

September/October 2017

# The art of growing young<sup>®</sup>

**Water:** Humanity's Most  
Vital Natural Resource

Feature article



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Life Are Free

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Wonderful Sense  
of Smell

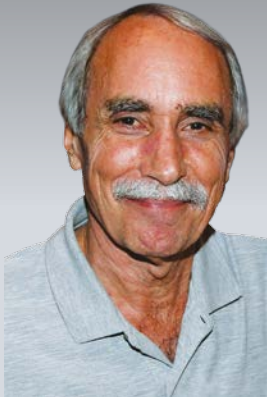
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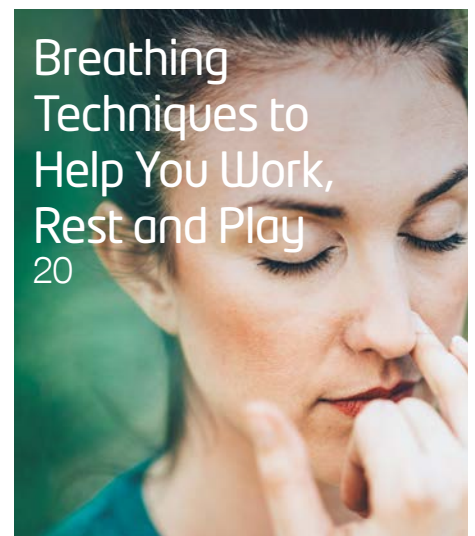
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# Letting Go in the Information Era

We live in the Information Era. Constant internet access and 24-hour cable TV allow us access to more information than anyone has ever had. In many ways, this is good. We are more informed and can stay current with the latest findings in health and wellness. We can take these findings and apply them to our own lives at a faster rate than ever before.

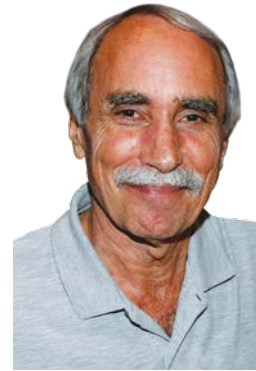
However, getting too much information too quickly can also be overwhelming and distracting. I know I'm not alone in thinking that sometimes it feels like the big nutritional news of yesterday has been completely upturned today. Even long-standing "facts" are changing now. And reporters are able to tell us about those changes in real time. For example, how long were we told fat was something to be completely avoided in our diets? Recent research has shown that, decades ago, well-intentioned doctors were wrong about fat, and many of the problems thought to be from dietary fat were very likely due to the unprecedented levels of refined sugars in Western diets. Despite what we were told as children, we now understand that we need high-quality fats in our diets to be healthy.

It's good to stay current, but allow yourself the freedom to let go sometimes. Trying to incorporate every single new piece of information into your life is impossible. It's also not necessary in order to be healthy. Rest easy knowing that much of the latest information in nutritional science is really validating the basic concepts that we have long believed to be true: a healthy lifestyle

incorporates a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, regular physical activity, stress reduction activities, a good support network, and a positive outlook.

The very specific details of what each of these aspects means may change, but by following your heart and using common sense, you can let go of the need to stay informed up to the second and let your positive focus guide you.

I'm not saying you should stop trying to learn about your health. Rather I am saying that I understand how busy we all are, and the onslaught of information can overtake your life. Put down your smartphone, close your laptop, turn off the television, and live in the moment with your friends and family. News and media can be addicting. For a truly healthy and happy life, focus on your loved ones and the health you have.



*Dwight L. McKee M.D.*

Dwight L. McKee  
Scientific Director

# Nutritional News

## Reduce Your Blood Sugar

Diabetics may find broccoli helps control their blood sugar levels. In a recent study, a compound in broccoli called sulforaphane was shown to help reduce blood sugar levels. Participants who took sulforaphane supplements for three months saw their blood glucose reduce by 10 percent. Sulforaphane is also a powerful protector in reducing the risk of multiple forms of cancer. In addition, if you cut up your fresh broccoli (or any cruciferous vegetable, such as cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts or watercress) and let a few hours pass before either eating it raw or cooking it, an enzyme called myrosinase is released, which increases the production of sulforaphane within the vegetable. If you are cooking frozen versions of any of these members of the cruciferous vegetable family, the myrosinase enzyme is deactivated by the blanching process done prior to freezing. However, you can easily reintroduce the myrosinase enzyme to work its magic by producing more sulforaphane by sprinkling the vegetables with dried mustard seed powder, a rich source of active myrosinase enzyme, prior to cooking.



## Is Your Phone Causing Back Pain?

There is a new epidemic of back pain being caused by cell phones. People tend to hunch their shoulders and lean forward when using their smartphones to send messages or read emails. Avoid bad posture by holding your phone at eye level, and remain conscious of your posture when texting or surfing the net on a smartphone.

## Physical Activity Can Stave Off Dementia

Protect your brain in 30 years by getting off the couch today. Physical activity helps protect cognitive function. This is a fact scientists have known for some time. Recent research has uncovered a strong link between engaging in regular physical activity when you are young and staving off dementia decades later. In the study, participants who spent the most time on the couch, watching television, experienced nearly two times the risk of dementia later in life than did those who were more active. A healthy lifestyle today doesn't just benefit you tomorrow. It will also help protect you for decades to come.

## Maintain a Good Work/Life Balance

Reduce your risk of stroke by leaving the office at a decent hour. According to a study of over 600,000 adults from Europe, the United States and Australia, people who work long hours have a higher risk of stroke than do people who maintain a better work/life balance by leaving the office on time. Long hours was considered anything over 55 hours per week. Working fewer than 40 hours per week was associated with a reduced incidence of stroke and heart disease.

## Protect Your Heart

If you can spare 10 minutes, you can protect your heart. Researchers followed more than 50,000 adults to track the health benefits of running. After 15 years of results, the researchers concluded that runners experienced a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease regardless of distance, duration and speed. Better still for those of us living busy lifestyles, the study revealed that running just five to 10 minutes per day was enough to experience the benefits.



## Eat More Spinach

Leafy greens may help with weight control, according to new research. A new study from the American College of Nutrition found that a specific compound in spinach helps suppress appetite. Looking specifically at one compound in spinach called thylakoid, researchers found consuming just 5 g of thylakoids from spinach increased appetite satisfaction measured subjectively over two hours. The feelings of satisfaction were accompanied by a greater increase in the after-dinner blood sugar response. These results suggest eating a spinach salad as your first course at any meal could help reduce the amount you eat, thereby helping control weight.



# The Green-Fingered Workout

There's a new, popular workout that improves your body and your environment. Actually, you may have been doing it for years without knowing it. It's called the green-fingered workout, and all it involves is gardening.

The green-fingered workout is more than just standing with a hose while watering the flowers. Weeding, digging, hoeing, raking, mowing, planting—these gardening activities involve endurance, flexibility and strengthening movements.

The movements and actions used in gardening and yard work contribute to healthy lifestyles. It's possible to burn 300 calories an hour just by gardening. Plus, you are improving your surroundings by doing it—a benefit that's just not possible when you work out at the gym.

When done regularly, gardening and landscaping can help lower blood pressure; reduce unhealthy cholesterol levels; and lower the risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, depression and osteoporosis. Tending to a garden can work all major muscle groups, including in the legs, arms, buttocks, stomach, neck and back.

Digging up soil, setting plants, weeding, pruning, mowing, carrying water, harvesting fruit and even walking around the yard to examine plants can boost heart rate and tone the body.



Even your brain receives a workout when you plan your garden and mentally configure your green spaces.<sup>1</sup>

Maximize your green-fingered workout by gardening with purpose. Mowing the lawn with a push mower will burn far more calories than when sitting on top of a riding mower. One session of push mowing can burn 300 calories or more. Using an old-fashioned, unpowered push mower can burn almost 475 calories per hour! Other yard work, such as raking or pruning, can burn nearly 200 calories per hour. Other simple tasks, such as planting and weeding, can burn up to 200 calories an hour.<sup>2</sup>

Planting moderately sized shrubs and trees provides a whole-body workout that burns 270 calories per hour for women and 354 per hour for men.



Maintenance care after planting, such as trimming and pruning, also keeps us in shape by working the muscles in the hands, forearms, shoulders and upper back.

<sup>1</sup> Tilley, Nikki. "Garden for Health—Benefits of Gardening Exercise." Gardening Know How. N.p., 25 Jan. 2017. Web. 22 June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Tilley, Nikki. "Garden for Health—Benefits of Gardening Exercise." Gardening Know How. N.p., 25 Jan. 2017. Web. 22 June 2017.



Less physically intense garden activities, such as weeding, provide the legs, hips, buttocks and hamstrings with a moderate workout. Physically weeding your garden instead of using herbicides also helps prevent accidental food contamination from chemicals.

