

THE HEALTH Q

INTELLIGENT BODY MIND SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

INDEXED IN LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

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Nov-Dec. 2006 Issue

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SPECIAL DIGEST EDITION

get fired up

yoga helps in cancer

prescription for good bones

wash away allergies

face your fears



Upcoming 'Feel Good About Yourself'
& 'The Healing Voyage'

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- ◆ Feel Good About Yourself is on December 2; The Healing Voyage Starts on Jan 17, 2007. Free Info Session on Jan. 10 @ YWCA, 7 pm. Details are on page 3 or visit www.TheHQ.ca

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SPECIAL DIGEST EDITION

GET FIRED UP

by Gurdarshan Jyot, PhD

WALTER CHRYSLER, THE FOUNDER OF CHRYSLER Motors, has said, "The real secret of success is enthusiasm. Enthusiasts are fighters. They have fortitude. They have staying qualities. Enthusiasm is the bottom of all progress. With it, there is accomplishment. Without it, there are only alibis."

Enthusiasm is a sense of inspiration. The word comes from the ancient Greek, meaning "the god within." It is a connection between your inner power and adding energy and excitement to whatever you do. Even if you may not feel naturally enthusiastic, anytime you act "as if" you are, you start to take on that quality.

- ❑ When you are feeling low check your posture, if you are slumped take deep breath draw your shoulders back and pull upward.
- ❑ Bring change in your boring routine. Do something which really fires you up.
- ❑ Surround yourself with positive, enthusiastic people. Enthusiasm is contagious—It will catch you.

Live your life to the fullest with enthusiasm, as French writer Emile Zola wrote: "If you ask me what I came to do in this world...I will answer you: 'I am here to live out loud.'" [HQ]

Dr. Gurdarshan Jyot has a PhD in Psychology. She lives and works in Brampton, Ontario.

See ya ...

IT IS THE END OF THE 2006. Well, almost. I hope you had a wonderful year. I enjoyed bringing out 'The Health Q' & 'Monday Morning' and am thankful for all the helpful feedback you gave us. A big thank you also to all the contributors. To sum up this year, we are presenting a digest of some of the widely-read articles in 2006. Due to space limitation, we are presenting only few. Nonetheless, I hope you will enjoy reading them and do not forget to visit our website for more exciting stuff.

In the spirit of holidays, we will be taking a break in December. Hence, there will be no issue for that month. We will be back on schedule in January 2007. Until then, stay healthy, happy and enjoy the holidays. —**Parmjit Singh**

Wash Away Allergies

by Parmjit Singh, PhD

IT IS THAT TIME OF THE year when we fall victim to cold, flu and sinus pains. However, it does not happen all of sudden. Over the time, toxins build up in the body and leave us vulnerable to various allergies and other related problems. Rather than running to a nearby pharmacy for every cold and allergic break-out, yoga offers a cheap and effective method to control these flare-ups, especially related to nasal passage. It is called the Nasal Wash, performed with a neti pot (see the image on page 3).

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yoga helps in cancer

by Parmjit Singh, PhD

WITH CANCER STRIKING AN ALARMINGLY HIGH percent age of population and preventive remedies/vaccine still in the realm of speculation and making, yoga may promise some alleviation from the terrible physical and psychological consequences that follow its diagnosis and treatment process.

Some studies in the recent past have held out such hope. In one of the studies, yoga practice has been shown to have improved a general sense of well-being and easing out discomfort in breast cancer patients. Participants registered 12% increase in their well-being as compared to the control group. In another study, scientists found that lymphoma patients who practiced Tibetan yoga for seven weeks went to sleep faster, slept longer, had better overall well being and used less sleep medication as compared to the control group which did not practice yoga.

Ordinarily yogic exercises may just seem a bunch of slow-motioned twist or turns practiced to a mellow music but they are based on century-old model of health and wellness, something which science is beginning to unravel now.

