants to support, enjoy and return again.

*Sweet Basil California Eatery* is located at 73655 El Paseo and is open Wednesday - Sunday for lunch 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. and dinner from 5 p.m. - 9 p.m. Reservations are recommended by calling (760) 610.1698. Full menu is available online at [www.sweetbasilpd.com](http://www.sweetbasilpd.com).

## Eat, Drink and Be Healthy

Substitutes you'll savor by Lauren Del Sarto

### Healthier Pastas (Even Nonni Might Enjoy!)

Who doesn't love pasta? If you grew up in an Italian family, preparing and eating a hearty plate of spaghetti warms your heart like a big kiss from Nonni.

But for those who have chosen a gluten- or grain-free lifestyle, eating pasta can send your stomach spiraling. While many gluten-free options are available, those made from corn or rice aren't really healthy alternatives, and zoodles don't deliver that satisfying pasta love.

Fortunately, the veggie pasta market is growing with texture, taste, "twirlability" and significantly more nutritional benefits. It's fun to try different styles and brands, but check labels for additives and try to stick with those that are 100 percent veggies.

Here are some brands we prefer for texture and taste with the pros and cons of each and two stand-out winners:

**Ancient Harvest Veggie Pasta** (penne, rotini and spaghetti). Made with four simple ingredients - green lentils, tapioca starch, kale, cauliflower, and spinach - this tasty alternative delivers 12 grams of protein with only 2 grams

of sugar (no added sugar), but packs 36 grams of carbs per serving. There are four servings per box, but we tend to split a box, so that's 72 carbs, which doesn't work for a low-carb lifestyle. Be sure to look for their veggie line as there are others.

**Cybele's Free to Eat Superbfood** (penne, rotini, shells and elbows). These 100

percent veggie pastas come in festive flavors like red lentils, pumpkin and butternut squash and green lentils, cauliflower and parsnips, and no other ingredients. Don't worry, the flavor doesn't override your favorite sauce, but again, each 2-ounce serving (1/4 box) delivers 35 grams of carbs, and you're gonna want more!

The newest to join the category? Hearts of palm pasta from **Palmini** and **Natural Heaven**. They are exceptional, boast many health benefits, and are LOW-CARB with only 4 grams of carbs per serving (great for Keto). Both brands are sustainably grown and harvested from rapidly regenerating peach palms (unlike palm oil which is destroying our rain forests) and are pre-cooked, so you simply heat them in your favorite sauce.

We prefer **Natural Heaven** as it contains only one ingredient: hearts of palm, has zero sugar and comes in lasagna, spaghetti or angel hair with nice twirlability. **Palmini** also contains sea salt and citric acid with 1gram of sugar. **Natural Heaven** is pouched and boxed while **Palmini** is canned (a bit odd for pasta) or pouched, as shown here.

Because it's low-carb - and to make Nonni proud, you may be enticed to eat the entire container, but beware; when combined with veggie toppings, it can deliver a powerful punch of fiber. We learned the hard way and now split a box.

Have fun exploring the world of veggie pastas and share your healthy recipes with us at [www.DesertHealthNews.com](http://www.DesertHealthNews.com) (search 'pasta' for this article). Mangia!

*Desert Health does not receive compensation for any product promoted in this column. Find more healthy alternatives to your favorite foods and drinks at [www.DesertHealthNews.com](http://www.DesertHealthNews.com).*



Plant-based low-carb spaghetti and vegan meat balls topped with pecorino romano (goat) cheese



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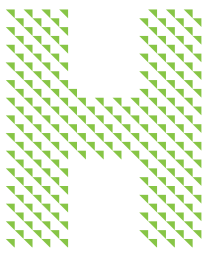
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## Going to the Chapel with PMS (Personal Money Symptoms, that is)

By Michele T. Sarna, CFP®, AIF®

Marriage is an exciting time in one's life. Planning for a wedding entails a lot of time and effort, regardless of the size of the celebration. Nowadays, there are many layers to consider when contemplating those nuptials. Where will you live? Do you want kids? Are you marrying into an instant family?

Ask yourself if your significant other is aware of your PMS. Bringing your personal money symptoms to the relationship may not have made the discussion list.

Not all partners see eye to eye when it comes to money. What association with money do you and your partner bring to the relationship? Everyone has a way they view and feel about money, which may have been molded from their childhood, influenced by their parents, or unconsciously despised due to life events, whether good or bad.

Odds are, you both have different views on money even if you grew up in similar environments.