Raking the yard may seem like an exhausting activity, but it provides a moderate-to-light workout of the arms, shoulders, back, hamstrings and buttocks. It's possible to burn just over 300 calories per hour by raking leaves or other debris.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Rindels, Sherry. "Gardening for Exercise." Horticulture and Home Pest News. Ohio State University, n.d. Web. 22 June 2017.



Gardening can do more than just burn calories. Stretching for tall branches and bending (with proper posture) to weed can improve flexibility and balance. Lifting bags of mulch and pushing wheelbarrows of dirt provide resistance training similar to weight lifting.

These actions lead to healthier bones and joints. The green-fingered workout provides minimal jarring and stress on the joints, unlike aerobics or jogging.

Still not convinced that the green-fingered workout is a real thing? The National Institutes of Health lists 30 to 45 minutes of gardening among its recommended activities to combat obesity. The list puts gardening for this amount of time on par with biking five miles or walking two miles.



The green-fingered workout also helps with mood and stress. Creating a green sanctuary in your backyard provides a comforting environment to relax in after a long day of stress at the office. Immersing yourself in nature—especially a well-landscaped setting you created—is a natural relaxer that can help boost feel-good chemical levels.

The green-fingered workout is a great way to enjoy nature with the whole family while strengthening and toning your body. When performed on a regular basis, this workout will provide your whole family not just a healthy garden but also healthier bodies.

# Water: Humanity's Most Vital Natural Resource

Every plant and every animal on Earth needs water to live. Despite water's importance, it is one of the most undervalued resources on Earth. Population growth, economic development and unsustainable practices are putting pressure on our available freshwater resources. There are many life-changing reasons to protect our world's drinking water supply not only for ourselves but also for our children's children.





About 75 percent of all muscle tissue is composed of water. Even fatty tissue has water in it—roughly 10 percent. Water is in every cell, helping transport oxygen and nutrients while removing waste.<sup>1</sup> Water keeps “wet” areas of the body moist, such as the eyes, mouth and nose. Without water in your eyes, the simple act of blinking would be very uncomfortable. Water helps protect organs and tissues, aids in digestion and elimination, regulates body temperature, lubricates joints, helps protect the kidneys, and does a whole lot more.<sup>2,3</sup>

When it comes to how much water a person should drink, there are several schools of thought. The most popular of these is the 8x8 recommendation—that is, a person should drink eight eight-ounce glasses (64 ounces total, or two quarts) of water every day. This number serves as a baseline. People who exercise frequently or live in high-temperature areas should drink more because they will lose more water through sweating.

You may wonder why 8x8 is so important. Why can't I just drink when I am thirsty?

The reason is that by the time your body signals a need for water with thirst, you have already lost about 1 percent of your total water volume.

This percentage can be even higher in seniors because as we age, it takes longer for the body to signal thirst.

Mild dehydration is a major contributor to headaches, fatigue and irritability. Research says dehydration can affect mood, concentration and cognition. Some observational studies indicate that water deprivation can serve as a trigger for prolonged migraines. Once a dehydration headache sets in, restoring water levels in the body may not be enough to stop the migraine.<sup>4</sup>

Although water deprivation and dehydration have long been known to compromise physical performance, the latest studies are showing that even mild dehydration is enough to impact physical abilities.<sup>5</sup>

Without adequate water intake, a hardworking body is not able to cool itself efficiently, which can lead to heat exhaustion and, more seriously, heatstroke.

During physically challenging events, it is possible to lose up to 6–10 percent of body weight through sweat.<sup>6</sup> Without an adequate supply of water replenishing what is lost, the body will lack energy and muscles may develop cramps. To prevent dehydration, exercisers must drink before, during and after workouts.<sup>7</sup>

Mild dehydration produces negative alterations in alertness, short-term memory, perceptual discrimination, arithmetic ability, visuomotor tracking and psychomotor skills. Whether you are playing a game of football at the park or trying to stay alert at the office, drinking water routinely rather than waiting for thirst can help avoid these issues.

As if all those reasons were not enough to drink more water, there is one more that many people don't realize. Drinking water is an excellent tool for managing weight. We sometimes misinterpret the body's thirst signals as hunger signals, causing unnecessary snacking.

Anyone who is trying to shed a few pounds may find staying hydrated makes it far easier.

Drinking a glass of water before a meal can also help cut caloric intake.

The water in your stomach will mix with food and help you feel fuller, faster. Of course, substituting fresh, pure water (and/or herbal teas) for sodas, juices and sports drinks will also help reduce caloric intake.

Even eating water-rich foods can help control weight because they tend to look bigger, which means you need to chew them more. The longer you chew a food, the more slowly your body will absorb it. This can result in feeling fuller. Such water-rich foods include beans, oatmeal, broth-based soups, fruits and vegetables.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>1</sup> “Fit Facts. Healthy Hydration.” American Council on Exercise. 2008.

<sup>2</sup> “What Does Water Do for the Body?” New Health Guide. N.p., 11 Dec. 2013. Web. May 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Popkin, Barry M., Kristen E. D’Anci, and Irwin H. Rosenberg. “Water, Hydration and Health.” *Nutrition Reviews* 68.8 (2010): 439–458. PMC. Web. 22 June 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Popkin, Barry M., Kristen E. D’Anci, and Irwin H. Rosenberg. “Water, Hydration and Health.” *Nutrition Reviews* 68.8 (2010): 439–458. PMC. Web. 22 June 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Bliss, Rosalie. “Dehydration Affects Mood, Not Just Motor Skills.” Agricultural Resource Service. United States Department of Agriculture, n.d. Web. 22 May 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Popkin, Barry M., Kristen E. D’Anci, and Irwin H. Rosenberg. “Water, Hydration and Health.” *Nutrition Reviews* 68.8 (2010): 439–458. PMC. Web. 22 June 2017.

<sup>7</sup> “Fit Facts. Healthy Hydration.” American Council on Exercise. 2008.

<sup>8</sup> “What Does Water Do for the Body?” New Health Guide. N.p., 11 Dec. 2013. Web. May 2017.



Water also aids digestion in several ways. Water helps the body emulsify fats and binds to soluble fiber, increasing the bulk of stools, reducing transit time through the intestines and making elimination easier. Once in the digestive tract, water helps stimulate the release of motilin, gastrin, pancreatic polypeptide, vasoactive intestinal peptide and other intestinal hormones. Water also helps prevent constipation and reduces kidney and liver strain by helping flush waste products out of the body. When we don't consume enough water, the body may take water from the colon to use it elsewhere, thereby increasing the risk of constipation.<sup>9</sup>

Despite water's critical presence all over the body and the many ways it helps keep us healthy, our bodies are not capable of storing water for later use—unlike calories, which are stored as fat until we need to use the energy. Water needs to be constantly replenished. It's possible to live several weeks to months without food, depending on fat reserves, but most people can live only a few days without fresh water.<sup>10</sup>

While fresh, pure water is always the best choice for hydration, most people consume their fluids as coffee, tea, alcoholic drinks, sodas, energy drinks and sports drinks.

These liquids often have a net dehydrating effect on the body, since both caffeine and alcohol are diuretics that promote the removal of water from the bloodstream by the kidneys.

Sodas are especially bad because they also create a massive acid load in the bloodstream that depletes calcium and magnesium stores.<sup>11</sup>

Pure water comprises just two molecules of hydrogen and one molecule of oxygen. Unfortunately, much of the Earth's drinking water supply is polluted. Even treated tap water can contain trace amounts of chlorine or chloramine, other chemicals, and even pharmaceuticals that current municipal drinking water treatment plants don't yet have methods to remove. Remnants of chemicals used during the treatment process to kill bacteria can harm the beneficial bacteria in our digestive tracts and increase oxidative stress in our bodies. Even though modern treatment methods allow us access to the safest water supply in the history of civilization, from the perspective of not spreading infectious waterborne diseases, many experts still urge the use of filters to remove chemical contaminants, particularly chlorine, which is toxic to the human microbiome. A pure water supply is an essential ingredient to long-term good health for anyone of any age.

There are several filtration options readily available for consumers, ranging from complicated and expensive to simple and affordable. Some of the most common are distillation, reverse osmosis and carbon block filtration. Carbon block filtration is often the most popular and cost-effective method because it is relatively inexpensive and works well. These systems are available as pour-over devices that drain into carafes, or pieces that install on faucets. Depending on the model, they are also capable of removing lead.

No matter how you obtain your fresh, pure water, drink it from a glass or carry it in a reusable water bottle for the sake of the environment. Purchasing multiple plastic bottles of water ends up polluting our environment and making it even harder for our children to obtain fresh water. Water is a precious gift from nature. If we all work to conserve and protect our water supply, we can help ensure our children's children are able to benefit from one of humanity's greatest resources.