For one, yogic exercises are passive but mindful. One pays attention to the progress of a posture through carefully directed attention. That is what, apart from other things, may be helpful in helping people regain their sense of well-being and comfort. This directed attention on the body and emotions redefine personal relationships with one's own body and helps to ease out fear of death and desperation associated with the feeling of 'why me'. When faced by personal mortality, as cancer tends to drive one to that realization, people recoil into fear and despondency which complicates the physical pain and horror related to the disease.

Ancient Indian texts describe five sources of distress (Kleshas) which disturb mental quietude and well-being (Telles & Visweswariah, 2006*). These five factors are: (i) lack of knowledge (avidya), (ii) a sense of 'I-ness', (iii) strong preferences, (iv) strong dislikes and (v) fear of death and to lesser degree of anything which appears threatening.

As you can see, the sense of 'I-ness' or 'why me' is considered one source of distress in ancient philosophy. This might be, as it seems, one source of cognitive distortion that complicates the pain, coping and the recovery process. As people do not have accurate knowledge of the real nature of physical body (which they consider a solid and a sophisticated machine), they get trapped into a false sense of 'self' conveyed through sensory perceptions.

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prescription for good bones

by Joanne Malar, Three Time Olympian

SWIMMING IS ONE OF THE MOST popular forms of aerobic exercise. Not only is it fun but people of all ages reap handsome health benefits from this non-weight bearing total body workout. It is also very beneficial for people suffering from medical conditions such as arthritis.

In general, swimming:

1. Helps in improving overall strength: Since swimming works your total body, you will be able to strengthen a wide variety of muscles that are often bypassed in other activities. The benefits of taking swimming, especially for old people, are multiple. Apart from developing generalized muscular strength, it helps to improve both mental and emotional strength.

2. Improve your balance: Falls are common among the elderly and even minor falls often cause breaks and fractures. Exercises that develop your core abdominal muscles will aid in preventing future falls or close calls. Swimming increases your stabilizing muscles core by holding your body posture in the water and activating your abdominals throughout the motions. Strengthening this muscle group will help you to correct your stance and improve your reaction time when thrown off guard.

3. Is non-impact: Due to the lack of gravity, swimming is easier on your body. Especially, it is a great workout for the seniors who are able to safely increase their heart rate and extend the duration of exercise without the negative toll on their body and joints that high impact exercise can often bring. Faced with the choice of exercise, more likely in sunset years, swimming is a choice to prevent injury.

4. Helps through injury: Swimming is an excellent rehabilitation tool. Many elite athletes get to swimming after getting injured from high-intensity sports such as running, football or cycling etc. The advantage of swimming through injury is that you can still maintain your level of fitness and cardiovascular endurance without further irritating the injury due to the non-impact nature of the water. There are many water devices that aid safeguarding your injury in the water such as a pull buoy. This is a floatation device that you put in-between your thighs that keeps your legs afloat and allows you to swim without using your legs. There is a belt that you can wear around your waist that keeps you afloat upright so you can get the benefits of running in the water

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feel good about yourself

What: Half Day Workshop
When: Dec. 2, 2006
Where: YWCA, MacNab St. Branch
Cost: \$50/person (includes take home material, membership, live instructions and other perks)

Take a half day off your busy life to equip yourself with stress-busting and workplace-empowering techniques. Revitalize your body and mind with yoga and meditation.

{Open for both men & women} ✨ YWCA membership not required

the healing voyage

What: 5 Week Program
When: Starts Jan. 17, 2007, 7:15 pm
Where: YWCA, MacNab St. Branch
 Free Info Session: Jan. 10, 7 pm @ YWCA
Cost: \$125/person (includes manual, membership and other perks)

Come join us on a 5 week of body, mind, spirit exploration and renewal. Improve your health and wellbeing. Enjoy the healing power of yoga and meditation and experience the spirit-exalting power of tuning in.

call 905.524.3463

face your fears

by Byron Selorme

WHEN YOU ACTIVELY APPROACH SOMETHING WHICH you are scared of, the very decision to act tends to dissolve fear. That could be the fear of failure, fear of losing love or respect from those we care and the fear of lack of money.