**Start the conversation.** Like inquiring about past romances, ask if there is a memorable event dealing with money or finances. How did their parents handle money? What does money mean to them?

**Empathize.** Our personalities don't evolve overnight, nor does our relationship with money. Be empathetic of the other's feelings and potential reactions to money situations. Do they count every penny or spend freely? Try not to judge one another on reactions to monetary events. Work on ways to understand each other and discuss spending habits without blaming.

**Stay the course.** Plan to be impulsive. Create a spending plan to allow for the other's traits to be incorporated without overspending or over-denying. Schedule ongoing monthly finance meetings with each other to discuss what purchases or savings goals you want to achieve that month. Include long-term financial goals and check on the progress of reaching those goals. Scheduling a meeting with each other will help subside emotions and reactions resulting in a productive, loving conversation.

**Learn from one another.** Pick a positive action of the other and try to emulate that action for a day, week, month or longer.

**The big picture.** There will be financial obstacles along the way, but if you remain united and understand where each of you is coming from, you will reach a consensus on how to handle these challenges.

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

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## Dr. Amy's Inaugural Children's Book

### The Adventures of Shaina and Chuckles

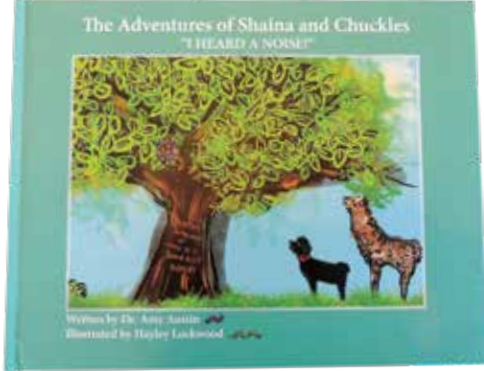
#### "I Heard a Noise!"

Review by Doris Steadman, MEd, MSW

Desert Health contributor Amy Austin, RN, PsyD, LMFT has published a warm and educational children's book based on real characters from her own life. The book tells the story of Shaina, a striking black poodle, and her best friend Chuckles, a llama. The unlikely pair were actual friends and Shaina, a beloved pet of Dr. Amy's.

"The book stresses the importance of performing random acts of kindness with the storyline about hearing a distressing noise and being willing to help and perform that act of kindness," says Dr. Amy. The story is timely as we come out of quarantine and begin to interact once again.

Children will enjoy the adventure of following the noise and discovering what happens next. The joy Shaina experiences when she is able to get help for "the little one making the noise" is well portrayed in the book. The message that it is ok to get someone to help in an emergency is very clear and told in a gentle way throughout the story. The text is written with periodic rhyming and rhythm, which children will enjoy while listening.



The illustrations are whimsical and will keep children interested in trying to find the source of the noise. As each page is filled with a variety of little critters, children will find new things to point out each time they read or hear the story.

The end of the book has questions and suggestions for the adult reader to help children understand and prepare for any possible emergency situation, such as who to call if someone is in need. If the child is an early reader, it is important for someone older to help guide the follow-up questions and discussion.

The illustrator, Hayley Lockwood, has given children the gift of art through her illustrations which follow the story, yet enlarge the environment with farm animals and countryside scenery.

Dr. Amy has written a book that will not only help children, but will also help families develop a way to cope with unexpected situations. I believe this story would be an asset to have at home as well as in the early childhood environment. It is a cute story with a good and important message.

Desert Health Editor and Event Manager Doris Steadman is a retired elementary school counselor with two master's degrees in early childhood development. She was also the manager of the children's book department at Barnes & Noble in Palm Desert. To purchase The Adventures of Shaina and Chuckles "I Heard a Noise!" (Maxim Publishers, 2021) contact Dr. Amy at [ugohashem@aol.com](mailto:ugohashem@aol.com) or (760) 774.0047.

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**Living Wellness**

with **Jennifer Di Francesco**



**Trusting the Flow**

As we arrive in the moment and witness what is set before us, we choose how to relate while stepping into empowerment. We inadvertently toggle back and forth between judgments, such as assessing things as good or bad and comparing experiences, people or situations while trying to fix perceived problems.

Embedded in our culture and our way of relating to the world is the judging, comparing and fixing mind. Incessantly we do this even when there is no need to compare, fix or judge. If we entered into experiences accepting what is there as it exists, we might invite mystery. By navigating waters, we find ourselves aligned with what serves us without trying to create an identity. There is no need to demand life to be other than what it is.