### Tips for increasing water intake

- Carry a water bottle everywhere you go. It can be refilled anywhere there is a faucet and act as a constant reminder to drink more.
- Eat more water-rich foods, such as beans, fruits and vegetables.
- Drink a glass of water before every meal and another one during the meal.
- Flavor water with lime wedges, cucumber slices, fruit pieces or other natural, healthy foods.
- Never wait until you are thirsty to drink. If needed, set reminders on your smartphone to drink a glass of water every few hours.
- Order water instead of soda, tea or coffee when dining out.

<sup>9</sup> "Functions of water in the body." Mayo Clinic. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, n.d. Web. 27 May 2017.

<sup>10</sup> "Fit Facts. Healthy Hydration." American Council on Exercise. 2008.

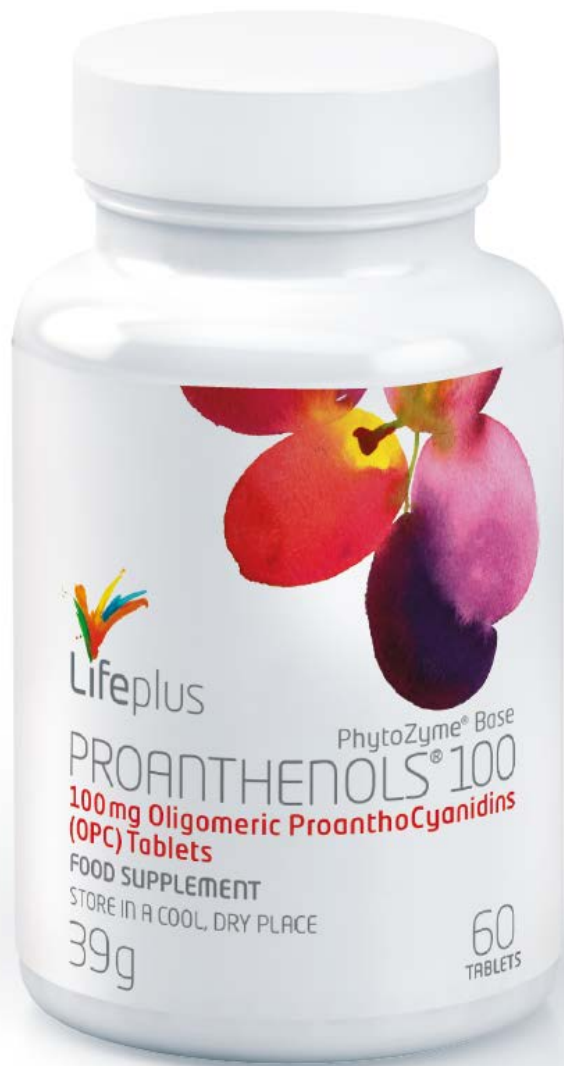
<sup>11</sup> Wyshak G, Frisch RE. "Carbonated beverages, dietary calcium, the dietary calcium/phosphorus ratio, and bone fractures in girls and boys." *J Adolescent Health*. 1994;15:210-215.

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# Harness Your Wonderful Sense of Smell

Before we are even out of the womb, our sense of smell is developed. Humans can recognize thousands of different smells, and we are able to detect specific odors even in infinitesimal amounts. Smell is the sense most linked to emotional recollection.

Perhaps we would all benefit from literally taking time to stop and smell the roses more often.

Researchers studying the link between smell and emotion set out to discover why odors can trigger strong memories. Using advanced neuroimaging techniques, they found the brain elicited the strongest emotional responses when a person was exposed to meaningful odor. Their findings showed strong neurobiological evidence that smelling a familiar scent triggers an area of the brain called the amygdala and creates powerful emotional connections to that particular odor.<sup>1</sup>



A separate study recently found that when a person inhales through his or her nose sharply, electrical activity in the human brain that enhances emotional judgments and memory recall is enhanced.

Scientists saw breathing in through the nose stimulated neurons in the olfactory cortex, amygdala and hippocampus, as well as across the limbic system.

The memory-boosting results were not replicated if participants breathed in through their mouths, which signaled to researchers that it was the sense of smell responsible for generating the surge in emotionally connected brain activity.<sup>2</sup>

In short, our brains are wired to connect smells with emotions. This may explain why catching a whiff of cut grass on the wind can conjure vivid memories of warm summer evenings as children playing in the grass, or why a person can't stand the smell of a particular food, because, one time years ago, that food gave him or her food poisoning.

Understanding the connection between odor, memory and emotion helps us better harness the wonderful sense of smell through practices such as aromatherapy. Aromatherapy uses the unique smells of essential oils to support and balance the mind, body and spirit. Aromatherapy is most often used to help improve quality of life by reducing stress, anxiety and nausea. It is often combined with other complementary treatments, such as massage therapy or acupuncture, to enhance relaxation.



With the knowledge that odor can stimulate and modulate emotion and memory, aromatherapy may be useful for more complex health issues as well. Harnessing the sense of smell can be beneficial for people dealing with psychological problems such as chronic anxiety, fear and stress.<sup>3</sup>

*Jhana* (or “concentration”) meditation is a process that combines the calming, centered aspects of meditation with the power of smell. Get comfortable as you would with any meditation practice, but instead of trying to clear your mind completely, focus on your sense of smell. Smell the air very finely until you pick up on a pleasant odor. If you smell the air just finely enough, you will find a pleasurable aroma.

<sup>1</sup> Herz RS, Eliassen J, Beland S, & Souza T. Neuroimaging evidence for the emotional potency of odor-evoked memory. *Neuropsychologia* 42 (2004), 371–378.

<sup>2</sup> Christina Zelano, Heidi Jiang, Guangyu Zhou, Nikita Arora,

et al. “Nasal Respiration Entrain Human Limbic Oscillations and Modulates Cognitive Function.” *Journal of Neuroscience*. 7 December 2016, 36(49), 12448–12467, DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.2586-16.2016.

<sup>3</sup> Kadohisa, Mikiko. “Effects of Odor on Emotion, with Implications.” *Frontiers in Systems Neuroscience* 7 (2013): 66. PMC. Web. 27 May 2017.



Allow your eyes and ears to center themselves on the tip of your nose, where your sense of smell starts.

Let your entire sensory system come to focus on your nose.

The act of meditation and the power of smell will completely engage your body and mind at a single point in conscious awareness—aroma.

Your mind and body will feel relaxed as your brain registers good memories connected to the smell. Allow yourself to sit in this feeling and enjoy each inhalation. The more you smell the air, the more pleasure you will be able to receive from the scent you found.



The ultimate goal is to cultivate the finest and most pleasurable point of smell in your conscious awareness.

Practice this for 30 minutes. The more often you are able to do this, the more quickly you will be able to get into the calm and relaxed state you are striving for. You are practicing *jhana* and harnessing the power of smell.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>"Jhana: Smell the Air." Personal Power Meditation. N.p., 26 Sept. 2015. Web. 27 May 2017.



# Effortless Ways to Grow Your Own Foods

The moment a vegetable is picked from its plant, its nutritional content begins to lessen. With that in mind, would you rather eat foods picked fresh from your own backyard or foods that have traveled hundreds of miles, only to sit on the supermarket shelf for an unknown period of time?

Growing your fruits and vegetables is a relatively easy family activity that brings everyone together while teaching important lessons about nutrition, nature and sustainability. Kids are more likely to eat homegrown veggies they have helped cultivate.

Studies show that local, organically grown food tends to have more minerals and nutrients vital for health than do their conventionally mass-grown counterparts.<sup>1</sup> They may also contain more antioxidant compounds to protect your body by helping fight free radicals.<sup>2</sup> Homegrown foods also lack pesticide and chemical residue sometimes found on foods grown on massive farms.<sup>3</sup> They may taste better as well, and not just because they are so fresh. Some varieties of fruits and vegetables have been specifically cultivated to last longer and look better in order to make them more appealing in the store after their long trip from the farm. This is often done at the expense of flavor.<sup>4</sup>

There is a good reason why so many chefs are showcasing locally grown organic foods in their recipes—they taste better. There's no reason not to gain the same benefits in your own home. You won't just experience tastier food at home; you'll also reap numerous other benefits. A backyard garden helps families get the nutrition they need from tastier and more nutritionally complete foods, helps families save money, protects the environment for future generations, prevents mass soil erosion, saves energy, keeps unwanted pesticides and chemicals out of your refrigerator, and helps keep your community green and beautiful.

If you have never grown your own food before, start simple, with a few tomato, zucchini, pepper or bean plants. These four vegetables can be grown in pots or the ground, are hearty, and produce a lot of delicious food.

Tomatoes can be raised from seeds but are also readily available as seedlings during planting season. Tomatoes will also grow indoors in front of a well-lit window. You can pot them or, if you have a yard, put them in the ground, where they will receive sun. Don't be tempted to pick the fruit too soon. Letting tomatoes fully ripen on the vine in the sun produces incredible flavor.

