

Moving Through Life

Finding the Pleasure in Exercise

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We're busier than ever with longer workdays, less leisure time, shorter lunch hours, longer commutes, and more demands than ever before. We may even be in a job that doesn't fulfill us, yet we spend most of our time there. When the day ends, we have almost no energy left to do what we enjoy. How to find a healthy balance?

Plenty has been written about the therapeutic benefits of exercise. So, why aren't more people reaping those benefits and moving toward health and well-being? We need to reexamine our notion of what exercise and movement are and consider what we're moving toward or away from. Then we can begin to ask ourselves other questions: Not

reoriented our point of view to notice where the opportunities lie? We can begin by simply redefining exercise (with its sometimes negative connotation of obligation) to movement. Already opportunities arise: How do we want to move in our bodies and in our lives? How can we have fun doing that? How can we move more (or maybe less, if we need to slow down)? How does it feel to be still? How can we make time to move into pleasure, to move with pleasure? Already, the notion of movement takes on a more healing expression. Rather than simply being another item on our to do list, it becomes a way for us to examine our lives, to see where we can move toward health, and use physical activity as a way to support this.



Pleasurable movement is motivating, connects you with your body, and comes in many forms.

just are we fit, but are we physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy? Are we happy? Do we enjoy how we're moving through life? How can we integrate more healing movement into our days?

Exercise as "Medicine"

We sometimes see more barriers than options to exercise. But what if we

"When most people think of medicine, they visualize something material like a pill to be popped, a liquid to be swallowed, or an injection to be endured," writes Carol Krucoff, author of "Healing Moves: How to Cure, Relieve, and Prevent Common Ailments with Exercise" (Harmony Books, 2000).

Continued on page 2

"Become the change you seek in the world"

-Mahatma Ghandi

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In this Issue

Moving Through Life
Healthy Holidays
The Scoop on Meditation

Continued from page 1

"Some might also consider surgery, tests, or procedures ... [But] simple physical activity can have profound healing effects."

Krucoff, who cowrote the book with her husband, Mitchell, a Duke University cardiologist, advocates movement as preventive medicine, saying it's an ideal way to combat the increasing number of inactivity-related health conditions such as heart disease and obesity. This could actually be expanded to include stress-related conditions. In fact, it's often this combination of inactivity and increased stress that wreaks havoc on our immune system, endocrine system, and circulatory system. Every system in our body, in fact, responds to stress and inactivity. But, if this is true, then the inverse is also true: every system in our bodies will also respond to movement and pleasure. To make movement pleasurable and to use it as a way to reconnect with our bodies is, in many ways, the perfect antidote to the cycle of inactivity/hyperactivity and stress. As we move more in this way, we gain energy and health, we feel rejuvenated and relaxed, and we become more physically and emotionally aware.

Emotional Fitness

We often focus on physical fitness, but any movement toward health must also include emotional and spiritual fitness. Psychologist Nancy Mramor, PhD, author of "Spiritual Fitness" (Llewellyn Publications, 2004), ties emotional fitness with our physical health and with our heart's expression. "There is evidence that the largest number of heart attacks occurs on Monday morning between 8 and 9 a.m.," she says. "This occurrence is related to the experience called joyless striving. It applies to feelings of having to force yourself to go to a job that you have no interest in, or even truly dislike. Clearly these feelings suggest a lack of emotional fitness in the match between the employee and the job." When we're emotionally connected to our work in a healthy way and to one another, we not only survive, we thrive.

Personal Health

Interpersonal relationships, in fact, are one of the three major causes of life stress, along with environmental events/conditions and personal attitudes and beliefs. In his book, "Love and

Survival" (Harper Collins, 1998), renowned physician Dean Ornish, who first proved that heart disease was reversible through lifestyle changes, says that in order to survive, we need not only care for our lives, but the lives of others. Individuals with supportive relationships get sick less, heal faster, and live longer.

Our health and well-being are not about being hyper-active or inactive. They're about finding a balance, making our actions conscious, and learning to move in ways that are both healthy and appropriate in our own lives, then moving this healing energy out toward others. So, rather than exhausting or limiting our energy, we learn to expand it. Then we can begin exercising in a whole new way--exercising our right to choose and to better understand our body, our life, and what we want to be doing with it.

Begin by checking in with yourself as you're moving through your day: How does your body feel right now? How are you breathing? Where is this movement taking you? Do you feel good? Are you satisfied? Are you happy? If not, then change something. Change how you're moving, where you're moving toward, or look at what you're moving away from.