When we find ourselves comparing, fixing or judging, we are in a reactive mind and are thereby defined by this fixation. Our choices become limited as we control and manipulate situations. While living in a world of duality, we resemble a puppet on a string dancing back and forth to music consisting of comparisons, judgments and "fix it" challenges.

Moving into a state of grace, having more questions and not demanding answers, allows us to cherish our beginner's mind. A wise personal statement that can be repeated internally when presented with a life situation is "Ah, this moment is like this," and then when another situation appears, "Ah-ha, and this moment is like this." Moving into one experience and then another while reaffirming how those experiences are just as they are is a "wise view."

Out of the three: judging, comparing or fixing, ask yourself what is your primary and secondary tendency? These tendencies are part of your "inner committee," just as we sit on task forces that have members of a committee. We have many committee members that hide within us; some are reactive, and some are responsive. By learning to hold the power and mystery of liminal space, we let go of our roles and witness the potential waiting to unfold. The word liminal comes from the Latin root "limen," which means threshold. It marks a time that is waiting to be known.

For the past year, many of us have experienced liminal space. We have also found that all our efforts to fix, judge and compare have proven to be futile. Embracing liminal space is an invitation to surrender. Transformation happens when we are not in charge.

A beautiful poem called "The Real Work" by Wendell Berry unfolds with the words, "It may be that when we no longer know what to do, we have come to our real work." Let's begin to trust the flow and evolution of our life path and know that something incredible is waiting to be known.

*Jennifer Di Francesco is a wellness explorer and desert adventurer and can be reached at zenjenzen@aol.com.*

**COVID Dreams, Pets and Peace of Mind**

By **Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos**

"Dreams tell us many an unpleasant biological truth about ourselves, and only very free minds can thrive on such a diet." – **Sigmund Freud, Dream Psychology**

Freud viewed dreams as attempts by the unconscious to resolve conflicts through dream-work.<sup>1,2</sup> Dreams are often a microcosm of our waking world. Dream-work may prepare us for the future. President Abraham Lincoln dreamed of his death. Three days later, he was assassinated.<sup>3</sup>

What is the purpose of a bad dream? Can we dream of a parent's health or even for our pet?

My publicist's email during COVID was brief: Someone named Carla wants to speak with you about her cancer dreams. And I'm forwarding an email from a woman named Amy. She's dreaming about her cancer – and that of her dog.

The two women had missed their annual mammograms. Amy became a guest on my video podcast, Dreaming Healing, where she explained that the voices she heard specifically said the word cancer. "My vivid dreams felt so real; they really shook me up! They contained monks dressed in red robes who pointed at me and said, 'metastatic breast cancer.' Pink smoke filled my breast area."

During another dream, Amy's beloved dog Rocky said, "Mommy, I'm very sick with leukemia." A veterinarian confirmed Rocky's cancer. Rocky's death motivated Amy to follow through on her health dreams; she got a mammogram, despite limited patient appointments.

Carla stated that during recurrent cancer dreams, she heard her name called.

Saying you hear voices can be tricky. Saint Joan of Arc was burned the stake for her voices and dreams.<sup>4</sup> But voices can save lives. Thirty authors in the book *Dreams That Can Save Your Life* believed their voices and dreams motivated them to seek medical testing. Reports

confirmed their dire dreams, but they lived to write their stories.<sup>5</sup>

In Chapter 8, Paulette Wyssbrod-Goltz wrote, "The voice in the dream said, 'Your mother has cancer, she has three months to live, and you have a tumor in your right breast.'" Her dream came true.



*Dreams that predict medical conditions can lead us to positive action.*

Carla and Amy both asked what they should do about their dreams. "Consult your doctor," I said. "Ask for tests to prove or disprove them, and don't take 'no' for an answer."

Fortunately, they both received negative test results for cancer. So, what were their dreams' purposes? Perhaps they were about the future or were healing dreams. The pink smoke (for breast cancer) could be dream therapy.

Why did Rocky tell Amy he was sick if he was going to die anyhow? Perhaps Rocky prepared his mom for his death.

If dreams are a microcosm of our waking world, it is possible that hourly news statistics on COVID deaths affect our dreams. And maybe this helped push both Amy and Carla to get tested for peace of mind.

During the waking nightmare of a worldwide pandemic, peace of mind is a prized possession.