Zucchini or courgettes—whatever you call them, they are delicious, easy to grow and voracious producers. Be prepared to eat a lot of zucchini and still have some left over for your friends and family. Similar to tomatoes, zucchini plants are easy to grow from seeds but are also readily available as seedlings, which speeds up the process. Plant in the ground or in a container and wait for them to flourish. Zucchini flowers are also edible. They are delicious sautéed in a little bit of olive oil and seasoned with salt and pepper.



Peppers of all varieties are perfect for new gardeners because they are relatively small yet produce an ample harvest that can be collected over weeks.

Whether you enjoy hot, mild or sweet peppers, most plants grow similarly. They are perfect for pots because they don't sprawl. Peppers are best when several varieties are planted together, so your family can enjoy a colorful, healthy meal with varied tastes. Just be sure you place your pepper plants where they will receive plenty of sunlight. Peppers do not do well in shady areas.

Only slightly more complicated than the other plants, bean plants are fun for children to help with because they climb.

Children can help “teach” the plants to climb where you want them. Then they can help harvest the beans while standing—no need to squat down or dig through large leaves, looking for the edible pieces.

To complement your vegetables and spice up your meals, try planting a few herbs as well. Many herbs grow exceptionally well in kitchen windowsills. There is no tastier addition to a meal than herbs cut fresh from your own plant minutes before use. Windowsill-grown herbs also tend to be very low maintenance. The only problem you will experience is coming up with enough new and exciting recipes to take full advantage of your plants.

Once you have mastered these easy plants, plan something more exotic for next year's harvest. The options are nearly limitless—every year, family members can choose what fruits or vegetables they want to grow and then learn about the process of food production. Furthermore, children who grow up gardening often tend to be more interested in not just growing but also in eating vegetables as they get older. Backyard gardens are easy, delicious, healthy and fun for the whole family. Now is the time to start planning. Research your favorite varieties of vegetables and learn what their best growing environments are. Get prepared now so when the weather warms up, you are ready to plant your new backyard garden.

<sup>1</sup> Średnicka-Tober, Dominika, et al. “Higher PUFA and n-3 PUFA, Conjugated Linoleic Acid, α-Tocopherol and Iron, but Lower Iodine and Selenium Concentrations in Organic Milk: A Systematic Literature Review and Meta- and Redundancy Analyses.” *The British Journal of Nutrition* 115.6 (2016): 1043–1060. PMC. Web. 13 June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Barański, Marcin, et al. “Higher Antioxidant and Lower Cadmium Concentrations and Lower Incidence of Pesticide Residues in Organically Grown Crops: A Systematic Literature Review and Meta-Analyses.” *The British Journal of Nutrition* 112.5 (2014): 794–811. PMC. Web. 13 June 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Smith-Spangler C, Brandeau ML, Hunter GE, Bavinger JC, Pearson M, Eschbach PJ, et al. “Are Organic Foods Safer or Healthier Than Conventional Alternatives?: A Systematic Review.” *Ann Intern Med*. 2012;157:348–366. doi: 10.7326/0003-4819-157-5-201209040-00007.

<sup>4</sup> Charles, Dan. “How The Taste Of Tomatoes Went Bad (And Kept On Going).” NPR. NPR, 28 June 2012. Web. 13 June 2017.

# Which Type of Yoga Is for You?

The benefits of yoga are as varied as the styles you can choose from. Lower blood pressure, increased flexibility, toned muscles, improved bone density and lowered stress levels are just a few reasons to grab a mat and find a class.





But which class do you join? With so many to choose from, how do you know which style of yoga will be best for you? To help you choose, below is a list of some of the more popular styles. This is not an exhaustive list, but it highlights the differences between some of the oldest and newest forms. If nothing here sounds perfect to you, keep looking. With so many options available, you will find one that meets your needs and goals.

### Hatha

Hatha yoga is any style of yoga that involves specific postures (known as *asanas*). Sometimes it involves breathing exercises (also known by the Sanskrit term *pranayama*), which are often practiced after and sometimes along with the *asanas*. As one of the six original branches of yoga, Hatha is one of the oldest styles in this list. The ancient practice of Hatha is seen today as a classical approach to yogic breathing exercises and postures. In this regard, Hatha generally refers to the practice of physical yoga postures. Ashtanga, Vinyasa and Iyengar are all types of Hatha yoga.<sup>1</sup>

### Anusara

As one of the newer styles of yoga, Anusara was created in 1997. That shouldn't deter you from choosing Anusara over older styles.

In fact, Anusara is a good place for beginners because it was created to be heartfelt and accepting of people new to yoga.

Based on Iyengar, this style eschews formality and encourages students to express themselves through their poses to the fullest ability rather than pressuring them to perfectly replicate each stance.

### Ashtanga

Ashtanga is one of the faster-paced versions of yoga. Don't expect to walk out feeling peaceful and relaxed, although that is possible. It's more likely that you will end the class feeling refreshed and energized, and possibly sweaty. Ashtanga utilizes a series of poses, each held for a few breaths before quickly transitioning into the next. Ashtanga is a good yoga style for people looking to burn calories while toning muscles.

### Bikram

Also known as hot yoga, Bikram Yoga is performed in rooms heated to 35–42°C (95–108°F) with a humidity of 40 percent. Expect to sweat! As it takes place in a sauna-like room, Bikram Yoga purports to help protect the muscles during deep stretches, detoxify the body by opening pores and increase heart rate for a better cardiovascular workout. Bikram Yoga uses 26 postures in sequence that were adapted from the more traditional Hatha yoga.<sup>2</sup> Bikram Yoga is the best-known style of hot yoga, but it is possible to find other styles performed in heated rooms if you are intrigued by the heating element but wish to try a different style.

### Iyengar

In Iyengar Yoga, the emphasis is on precision and alignment in all postures. With this focus on precision, Iyengar utilizes blocks, straps, harnesses, boards and other props to help students become more perfectly aligned in each position. Because of the liberal use of props to help, Iyengar is a good choice for people of all ages and abilities.<sup>3</sup>

### Kundalini

Blending spiritual and physical practices, Kundalini Yoga incorporates movement, breathing, meditation and chanting. Kundalini Yoga strives to help students build physical vitality while increasing their consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

### Prenatal

Developed specifically for expecting mothers, prenatal yoga is tailored to help women in all stages of pregnancy. Prenatal yoga also extends to post-birth mothers who wish to get back into shape. Prenatal yoga is gentle on a woman's pregnant body but helps her tone and maintain muscles throughout pregnancy. Prenatal yoga also helps women maintain peace and calm during the stressful events that sometimes come with pregnancy.<sup>5</sup>

### Restorative

Focusing more on relaxation than on working muscles, restorative yoga generally utilizes just four or five poses per session, with each pose being held for as many as 20 minutes. Props may also be used to maintain comfort. Restorative yoga is perfect for anyone who wishes to emphasize relaxation over physical exertion as a means of combating stress.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>1</sup> "Types of Yoga." Yoga Journal. N.p., 03 Apr. 2017. Web. 13 June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> "Home." Bikram Yoga®. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 June 2017.

<sup>3</sup> "B K S Iyengar - Home." B K S Iyengar—Home. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 June 2017.

<sup>4</sup> "Types of Yoga." Yoga Journal. N.p., 03 Apr. 2017. Web. 13 June 2017.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-8622/14-styles-of-yoga-explained-simply.html>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-8622/14-styles-of-yoga-explained-simply.html>.



## Vinyasa/Power

Vinyasa/power yoga uses coordinated movements with breath to flow from one pose to the next. “Vinyasa” is the term used to describe a specific sequence of poses. These classes often change the sequences of poses from one class to the next so there is less repetition from week to week.<sup>7</sup>

## Yin

Another relaxing form of yoga, Yin yoga is also called Taoist yoga. Yin yoga classes focus on lengthening connective tissues. It is meant to be a complement to Yang yoga, which puts more emphasis on strengthening muscles. Yin poses tend to be more passive so that students are able to relax muscles. Poses are held for longer periods of time as well, making Yin a good way of practicing patience and reducing stress.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “Types of Yoga.” Yoga Journal. N.p., 03 Apr. 2017. Web. 13 June 2017.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-8622/14-styles-of-yoga-explained-simply.html>.

<sup>9</sup> “Yin/Yang Yoga | Yoga for Today | Sherwood Park Yoga.” Yoga for Today. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 June 2017.

<sup>10</sup> “Tantra Yoga.” Yoga Journal. N.p., 03 Apr. 2017. Web. 13 June 2017.

<sup>11</sup> “For Health, Happiness and World Peace.” Laughter Yoga University. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 June 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Mandybur, Jerico. “‘Beer yoga’ is a thing, now, and it’s going international because, well, ‘Beer Yoga.’” Mashable. Mashable, 17 Jan. 2017. Web. 13 June 2017.