"Become the change you seek in the world," Mahatma Ghandi said. This isn't about a temporary quick fix to end a bad habit, lose some weight, or fill our time. This is about long-term change--making more conscious use of our time and of our life. It's about moving through life in healthy and healing ways, and expanding our idea of who we can be. Then our view of the world widens, our heart grows, our spirit soars, and our body moves toward true change. This is the healing power of movement.



Enjoyable exercise boosts physical health as well as emotional well being.

Healthy Holidays

Five Tips for the Natural Traveler

Planning a vacation or business trip? Consider packing a small kit of natural remedies before you go. Unfamiliar surroundings, unusual foods, and jet lag can make you vulnerable to viruses, stress, and gastrointestinal (GI) upset. Colorado Naturopathic Physician Michael Sutton suggests the following items:

1. GRAPEFRUIT SEED EXTRACT

This extract fights and prevents viruses and helps reduce symptoms of diarrhea and GI upset. It can even be used to decontaminate water (4-5 drops extract per quart of water). A few days before you leave, mix 4-5 drops with juice or water and drink it before bedtime, and continue for the duration of your trip. If you do catch a cold or flu, you can drink as much as 8-10 drops, 3-4 times a day.

2. AIRBORNE

Available in natural products stores, Airborne is an effervescent tablet containing herbs, antioxidants, vitamin C, and amino acids. It helps prevent and

fight colds, as well as motion sickness, when traveling.

3. MELATONIN

To ease jet lag, Sutton suggests leaving your watch set for the time zone from which you're departing. When your watch shows your normal bedtime, take 3-6mg of melatonin, then go to sleep to regulate yourself quickly and easily to the new time zone.

4. BACH FLOWER RESCUE REMEDY

To calm nerves and reduce anxiety, place a few drops of this remedy under your tongue when you're feeling anxious, or add 5-6 drops to your water bottle and drink throughout the day.

5. WATER

H₂O is essential to healthy travel. Drink lots of water and avoid alcohol, as dehydration is a major cause of travel-related illness.

By packing a few natural remedies and paying attention to your body's needs, you'll be able to fully enjoy your trip.



Staying healthy is key to a good vacation.

The Scoop on Meditation

A Simple Practice with Profound Benefits

People who meditate regularly appear internally and externally five to 10 years younger than their non-meditating peers, according to author Deepak Chopra. That's good news for the estimated 10 million people who practice meditation on an ongoing basis and experience the resulting calm it cultivates.

The rich benefits come from doing something that looks like nothing: Sitting still, being quiet, and breathing deeply. Meditation works simply but profoundly by defusing the onslaughts of life -- a racing mind, busyness, deadlines, commutes, all of which have physiological effects on well-being. Meditation calms the nervous system, decreases metabolic rate, heart rate, and

blood pressure, and lowers levels of cholesterol, stress hormones, and free radicals. It also has a direct effect on breathing, slowing and deepening respiration so more oxygen circulates throughout the body. Not only that, meditation is said to lessen feelings of anxiety and depression and improve memory and concentration. And all of this culminates in slowing the aging process, as Chopra notes.

There are many meditation techniques, including focusing on a mantra, a sacred word or phrase, or your breath. But the basic intent of all meditation is focus and attention. And it doesn't take hours a day in an ashram to meditate effectively. Benefits kick in with even a short period of devoted time.

How to begin? Wear comfortable, unrestrictive clothes, sit on a cushion or chair with your back straight (think once again, comfort), rest your hands on your legs, let your eyes go soft and out of focus or close them, breathe slowly and deeply, and -- the hardest part -- attempt to empty your mind of thoughts and quiet the internal dialogue. When thoughts flit through your mind, let them pass without judging them and come back to your focus (your mantra, counting, etc.) and breathing.

Start with this sitting meditation technique for five minutes a day, and add on time as you get more at ease with the process. For more information on techniques and benefits, check out www.abc-of-meditation.com.

*"Expansion of
happiness is the
purpose of life"*

*– Maharishi
Mahesh Yogi*

Best Wishes for a Joyous and Peaceful Holiday Season!

This edition's special: \$50 Gift Certificates for 1-hour therapeutic massage (\$65 value). Massage makes a wonderful gift! Yes, you can give yourself the gift of massage too, absolutely!

Joy and Light,
Christine

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