These fears start as small discomforts. However, we often do not address them at that time. Later they build up, thanks to all our internal thoughts repeating seamlessly.

In a Yoga practice similar things come up. We experience discomfort in a pose and every time we approach a pose, we feel some dread or anxiety rising up within us. This is really an opportunity that we so often miss. That moment, when we truly find something, is uncomfortable and that is when we need to ask ourselves "why"? We need to observe what we are avoiding, and then move in the direction of that discomfort. This is where the free, happy, spontaneously joyful life resides.

Personally, I also cower from this choice over and over. I fight it and look for the safe and easy way out. I find ways to distract myself or avoid a decision. It is silly because life is patient and kind. It offers the lessons in different ways. Finally, when I can take no more, or get frustrated with this, I take the plunge and dare to act. The results are often so anticlimactic that I am embarrassed for having put it off for so long. Everyone else goes on about their business as if it was unimportant. It might have been an apology that I held back from, a donation that I clung to, for the fear that there will be none left, it might have been a pose that I needed to adjust—the sooner I act, the less power the fears have over me. The sooner I let it go and dive in, trusting that either divine guidance, inner resilience or some combination will get me through, the sooner I find true freedom.

We all know what we need to do. If you have something which you have been avoiding:

something with family, an apology, a business you need to start, a cheque to write, an exercise program to commit to, stand up and speak in front of people, or to practice that pose you hate—stop fussing and fretting and do it now. Do it NOW and be free. The very act of doing will free you from fear. [HQ]

Byron Selorme teaches Yoga in Shavasna Yoga Center in Hamilton.

wash away allergies

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

**How to do it**

- Take the neti pot (it is available from health and yoga stores) or simply get a small kettle. Wash it properly.
- Fill it with lukewarm water and mix in approximately one-quarter teaspoon of salt. The water in neti pot is usually equivalent to normal body saline level; so do not worry if you fear that it will sting you while pouring through your nostrils. If needed, adjust the salt quantity so that it does not bother you while doing this exercise.
- Bring the spout to the nose, bend over the sink with the head slightly bent forward and slightly tilted (to the right if pouring water through left nostril and vice versa) so that water can flow out from other nostril freely.
- Raise the neti pot so that water starts pouring into nostril. Then it will start flowing out from the other nostril. The flow will depend upon whether the passage is clear or clogged.
- During this process, breathe through mouth.
- After pouring through one nostril, blow freely through both nostrils to force out excess mucus and water. If you feel still congested; kneel down, put your forehead on the floor and blow as you did before.
- Then repeat the cycle for the other nostril.

Benefits

- Clears internal sinus passages and restores their health.
- Helps fight allergies, colds and other sinus problems.
- Allows easy breathing during meditation and yoga.
- Dissolves excess mucus.
- Hydrates dry nasal passage due to travel, smoke and other pollutants. [HQ]

Do you suffer from self-esteem?

by Parmjit Singh, PhD

Have you ever thought that if I had better self-esteem, my life would be different? If so, think again. Self-esteem may not be such a powerful determinant in fashioning our destinies as it has been portrayed in the Western society. In fact, recent research says that it does not matter much.

Self-esteem, to me, is a sort of misnomer and its current definition is profoundly narrow and materialistic. We are so smit-

ten with reductionistic science that if there is anything wrong in our life, we compulsively start thinking that we must be lacking something, just as another material thing. Therefore, self-esteem also has become another thing on our 'to-get list'.

However, this is not so. We suffer from low-esteem because we have started identifying our self-worth (esteem) on the basis of what we own, what we

do, money, etc. By doing so, we commit the error of 'sizing' our self-worth in reference to external parameters.

We need to think about self-esteem from a different perspective. We suffer from low self-esteem not because we do not have it, but because our perception of real self is clouded under materialistic delusions. Years of comparative thinking and condi-

tioning has obscured our authentic inner self.