## Yang

The counterbalance to Yin yoga, Yang yoga is the more traditional Hatha- or Ashtanga-based asana practice. While Yin yoga is peaceful and light, Yang yoga works a person’s body to help develop muscular strength, stamina and flexibility.<sup>9</sup>

## Tantra

The word “tantra” conjures thoughts of ancient sexual knowledge, but tantra yoga is actually a combination of *asana* (body position), *mantra* (a phrase repeated over and over during meditation) and *mudra* (specific hand and finger positions), along with both *bandha* (energy lock) and *chakra* (energy center) work. Tantric yoga strives to help students build strength, clarity and bliss in everyday life. Tantric yoga purports to harness the five forces of the female deity Shakti.<sup>10</sup>

## Laughter

Developed by a doctor from India, Dr. Madan Kataria, Laughter Yoga is based on the idea that the body cannot differentiate between fake and real laughter. Purposefully laughing during a session of Laughter Yoga produces the same physiological and psychological benefits as spontaneous laughter, including lowered levels of stress hormones (epinephrine, cortisol, etc.) in the blood.<sup>11</sup>

## Beer

Twentysomethings have combined the popularity of yoga with the popularity of drinking beer. Good for anyone looking to have a good time, beer yoga runs students through a series of poses while holding (and sipping from) beer bottles. You may not experience as high a level of exercise from beer yoga, but it is sure to be a good time with friends.<sup>12</sup>

## Ganja

Recently gaining popularity in the US, in states that have licensed medical cannabis, ganja yoga allows participants (only those who have a medical card for cannabis in states that have legalized medical cannabis) to use cannabis in various forms for about 15 minutes before the class starts. One might think of cannabis-enhanced yoga as a new fad, similar to beer yoga, but some yoga historians report that the combination of cannabis and yoga dates back thousands of years, when ancient yogis consumed bhang, a cannabis flower beverage, as well as charas (hashish), as part of their daily meditation and asana practice.

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# Healthy Weeds: Time to Fall in Love with the Unloved Flower

“What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

If we all take Mr. Emerson's advice to seek out the virtues of weeds, we may find healthy, delicious foods where we least expect them. From backyard pests to city sidewalk dwellers, here is a short list of gardeners' most reviled weeds and why we owe it to our health to grow more of them.

## Nettles

The first weed in the list is possibly the most reviled due to its stinging nature. The leaves and stems of stinging nettles are covered in fine hairs that, when touched, act like hypodermic needles, injecting chemicals that produce a stinging sensation. Despite their sting, nettles are rich in vitamins A, B and C, as well as calcium, magnesium and other minerals. Nettles can help in the formation of estrogens, which can help increase mental output. Frequent consumption of nettles may also help improve memory loss, according to research. Nettles should be harvested carefully, with gloves on, and put into a pot, where they can be blanched, steamed or dried.<sup>1</sup>

## Perilla

This weed is actually considered a prized herb in Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Called shiso in Japan, this green- or red-leafed plant is very high in vitamins A and C.

Consuming perilla is also thought to help boost the immune system.

With a taste somewhere between mint and fennel, this plant is as delicious as it is voracious. A single perilla plant can produce thousands of seeds that will spread throughout the neighborhood if you aren't careful.<sup>2</sup>

## Dandelion

Dandelions are extremely hardy plants. Although considered to be pesky weeds by many people who strive for a green lawn, their hardiness could also be thought of as virtue, making them tasty, healthy and abundant.

The flowers, leaves and stems are all edible. Dandelion flowers can be made into jam, tea and wine.

Both flowers and greens make great additions to salads, soups or breakfast smoothies. Dandelions, particularly the roots, are a known liver cleanser. They are also known for soothing wounds, making them excellent ingredients in homemade salves and body care products.<sup>3</sup>

## Purslane

City dwellers know purslane all too well even if they don't realize it. Common purslane (often referred to in the U.S. as “pigweed”) often grows in sidewalk cracks. Purslane is a slightly sour and salty leaf vegetable reminiscent of lemon that is extremely rich in omega-3 fatty acids (in fact, the richest known plant source of omega-3), the type of healthy fat found in salmon.<sup>4</sup> Just 100 grams of fresh purslane contain up to 400 mg of alpha-linolenic acid. When cooked, one cup (250 ml) of leaves contains 90 mg of calcium, 561 mg of potassium and more than 2,000 IUs of vitamin A.<sup>5</sup> The stems, leaves and flowers of purslane are all edible. They are great additions to salad, whether raw or lightly sautéed.<sup>6</sup> Purslane is highly prized in Mediterranean cultures yet reviled as a weed in many other parts of the world.

## Daylily

Daylily may not be seen as a weed, like the other plants on this list, but it does have something in common with them: most people don't realize how nutritious it is. The blossom of a daylily is in bloom for only a day before falling off. As evening approaches, pick the vitamin A-rich blossom and add it to your dinner salad for a sweet, nutritious kick. Be careful that you are eating wild daylily (orange *Hemerocallis fulva* or yellow *H. lilioasphodelus*), as true lilies are often toxic.<sup>7</sup>

## Queen Anne's Lace

Similar to dandelions, Queen Anne's lace is a weed that can take over an entire lawn if not picked. Unlike dandelions, it is the root you want to eat, not the flower or stem.

Queen Anne's lace is sometimes called wild carrot because the fingerlike roots can be consumed just like carrots.

Although the flowers are also edible, the roots make great natural additions to soups and stews in the fall.<sup>8</sup>

## Plantago

This hardy weed can survive in rough places, such as sidewalk cracks or gravel lots. Related to the much better-known leafy green spinach, plantago is a good source of iron and vitamins A and C. Plantago can be eaten just like spinach, although it is usually cooked until tender. This delicious weed has also been shown to possess antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rutherford-Fortunati, Alisa. “Weeds Worth Growing.” Gentle World. N.p., 15 Feb. 2014. Web. 20 June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Wanjek, Christopher. “5 Garden Weeds You Can Eat!” LiveScience. N.p., 10 July 2012. Web. 20 June 2017.

<sup>3</sup> “Healthy Weeds You Can Eat & Why You Should » Nature Moms.” Nature Moms Blog. N.p., 03 Jan. 2016. Web. 20 June 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Wanjek, Christopher. “The Five Healthiest Backyard Weeds.”

LiveScience. Purch, 31 July 2011. Web. 20 June 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Simopoulos, A P; Norman, H A; Gillaspay, J E; Duke, J A (August 1992). “Common purslane: a source of omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants.” *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*. 11(4): 374–382.

<sup>6</sup> Wanjek, Christopher. “The Five Healthiest Backyard Weeds.” LiveScience. Purch, 31 July 2011. Web. 20 June 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Wanjek, Christopher. “5 Garden Weeds You Can Eat!”

LiveScience. N.p., 10 July 2012. Web. 20 June 2017.

<sup>8</sup> “Healthy Weeds You Can Eat & Why You Should » Nature Moms.” Nature Moms Blog. N.p., 03 Jan. 2016. Web. 20 June 2017.

<sup>9</sup> “Healthy Weeds You Can Eat & Why You Should » Nature Moms.” Nature Moms Blog. N.p., 03 Jan. 2016. Web. 20 June 2017.

# Breathing Techniques to Help You Work, Rest and Play

For most of us, breathing is the same as many other processes in our bodies—an automatic function that is always happening and never consciously thought about. We breathe in life-giving oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide all day, every day. Yet how often do we stop and think about our breath? What would happen if we did?

Unlike our heartbeat, digestion or nervous system function, breathing is easily controlled by our conscious mind. With focused control, breathing can have a major impact on your mind and body. If that sounds far-fetched, think about a time when you took a deep breath to calm your nerves when you were emotional, scared or nervous. It helped, didn't it?

Learning to pay regular attention to your breath is a great way to help manage stress, anxiety and so much more.

Recent research at Stanford University School of Medicine found an area of the brain where breathing and state of mind are connected by nerve cells. Medical practitioners have long known that breath control can have a positive impact on stress disorders. Now we are one step closer to understanding exactly why that is.

In yoga, the practice of breathing to shift one's consciousness from aroused to peaceful is called *pranayama*. It is a core component of nearly every form of yoga. What ancient yogis understood intuitively has been verified in scientific studies. The researchers at Stanford found a tiny cluster of neurons linking respiration to relaxation, attention, excitement and anxiety. Located deep within the brain stem, this small area seems to monitor breathing patterns and relay that information to other parts of the brain that drive arousal activities, including waking us from sleep, maintaining alertness, and triggering anxiety and distress.<sup>1</sup>

While the Stanford study found a tiny area of the brain responsible for telling your body to become more or less aroused, an unrelated study from Northwestern Medicine discovered a link between rhythm of breathing and electrical activity in the brain that enhances emotional judgments and memory recall. With just one strong inhale through the nose, you can strengthen your brain and sharpen your memories, according to the results of this study. Participants were able to more quickly identify faces displaying specific emotions when they were breathing in than when breathing out.<sup>2</sup>

Focused breathing also benefits the lymphatic system, which has no pumping system of its own. Lymph fluid is circulated through the body with every breath you take. Fewer, shallower breaths may reduce the effectiveness of the lymphatic system, which is a critical component for both detoxification and immune function. You may be able to help maximize your lymphatic system's capabilities through deep diaphragmatic breathing. To do this, breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose (this also helps with memory—everything is connected when it comes to breathing!). Let your breath go out through your mouth slowly. Deep, slow breathing for even just 10 repetitions (more is even better) will oxygenate the blood and circulate the lymph fluids, especially around the liver, where they help detoxify your body.