*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. For more information or to view her podcast, visit [www.KathleenOkeefeKanavos.com](http://www.KathleenOkeefeKanavos.com).*

Resources: 1) [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/426077.Dream\\_Psychology](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/426077.Dream_Psychology); 2) <https://www.freud.org.uk/education/resources/the-interpretation-of-dreams/the-dream-work/>; 3) <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/lincoln-dreams-about-a-presidential-assassination>; 4) <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-ages/saint-joan-of-arc>; 5) <https://www.simonandschuster.com/authors/Kathleen-O-Keefe-Kanavos/138916078>



## 7 Tips to Increase Your Positivity

By Susan Murphy, PhD

You become what you think about. Throughout history, philosophers, historians and even poets have written about the power of the mind. Your thoughts become your reality.

Norman Vincent Peete said, "Change your thoughts, and you change your life. If you think in negative thoughts, you will get negative results; if you think in positive terms, you will achieve positive results. In three words, 'believe and succeed.'" William James wrote, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind. If you wish to be rich, you will be rich. If you wish to be learned, you will be learned. If you wish to be good, you will be good."

Thinking helps you plan, make decisions and imagine your future; however, negative thinking can lead to stress, depression and paranoia. Negative thoughts drain energy and keep you from living in the present moment.

If left unchecked, negative thoughts become stronger and more powerful in their hold on you. If your thoughts are confused and full of fear and doubts, your life becomes full of fear, anxiety and doubts. Most fears are learned. The only fears you are born with are fear of loud noises, fear of bright lights and fear of falling.

The antidote to fear is love, self-love, self-respect, and courage. Some good news is the discovery of neuroplasticity – which is the ability of the brain to change its physical structure and function based on input from your experiences, behaviors, emotions, and thoughts. This adaptation means that with awareness and action, you can change your negative thinking patterns.

### Develop a positive mental attitude

Make a commitment to remain positive and to being a positive force for others. One of my lifetime goals is to have everyone who meets me – in person or remotely – feel better about themselves, their abilities and their circumstances. Annually, choose a word to guide your daily life. This year I chose "hope." My 2021 plan includes spreading HOPE through my thoughts, words and deeds.

### Surround yourself with positive people

"You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with," says business expert Jim Rohn. Some people are naturally negative and view life as a glass-half-empty. It can seem like they spew carbon monoxide! Limit your time with them. Then replace their negative influence on your thinking with people whose glass is half-full. If you cannot seem to stop your negativity, contact one of these special people to help you gain a more positive perspective.

**Limit exposure to violent news, crime-ridden TV and movies, politics and negative social media posts**

Garbage in, garbage out. If you want to have positive thoughts, feed your mind positive images and uplifting stories. Choose wisely.

### Create a plan to implement when tempted by negative thoughts

Develop a plan to recognize negative thoughts. Implement it as soon as you find you are thinking negatively. When you catch yourself tempted by negativity, say, "Cancel!" Hold your chin up, take a deep breath, and flip your thoughts to something positive. An example of planning ahead is Olympic swimming champion Michael Phelps. Phelps used his plan during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. In his quest for his eighth gold medal, his goggles filled with water when he dove into the pool to start the race. Virtually blind, Phelps activated his plan and started counting his strokes. He knew exactly how many strokes he needed to get to the other end of the pool. He remained calm, focused and won the gold medal. No negative thinking allowed!

### Sing, dance, do yoga or take a walk outside

The act of moving can help you think positively by activating endorphins which are like morphine. Movement can reduce stress, improve sleep, diminish the perception of pain, boost self-esteem and decrease depression. So, turn on your favorite music and enjoy moving to the beat.

### Develop an attitude of gratitude

Being filled with gratitude for people and things in your life can turn negative thoughts into positive ones. It can bring you into the present and fill your heart with appreciation. Think of five people and things for which you are grateful right now.

### Seek professional help

Life is short, and you deserve to live your life to the fullest. If your negative thinking continues, consider professional help for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. CBT helps people learn how to identify and change destructive thought patterns that have a negative influence on behavior and emotions.

"Forces beyond your control can take everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond." – Viktor Frankl, neurologist, philosopher, Holocaust survivor

Starting today, you can choose to respond positively! Will you?

Dr. Susan Murphy of Rancho Mirage is a best-selling author, business consultant and speaker specializing in relationships, conflict, leadership and goal-achievement. She is co-author of LifeQ and In The Company of Women and can be reached at Susan@DrSusanMurphy.com. Murphy's article originally appeared on Forbes.com.



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