

SPECIAL EDITORIAL FEATURE

BODY NURTURING.



GAINING WELLNESS THROUGH HEALTHY LIVING.

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LOCAL EXPERTS PROVIDE TIPS TO GET A BETTER NIGHT'S REST.



Winter is here, but there's no need to head for hibernation. We humans need year-round stimulation to keep moving, growing, and in good health. After all, wellness is not something you work on once and cross off the list. It takes vigilance and insight to be well — but it's rewarding work, tending your present and future.

Often we have every intention of eating better, de-stressing, exercising,

and taking all the right vitamins. Then information overload sets in — diets, pills, studies, TV shows — all claiming the latest and greatest health boosters.

We've distilled the data down to six great ways to be good to your body. From skin care to meditation, here are routes toward enhanced health. Why wait until New Year's Day to start living well? Be good to your body today.

CLOSE YOUR EYES and clear your mind for 10 seconds. How was it? Chances are, an invasive thought — maybe even two — managed to creep in on your 10 seconds of attempted emptiness.

In the world of meditation, the mental chatter that consistently crowds our headspace comes from what often is called the monkey mind, swinging from one tree of thought to another, at an exhaustive pace, on a daily basis.

Perhaps you're sitting in traffic, staring at the TV, or even taking a walk when the monkey mind switches into high gear. Suddenly, within mere minutes, you've gone from wondering what to make for dinner to worrying about your 401(k), and everything in between.

Although you've taken no real action in response to these thoughts, you're left fatigued with worry, feeling anxious and tense. Often your body will reflect the effects of a mental marathon, with tight, raised shoulders, elevated blood pressure, or the twinge of a tension headache.

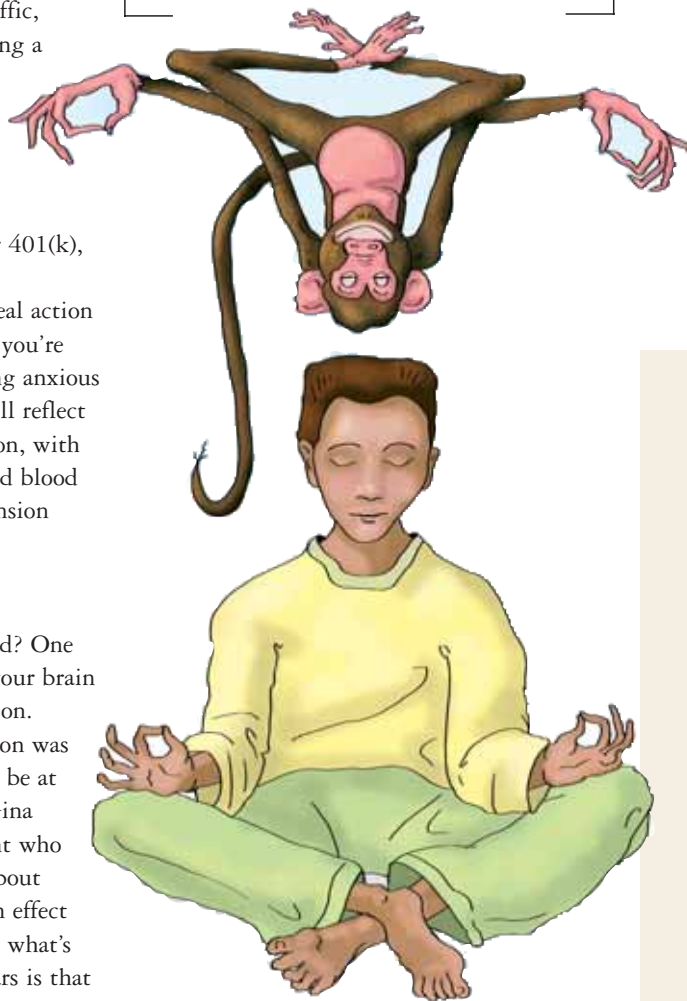
EMPTY THOUGHTS

How to calm the monkey mind? One option is to sit still and coax your brain to do the same: a.k.a. meditation.

"What drew me to meditation was the notion that I could sit and be at peace in my own skin," says Gina Flores-O'Toole, a Reno resident who has practiced meditation for about seven years. "At first, the main effect was that I felt really calm, but what's happened over the last few years is that I have more confidence, and I'm not afraid."

Benefits such as increased relaxation and confidence, and a greater sense of peace and well-being, may be the mechanisms behind an onslaught of recent research on the efficacy of meditation for conditions such as hypertension, heart disease, chronic pain, and depression.

QUIETING THE MONKEY MIND. 1 MEDITATION IS A HEALTHY WAY TO RELIEVE STRESS.