Healthy, conscious breathing is done from the diaphragm regardless of whether you are trying to relax, boost your brain, circulate lymph fluids or do anything else. The key to a good technique is taking deep breaths that cause your diaphragm to push down into your belly. We tend to think of our chests expanding as a sign of a deep breath, but you want to see your stomach expand as well so you know that your diaphragm is working.



Calm breathing, something many of us can benefit from during stressful days, is as simple as taking long, deliberate inhales. Being deliberate is key. Don't just suck in as much air as you can as rapidly as possible.

Start by counting to three slowly with each inhale, and again with each exhale.

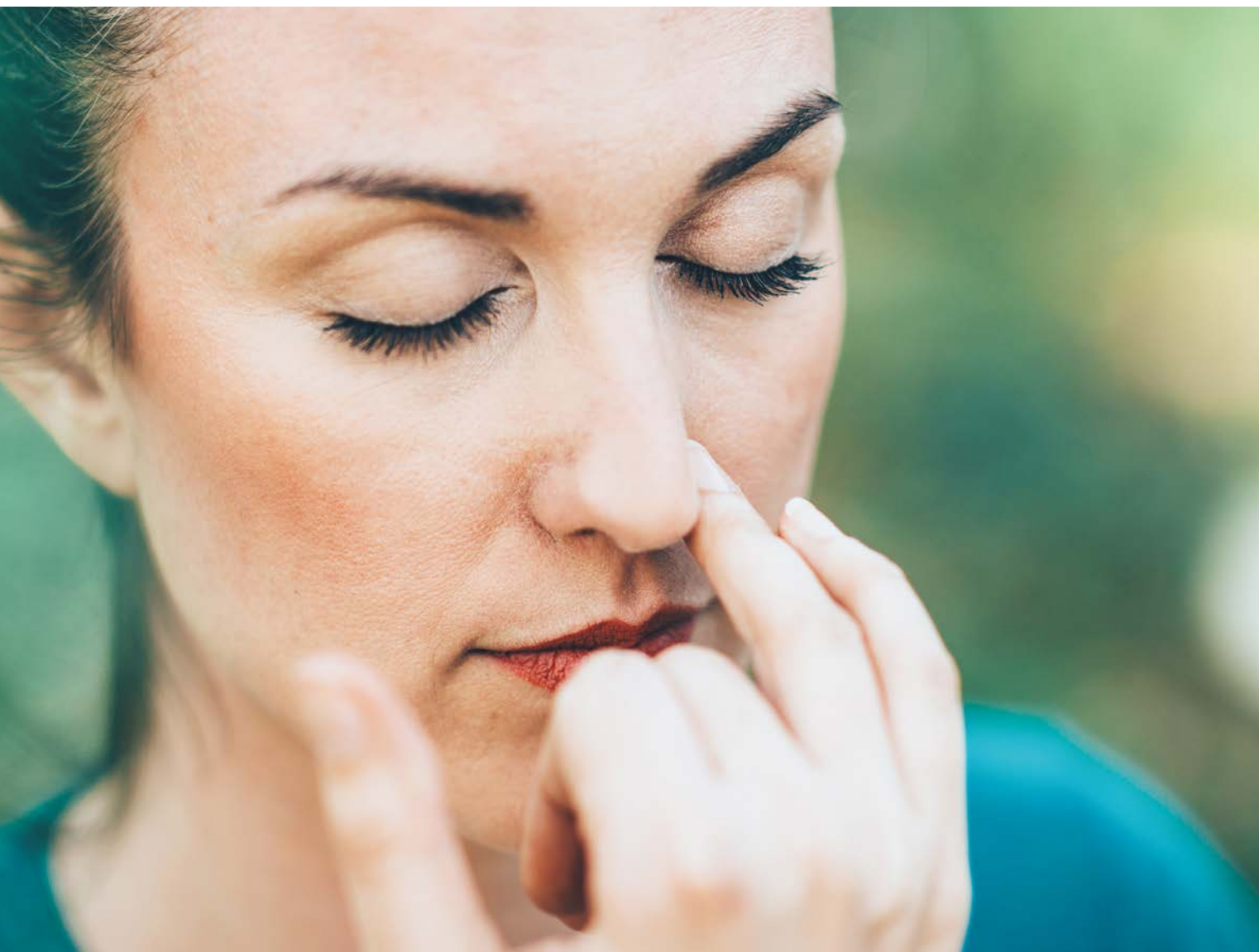
This deep, slow rate of breathing forces your mind and body to focus inwardly. The longer you can do this, the better the results for your body. Once you get in the habit of breathing intentionally, you can practice calm breathing anywhere—in the office, at a stoplight, while doing dishes or even while watching a movie with your family.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kevin Yackle, Lindsay A. Schwarz, Kaiwen Kam, et al. "Breathing control center neurons that promote arousal in mice." *Science*. 31 Mar 2017: 1411–1415.

<sup>2</sup> Christina Zelano, Heidi Jiang, Guangyu Zhou, Nikita Arora,

et al. "Nasal Respiration Entrain Human Limbic Oscillations and Modulates Cognitive Function." *Journal of Neuroscience*. 7 December 2016, 36 (49) 12448–12467; DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.2586-16.2016.

<sup>3</sup> "Are you breathing the right way?" *Best Health Magazine* Canada. N.p., 07 May 2009. Web. 20 June 2017.



Another form of breathing that is helpful in managing stress is called “4-7-8” breathing. It involves inhaling to the count of four, holding the breath to the count of seven and then exhaling to the count of eight. Try that for a minute or so the next time that you find yourself in a stressful situation.

Calm breathing complements positive thinking and other forms of mindfulness. If you use your breath to enter a relaxed and calm state, it is easier to pay attention to your thoughts and emotions so you can steer them in a more positive direction.

When combining healthy breathing with other relaxing exercises such as yoga, Tai Chi or meditation, your body may experience even more heightened states of relaxation and peacefulness. *Sama vritti* is a phrase in yoga that means equal breathing. Like calm breathing, *sama vritti* matches equal-length inhales and exhales.

It is believed that this fundamental style of breath helps calm the nervous system, lower blood pressure and reduce stress.

During more advanced or rigorous yoga sessions, many yogis rely on *ujjayi* breath, or “victorious breath.” To do this, simply breathe in and out through the nose while maintaining a slight contraction in the back of the throat. This deep, powerful breath brings lots of oxygen into your body.<sup>4</sup>

When you combine breathing techniques and stress-reducing practices such as Tai Chi or yoga, amazing things happen to your body. A groundbreaking new study revealed that we can alter our DNA through mind-body exercises! After analyzing 18 trials of nearly 850 participants, researchers saw genes related to inflammation become less active in people practicing mind-body interventions such as combining conscious breathing with meditation or yoga.<sup>5</sup>

### Deep breathing exercise for beginners

- Lie down or sit in a reclined position.
- Relax your neck, shoulders and limbs.
- Put one hand on your chest and one on your stomach.
- Take a deep breath through your nose for about two seconds.
- As you breathe in, feel your stomach expand more than your chest, pushing your relaxed hands up.
- While slowly breathing out, let your body fall deeper into relaxation.
- Repeat for 10 minutes.

<sup>4</sup> Sengupta, Pallav. “Health Impacts of Yoga and Pranayama: A State-of-the-Art Review.” *International Journal of Preventive Medicine* 3.7 (2012): 444–458. Print.

<sup>5</sup> Buric Ivana, Farias Miguel, Jong Jonathan, et al. “What Is the Molecular Signature of Mind-Body Interventions? A Systematic Review of Gene Expression Changes Induced by Meditation and Related Practices” *Front Immunol.* 16 June 2017, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fimmu.2017.00670>.

# Iron Needs in Later Life

Iron is an essential mineral for life. Without it, the body is unable to transport oxygen to its many organs, tissues and cells. As with other nutrients, our needs for iron change throughout life. Continue reading to learn how much iron you may need after you pass the “big 5-0.”

Elderly people can be at higher risk for developing anemia through iron deficiency. While anemia is prevalent among people over 50, the underlying reason is not easily defined, as there are many reasons a person’s iron levels could be reduced.

Years of use of aspirin or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for self-managing pain can lead to significant bleeding from the digestive tract.