In order to have healthy self-esteem, we do not need to gain it from somewhere else. All we need to do is peel off the layers of conditioning and false identifications we have accumulated through life experiences. Once you do that, you will find that you always had it. It was just lying buried under your false perceptions and wrong-headed identifications.

yoga in cancer

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One major problem with that perception is that when we come to consider personal wellness solely on the basis of lack of illness in physical body, any threat to it from an illness devastates our feeling of well-being. Furthermore, this ego-identification with perishable physical body tends to distort our sense of self—and we are consumed with terror of disease and mortality. This is the first time we face death or its possibility and because we have never known our self beyond the body-identification, disease means the end of everything. That is what scares people even more than the disease itself—the fear of death.

In yogic philosophy, wellness is not related as much to the soundness of physical body or lack of disease as to the integrity of the mind-body-spirit axis. It reminds people that material things are perishable; that physical body is inherently subject to disease and decay.

This line of understanding helps to reshape personal perception about physical body and its pain process and bring people out of their catastrophic sense of failure and pessimism, thus giving the immune system a breather to initiate healing process. This emotional relief might be able to induce relaxation and deepen the quality of sleep. Previous research has also confirmed that a better quality sleep can beat cancer.

Yoga, through its passively directed attention and movements, could be helping participants in redefining their relationship with their own physical and mental body, thus opening the possibility of experiencing well-being while being struck with a terrible disease such as cancer. [HQ]

*Telles, S, & Visweswariah, NK (2006). Comments to: Health Realization/Innate Health: Can a quiet mind and a positive feeling state be accessible over the lifespan without stress-relief techniques? *Med Sci Monit.*, 12(6)

If you would like to try some simple postures, visit our website at www.TheHQ.ca. Remember to follow instructions and practice under specialist supervision.

Dr. Parmjit Singh teaches in the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University. In his private life, he runs health and wellness programs for community and corporate establishments. For the latest program offering, please visit 'Event Calendar' at our website www.TheHQ.ca or sign up for our free newsletter, 'The Health Q' for health and wellness tips and regular updates.

prescriptions for good bones

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without touching the bottom. Lastly, kickboards allow you to stay afloat while resting your arms on the board and relying on your legs to kick and propel you through the water.

5. Cardiovascular endurance: Swimming is one of the best exercises to strengthen your heart and lungs. It fashions up a great cardiovascular workout to strengthen your aerobic system. Again, because of the non-impact nature of swimming, it is suitable for the aging population to maintain their fitness and bone-mass.

One of the major concerns amongst our aging population is osteoporosis. As with many health issues, there are varying opinions on the best preventative measures. Osteoporosis is characterized by the loss of bone mass and bone mineral density (BMD). Traditionally experts recommend weight-bearing exercise to maintain and increase bone mass. Weight-bearing activities or load-bearing exercises typically suggested are weight training, resistance tubing, hiking, jogging, step aerobics, stair climbing, any exercise or sport that requires you to work against gravity. Some experts say swimming and walking, the two most recommended forms of exercise for the elderly are not bone building activities. However, should all the health benefits of swimming and walking be overturned due to this one focus? Other experts argue there is evidence that swimming does help increase bone mass in seniors but the problem is a lack of research on the aging population as studies often focus on younger elite swimmers for measurement.

When there are discrepancies in research, whether in nutrition or in exercise, the best advice is moderation. Swimming works best in combination with other activities. Swimming a couple of times a week mixed in with other activities will ensure that a wide range of muscle groups are used, under different weight loading quantities.

Mix some resistance bands, free weights, weight training, stair climbing, step class or racquet sports into your routine a couple of times a week. Focus on including stretching, balance and flexibility into your routine as well. Think quality over quantity, and fit in what you can while enjoying the variety!

This regimen of including various activities will help maintain and promote bone mass and overall health! [HQ]

Joanne Malar is a three time Olympian swimmer. Currently she lives in Hamilton and offers private holistic nutritional consulting.