One such study, published in the *American Journal of Cardiology* (May 2005), showed that meditation is associated with "significantly lower mortality rates compared with other behavioral interventions and usual care. The decreases in risk were 23 percent for

all-cause mortality, 30 percent for cardiovascular mortality."

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health currently is funding studies on meditation for the prevention and treatment of heart disease; the reduction of arthritis and lower-back pain; and the long-term impact of meditation on basic emotional and cognitive functions.

For those who practice this form of mental relaxation, no research is necessary — the experience alone is enough to prove its efficacy.

"Meditation is the most meaningful activity in my life," says Valerie Poulos, a meditation instructor at the Yoga Center in Reno. "Where I used to have inner stress, I now have inner peace."

GIVE MEDITATION A GO AT HOME WITH THESE SIMPLE STEPS.

PROVIDED BY
MEDITATION INSTRUCTOR
VALERIE POULOS OF THE
YOGA CENTER IN RENO.


- Make yourself comfortable. Sit upright with a straight spine, in a chair or on the floor, and relax your body. Turn your palms upright, and close your eyes.
- Silently inhale, counting to six; hold your breath to the count of six; exhale silently, counting to six. Do this about five times.

This breathing technique is called measured breath.

"You can change the count," Poulos says. "Just make sure the inhale, hold, and exhale are of an even count."

Brandi Schlossberg is editor of RENO Magazine's *SEEK* section.

SUPER FOODS.
2
TO THE
RESCUE.
INCORPORATING
14 MORSELS INTO
YOUR DIET COULD
IMPROVE YOUR
HEALTH.



BROCCOLI

These bright-green florets and their vegetable brothers, such as cauliflower and cabbage, lower your risk for certain cancers in a big way. Be good to yourself and munch one-half to one cup per day. Bonus: These veggies also pack a punch when it comes to cataracts, immune function, heart health, strong bones, and the prevention of birth defects.

OATS



A sweet, warm bowl of oats on a winter morning is the definition of comfort food. Surprisingly, this comfort food doubles as a super food,

keeping cholesterol in check and working hard to prevent heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, hypertension, obesity, osteoporosis, and more. About five servings of oats or other whole grains throughout the day will do the trick.

ORANGES



The sticky sweet wedges of the ordinary orange possess remarkable powers. With a major burst of vitamin C, along with citrus flavonoids, pectin (the white stuff on the peel), and

folate, oranges will inhibit the growth of cancer cells, help prevent heart disease and stroke, and strengthen capillaries. Eat an orange or another citrus fruit each day for all the benefits.

PUMPKIN



This squash shouldn't be reserved for Thanksgiving and Halloween, as few foods hold a candle to the pumpkin. High in fiber, low in calories, and loaded with nutrients,

pumpkin prevents a wide array of diseases while protecting the skin and eyes. Besides, it comes in a can. Try to eat a half cup of pumpkin, butternut squash, carrots, yams, or orange bell peppers almost every day.

SALMON



Ever hear of omega-3 fatty acids? The American diet is sorely lacking in them, and salmon — be it fresh, frozen, or canned — is

one of the best sources around. Eat a seafood dinner two-to-four times each week to boost brain power, relieve depression, and fight heart disease, hypertension, macular degeneration, and autoimmune diseases.

SOY



Packed with protein, plant-based omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals, fiber, and disease-fighting isoflavones, these little green beans weigh

in as super food heavyweights. Aim to eat 15 grams of soy each day, at two separate sittings, be it tofu, soymilk, soy bacon, or any of the many other soy foods. Benefits include boosting heart health, preventing hormone-related cancers, and decreasing tumor growth.

SPINACH



Spinach has been shown to prevent heart disease, stroke, an array of cancers, cataracts,

and age-related macular degeneration. "Spinach is a rich source of vitamins A and C, folate, and several vital antioxidants," Wirshing says. Attempt to eat two cups of spinach, or another leafy green vegetable, nearly every day.

IT SEEMS SIMPLE: CHOOSE HEALTHY FOOD FOR A HEALTHY LIFE. But look around — obesity is nearly the norm, disease is on the rise, and fad diets come and go faster than raspberry season. Maybe eating healthy isn't as simple as it seems.

Enter super foods. True to their name, these 14 foods might just save your life.

According to Dr. Steven Pratt, senior ophthalmologist at Scripps Memorial Hospital and author of the bestselling book *SuperFoods Rx*, packing your plate with super foods brings benefits that range from mental preservation to cancer prevention.

"These foods all have a specific component that has been associated with a positive health effect," says Jamie Benedict, Ph.D., an associate professor in the department of nutrition at the University of Nevada, Reno. "They are also all fairly nutrient dense, meaning relative to calorie content, they are high in nutrients."