The longer a person uses nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, the more likely it is for this to occur, making seniors particularly at risk.

As we age, our sense of taste can weaken, causing a loss of interest in food that corresponds to a limited diet. When this happens, seniors are at risk for developing nutritional deficiencies. The two most common are B vitamin and iron deficiencies.

Medications, cancer therapies and poor absorption are other reasons iron levels may drop in the elderly. To further complicate matters, anemia in the elderly may be caused by inflammation.

A slight deficiency in iron causes anemia characterized by fatigue and weakness. More serious drops in iron levels can lead to pale skin, decreased cognitive ability and even organ failure.<sup>1</sup>

According to the National Institutes of Health, adults over the age of 50 should consume about 8 mg of iron per day.<sup>2</sup> However, it is easy to see how health issues that accompany aging can lead to an increased need for iron consumption.

Iron requirements for women decrease dramatically after they cease having monthly menstrual periods and become similar to the iron needs for men. Any older person who develops iron deficiency anemia needs to be evaluated by a physician to find the reason for the iron deficiency, to be sure that it’s not due, for instance, to an undiagnosed tumor somewhere in the intestinal or urinary tract that is causing blood to be lost on a continual basis. Never simply take iron supplements in this situation, assuming that the basis of the iron deficiency is dietary alone, without seeing a health professional first.

Also keep in mind that supplementing iron at a level beyond the recommended 8 mg per day for someone who does not have a documented iron deficiency can be harmful, resulting in increased oxidative stress, since free iron is a potent catalyst for the generation of free radicals.

One of the absolute best sources of dietary iron is liver. Animal liver can be baked, broiled or stir-fried. In addition to iron, liver is also rich in vitamin A, arachidonic acid and the B vitamins.

If you can’t stomach the thought of eating liver, beef is also a good source of the mineral, according to the Food Standards Agency. According to the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, beef is the third-most important source of iron, after fortified cereals and grains. Seniors should select lean cuts of beef to avoid consuming more fat than is required for their lifestyle. Even though we now know that fat is an important, healthy part of any diet, it must be consumed in amounts appropriate to activity level. Since many people over the age of 50 see a decrease in physical activity, it may be prudent to reduce fat intake to match.

Iron-fortified cereals are among the best vegan- and vegetarian-friendly sources of iron. Cereals have long been fortified with not just iron but also other vitamins and minerals to supply important nutrients that may not otherwise be obtained in the average diet. Read labels carefully—fortified cereal can contain up to 18 mg of iron per serving, according to the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority Board. Choosing the right breakfast cereal can help any adult reach his or her daily iron intake requirements early.

Similar to cereal, many grain products are now fortified with iron as well. From breads and pastas to grains and flours, manufacturers are fortifying their products with iron in order to help boost everyone’s intake to the levels needed for optimum health. Again, be sure to read labels carefully to better understand the amount of nutrients you are consuming.

Other sources of iron may not be as rich as liver, beef and fortified products, but they are still valuable. It is entirely possible to consume all the iron your body needs by eating a wide variety of iron-rich fruits and vegetables.

A few of the most iron-rich plants are morel mushrooms, apricots, dark green leafy vegetables, olives, beans, peas and asparagus.

No matter which foods supply your dietary iron, you may benefit from consuming vitamin C at the same time. Studies have shown iron is better absorbed by the body when vitamin C is present. Therefore, consuming citrus, red peppers, kale, broccoli and other foods rich in vitamin C may also be beneficial for upping dietary iron intake after reaching the big 5-0.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Iron-out-of-Balance in the Elderly.” Iron Disorders Institute. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> “Office of Dietary Supplements—Dietary Supplement Fact Sheet: Iron.” NIH Office of Dietary Supplements. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d. Web. 29 May 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Hallberg L, Brune M, Rossander L. “The role of vitamin C in iron absorption.” *Int J Vitam Nutr Res.* 1989;30:103–108.





# The Best Things in Life Are Free

They say that the best things in life are free. This is certainly true for the amount of pleasure and the many benefits kids can get from playing outdoors. From backyards to neighborhood parks, public lakes to nature preserves, the world is full of free public spaces that kids can use to run, play and socialize.

A recently published report on children and nature has highlighted what many previous studies have discovered: modern families' busy lifestyles, combined with an increased sense of fear throughout society, have limited the opportunities for children everywhere to explore their surrounding natural environment.<sup>1</sup>

Even though the warm summer months tend to be thought of as the best time to play outdoors, getting active outside may be especially important during the winter months. Limiting outdoor exercise throughout winter may stunt the growth of certain muscles. When children run and walk through snow, larger leg muscles get more use. Trudging through snow can also help develop gross motor skills.

Playing in the snow can help promote a better sleep cycle for children because they are less likely to go to bed with pent-up energy caused by too much time on the couch, watching television or playing video games.

In the cool fall months, kids can play many of the same games as they do in the summer, albeit with warmer clothes on. Once snow starts falling, children can get active by sledding, cross-country skiing, building snowmen or making forts. Once they are a little older, kids can also help shovel the driveway or sidewalks.

Another reason it's important for kids to get outside during the winter is the need for sunlight exposure. Although winter sun in the temperate zones of our planet often doesn't have enough shortwave ultraviolet rays to strongly stimulate the production of vitamin D in the skin, there are many benefits to sun exposure that go beyond those of vitamin D production, such as helping set the internal circadian rhythms of our sleep-wake cycle.

Sunlight and vitamin D also have a major role in mood regulation. Beating the winter blues is often a matter of getting outside into the sun.

Teenagers who are prone to moodiness may experience the biggest benefit from mood-boosting sun exposure.

More time spent outside may also help prevent colds and the flu during their most prevalent months. Despite the long-held belief that a person can catch a cold from being cold, there is no evidence that going outside during cold months can make you sick. In fact, because vitamin D is critical for proper immune function, the exact opposite may be true: the more time spent outdoors in the sun, the stronger our immune systems can be.

It's impossible to shield our children from all the viruses and bacteria in our homes, schools and places of work. But it's possible that by encouraging outdoor play, our children will be exposed to fewer of them. Furthermore, when kids are exposed to pests and bacteria in a natural way while playing outside, it can help make them less likely to develop autoimmune disorders and allergies, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Spending more time playing outside may also help protect vision. Some experts believe rising rates of myopia are caused by too many hours spent staring at computer and television screens. Others believe the rise is due to not enough time spent outside. A recent study published in *JAMA Ophthalmology* suggests a lack of direct sunlight may reshape the human eye and impair vision.<sup>2</sup> In either case, the remedy is disconnecting from technology and playing outdoors.

<sup>2</sup> Williams KM, Bentham GCG, Young IS, McGinty A, et al. "Association Between Myopia, Ultraviolet B Radiation



<sup>1</sup> Karen Malone, Sue Waite. "Student Outcomes and Natural Schooling Pathways from Evidence to Impact Report 2016." [www.plymouth.ac.uk](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk).



The holidays are not far off. Consider giving your child the gift of an outdoor experience instead of a physical toy or game. In a new study titled “Experiential Gifts Foster Stronger Social Relationships Than Material Gifts,” researchers noted that experiential gifts are more likely to build long-lasting memories for kids.

The gift of an experience such as a safari adventure, camping trip, mountain hike or other outdoor trip creates an emotional connection that lasts far longer than getting something.<sup>3</sup>

The experience doesn't have to be grand or expensive. Kids are more likely to have a strong, comforting memory of a special trip to the park with their parents who are engaged and happy than they are from an exciting but stressful trip to another country.

Encouraging outdoor play in free spaces is a healthy gift you can give your children anytime of the year that will benefit them for a lifetime.

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Exposure, Serum Vitamin D Concentrations, and Genetic Polymorphisms in Vitamin D Metabolic Pathways in a Multicountry European Study.” JAMA Ophthalmol. 2017;135(1):47–53. doi:10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2016.4752.

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<sup>3</sup> Cindy Chan, Cassie Mogilner. Experiential Gifts Foster Stronger Social Relationships Than Material Gifts. Journal of Consumer Research. 2016; ucw067 DOI: 10.1093/jcr/ucw067.



# Reading Body Language

Whether with family, at the office with coworkers or on a date with a new partner, we are constantly telling people how we really feel through our body language. Our true feelings can be amplified with a wink, hidden with a smile or betrayed with a smirk. Learning to control your body language and better read that of those around you can open the doors to better communication in all areas of life.

People are constantly broadcasting nonverbal signals. And you are reading them, sometimes without realizing it. We often instinctively act on body language signals without even realizing we are communicating. The way you react to a friend when you see she has tears in her eyes and a slumped posture is quite a bit different from the way you react to a friend when you see his jaw is clenched and his hands are balled up and resting on his hips. Before either of you has said a word, you are already communicating.

According to various researchers, body language is thought to make up between 50 and 70 percent of all communication. Some estimates even say over 90 percent of communication is nonverbal! Think about that in the context of trying to win an argument or make a point. Though your words are surely important, focusing too much on them and not enough on your body language can prevent you from winning a debate no matter how grounded in fact your argument is.

Posture, movement, eye direction, where your hands are, breathing, skin temperature—every part of your body is constantly sending messages. What those messages are depends on how much control you have over your physical actions.

Some body language reinforces the point you are making. For example, pointing toward a road sign while giving directions is a simple way of repeating with your body what you have verbally stated. Nodding while saying yes is another example of reinforcement. However, winking while saying yes may contradict your message signal, indicating that you actually mean no.<sup>1</sup>

Think about how big of a difference it makes when you smile while saying thank you or scowl while saying thank you. One message reinforces the positive message of thankfulness. The other betrays hidden anger or resentment.

Not all body language is as easy to control or understand. In general, the more emotional a person is, the harder it is to control body language. There are also physiological responses in the body to certain emotions that are extremely hard to control. Crying from sadness, shaking from extreme anger, laughing from happiness, sweating from nervousness—these giveaways are nearly impossible to control at times.

A flushed face could mean anger or embarrassment. Or it could simply mean that the person very recently engaged in strenuous physical activity. To better read a person's body language, you must also monitor the environment. A simple-to-understand example is that it's easy to tell if a person is shaking from fear or cold judging by the temperature in the room. It may be harder to tell if a person's face is flushed because he is angry, is embarrassed or recently did something physically exhausting.

Aspects of body language can be subtle as well. Slight changes to your mouth can signify what you are feeling. If your mouth is slightly turned up, it might mean you are feeling happy or optimistic. Conversely, if it is slightly turned down, you may be signaling sadness or disapproval. A stronger feeling could turn your mouth into an outright grimace, which is easier to detect.<sup>2</sup>



Fortunately, body language is seldom a single movement or stance.

Body language that signals a person is happy generally incorporates several of the following: smile, widened eyes, laughing, uncrossed arms and legs, good eye contact, relaxed muscles and straight posture.

Body language signaling surprise may include flushing of the neck or face, downward gaze, bowed head, shrinking of body posture, lack of eye contact and grimacing. In both examples, there are multiple factors involved that make it easier to fully understand what a person is feeling. Of course, that also means there are multiple aspects to control when you are trying to master your own body language.

<sup>1</sup> Tidwell, Charles. "Non-Verbal Communication Modes." Non Verbal Communication. Andrews University, n.d. Web. 05 June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Cherry, Kendra. "How to Read Body Language." Very Well. N.p., 18 May 2016. Web. 02 June 2017.



There are times when body language is easy to control—generally, when emotions are neither extremely high nor low. At other times, it is nearly impossible to control the nonverbal cues you are displaying. But trying to be aware of your body language when you are calm will ultimately make it easier to control when you are emotionally charged.

Everything about your body is capable of sending messages. Fingers, hands, arms, legs, feet, posture, movement, even where you position yourself in a room—it's easy to understand why researchers believe so much of what we communicate is nonverbal. With so many places to look for clues when interacting with people, body language can feel like a puzzle. But with practice and introspection into your own body language, you will soon be able to see the big picture instead of just many puzzle pieces. Once you can see the whole picture, it becomes much easier to avoid misinterpreting messages sent from a single area.<sup>3</sup>



Hold a conversation with yourself in front of a mirror several times a week or more frequently, if possible.

Watch the ways you move your body and think about what messages those movements send.

What would you think if you were talking to someone and he or she made those movements? The more you can practice with yourself, the better you will become at understanding the body language messages you are sending AND the better you will become at interpreting other people's nonverbal messages.

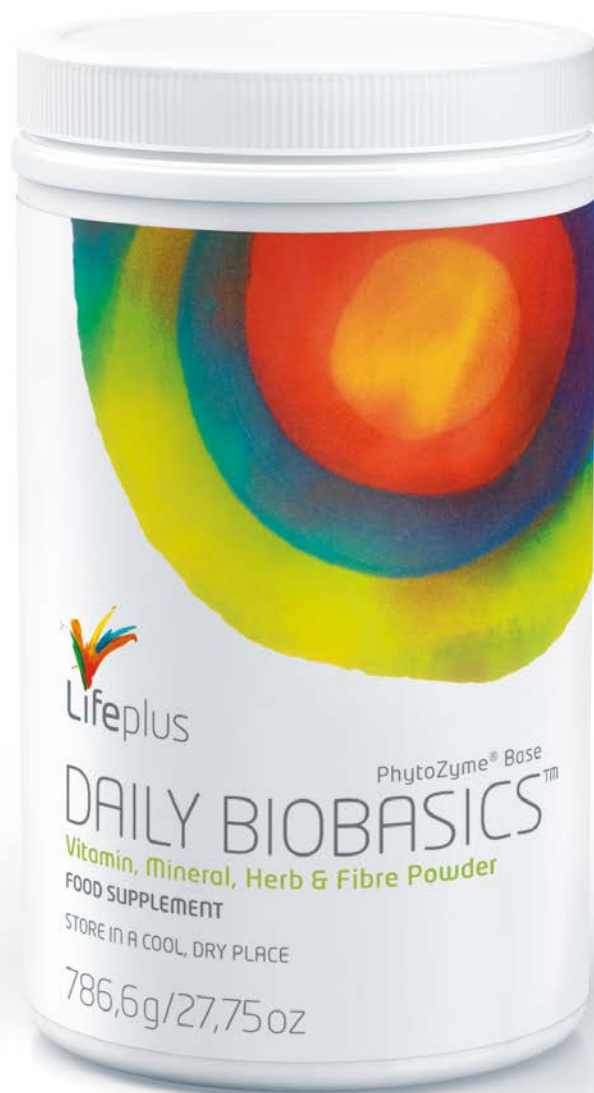
<sup>3</sup>Tidwell, Charles. "Non-Verbal Communication Modes." Non Verbal Communication. Andrews University, n.d. Web. 05 June 2017.

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Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a varied diet.

# Ask the Expert

## Should I eliminate fat from my diet?

The nutritional value of food is more than the sum of its parts, according to a recent international expert panel of epidemiologists, physicians and nutritional scientists. This is true of fatty foods such as meats and cheeses, as well as any fruit or vegetable. As published by the Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sports, University of Copenhagen, nutrients in food interact with each other in complex ways, meaning it may be unwise to focus too much on just one or two nutrients.

For example, many people fear eating too many full-fat dairy products because of the perception that fat is unhealthy.

However, when researchers looked specifically at cheese, they found consuming the dairy food had a lesser effect on blood cholesterol than would be predicted on the basis of its levels of saturated fat. Nutrients do not act alone in the body. There are many complex webs of interaction that scientists are aware of, and many more still to be



discovered. Fat has been labeled public enemy number one for decades. During this same time period, waistlines have expanded exponentially, likely due to increased intake of refined sugars, which chronically raise insulin levels—which tell the body to store fat. Due to our evolving understanding of nutrition, we now know that eating fat is not just healthy but also essential to our health as long as we eat amounts proportionate to our activity levels.

## Is staying physically active as I age important?

Absolutely! The human body slowly loses muscle mass, bone mass and range of motion as it ages. If you do not actively combat these losses with regular physical activity, you can quickly end up with health problems such as back pain, osteoarthritis, instability resulting in increased risk of falling, fat gain or osteoporosis. Regular exercise at any age helps slow or even reverse the loss of muscle mass, keeping seniors stronger and more mobile far longer. It also helps strengthen bones, improve flexibility and reduce joint and muscle pain—all of which contribute to a better quality of life in seniors, allowing them to stay active and independent longer. Mobility and balance also greatly influence mood in seniors, as fears of falling can be emotionally crippling to the point where a person is too afraid to leave his or her home. Moderate activity as simple as walking around the block is enough to help begin the process of regaining lost muscle mass. The more stable a person becomes, the more active he or she can get. This cycle will help keep anyone's body in shape no matter what his or her age.

## Can my friends make me fat?

Diet and exercise are far from the only two factors that directly influence your health and wellness. We are affected by the people we spend time with in numerous ways. If you spend a lot of time with negative people, you are more likely to develop a negative outlook on life. If you spend much of your time with positive-minded, healthy people, you are more likely to adopt their outlooks and habits as well. While nobody can “make you fat,” you are probably more influenced by the people around you than you realize. Do you have coworkers who constantly bring treats into the office and graze in the lunchroom? Or do you spend your lunches with a group of coworkers who prefer to eat a light snack and then walk for exercise before returning to work? In either case, you are likely to adopt the habits of those around you. This is true of coworkers, friends, family and any other people with whom you spend your time. Use this to your advantage! By seeking out people who are positive minded and engage in healthy lifestyles, you can greatly increase your chances of maintaining a healthy lifestyle yourself.



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