Did we mention that super foods taste good, too? Check out this handy guide to eating healthy, and find out how simple it can be to choose super foods for super health.

BEANS



Dried, fresh, frozen, or canned beans (and peas) are packed with low-calorie protein and fiber, helping to control both weight and blood sugar. Combine beans

with pasta or salad, mash them into a sandwich spread or enjoy them in Mexican food. Try to get four half-cup servings per week, and don't forget to rinse canned beans to reduce sodium.

BLUEBERRIES



"Research shows that blueberries contain more antioxidants than any other fruit or vegetable," says Jolyn Wirshing, a registered dietitian on staff at the UNR School of Medicine. Each sweet serving helps lower

cardiovascular risk, stave off Alzheimer's, and promote healthy skin. Treat yourself to one or two cups of blueberries a day — dried, fresh, frozen, or in the form of jam and preserves.

TEA



Make way for the no-calorie super food. Both green and black teas have been shown to decrease the risk of heart disease and cancer, among other benefits, such as preventing osteoporosis. Drink one or more cups a day. Be sure to steep for three to four minutes, and don't forget to squeeze the tea bag afterward to get the most bang for your cup.

TOMATOES



Fresh from the garden or processed in spaghetti sauce or salsa, tomatoes in any form are good news for you. "Tomatoes provide a good source of vitamins C, A, and E, and potassium," Wirshing says. "Several studies have linked tomato consumption with a decreased risk of prostate cancer and other cancers of the digestive tract." Try to eat one serving of processed tomatoes each day and a few servings of fresh ones every week.

TURKEY



This bird should make an appearance on your plate beyond Thanksgiving dinner, for skinless turkey breast is one of the leanest meat protein sources in the world. It not only provides protein, but also nutrients such as niacin, selenium, vitamins B6 and B12, and zinc, all of which promote a healthy heart and reduce the risk of cancer. Three to four four-ounce servings per week is best.

WALNUTS



Munch a handful of nuts about five times a week, and enjoy a significant reduction in your chances of a heart attack. Nuts also cut the risk of diabetes, cancer, and chronic ailments. Although walnuts take the super food title as one of the few sources of plant-derived omega-3 fatty acids with the highest antioxidant value, other nuts are super, too. Just make sure to limit your enjoyment of this tasty super food to a handful each day.

YOGURT



The immune-boosting properties of a creamy cup of yogurt make this super food far more than a quick-and-easy breakfast.

Brandi Schlossberg is editor of RENO Magazine's SEEK section.

MAKING A POINT.

3

TINY NEEDLES BRING BIG BENEFITS.



What do Watergate, war, and acupuncture have in common? Richard Nixon. It was during Nixon's administration that his press secretary, Henry Kissinger, received a crash course in the benefits of acupuncture, which he promptly passed along to the American public.

It was 1971, and Kissinger was visiting China along with a group of elite reporters. During the trip, *New York Times* journalist James Reston had an acute appendicitis attack, and Chinese physicians removed his appendix.

Reston's extreme postoperative discomfort was eased — to the great surprise of both Kissinger and Reston — via the ancient Chinese practice of inserting fine needles in specific points on the skin.

Back in the states, Reston wrote an article on acupuncture for the *New York Times*, and Kissinger discussed the experience in a press conference. It was a public-relations boon for acupuncture, and the practice has been increasing in popularity among Westerners ever since.

POPULAR TREATMENTS

"Acupuncture helps people I couldn't help otherwise," says Christi Bonds, M.D., a family physician, as well as an acupuncturist, at Integrative Medicine of Nevada in Reno. "I personally use it for a lot of women's problems, hormones, allergies, fatigue, endocrine, and pain."

Bonds, who earned her medical degree

at the University of Nevada, Reno and is nearing the end of a fellowship with integrative physician Andrew Weil, M.D., says acupuncture is a wonderful way to boost wellness in general.

"It's excellent for relaxation," she says. "It stimulates the free flow of the body's electromagnetic energy, otherwise known as *chi*, and that is the foundation of a sense of well-being and wellness for people."

An actual acupuncture session may take about an hour and involve anywhere from five to 25 needles placed at various points along the body.

These points will depend on the goal of the session, which could be anything from easing arthritis pain and sleeping better, to relieving sciatica or simply relaxing.

"It's not painful; the needles are so fine, like a strand of silk, so they don't hurt," says Annette Stapleton, a Reno resident and longtime recipient of acupuncture. "I find it very relaxing. Oftentimes, when I have the needles in me, I fall sound asleep."

Check your insurance plan to find out if acupuncture is covered. It's one of the most commonly covered forms of complementary care in the nation. And for that we may have the Nixon administration to thank.

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