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INTEGRATIVE HEALTH FOR MEN



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REWIND:
TOP ATLANTA HIKING TRAILS YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF



With the arrival of summer and more time spent outdoors, check out this piece on Atlanta hiking destinations. Storyteller and adventure guide Jonah McDonald is author of *Hiking Atlanta's Hidden Forests: Intown and Out*, and he contributed this article for our July 2018 issue.

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CORRECTION: The headlines on our May 2021 cover mistakenly included a story about homeopathy that did not ultimately appear in the magazine. However, it is available online at bit.ly/homeopathy-to-rescue.

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**MOMS,
 DADS, KIDS
 AND YOU**

**“Statistically speaking,
 living long and well is
 an uphill battle for most
 American men.”**



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Did I get your attention? There’s more: “Of the 15 leading causes of death, the only one men don’t lead in is Alzheimer’s, because many of them don’t live long enough to develop it.”

So begins the distressing news about the state of men’s health in this country. In this issue, we follow last month’s focus on integrative women’s health with a look at the rugged reality of men’s health in America. The article I quoted above, “Integrative Health for Men: Natural Approaches for Robust Vitality,” on page 14, takes a look at four leading health issues in men—heart disease, erectile dysfunction, prostate cancer and depression—and reveals new research and integrative approaches to help turn these conditions around. The good news is, as more men continue to embrace holistic information and practices, that trend seems to be turning.

In this issue, however, the focus is on *all* family members—male, female, young, old and everyone in between.

Since 2002, the Holistic Mom’s Network (HMN) has connected families who want to learn holistic, conscious and earth-friendly ways to live healthier, more natural lives. In our feature story, “Andria Somers on Holistic Parenting,” on page 25, we learn more about HMN from the nonprofit’s executive director. Then, for our companion piece, “Local

Holistic Moms Learning and Growing Together,” on page 27, I had the pleasure of interviewing the two co-leaders of Atlanta’s only chapter, West Atlanta Metro HMN. The clarity, passion and commitment these two women exhibit as they create a safe place for people to have fun and learn blew me away. And their insistence that one doesn’t have to be a mom to join didn’t get past me, either. After all, you don’t have to be a mom to want to learn more about healthy living for you and your family!

What about the kids? In these turbulent times of heightened emotions, rapid change and uncertain futures, kids feel the stress as much as anyone. We share with you “Simple Ways to Calm Anxious Children” on page 24, so your young ones can get a head start learning fun ways to calm their own nerves.

Rounding out our “family” collection of stories is our first from Atlanta lifestyle medicine health coach, Chef Bee. “In Turbulence There is Opportunity,” on page 38, shares her trials and personal discoveries as she and her family rode the emotional waves of quarantining in 2020.

We also give you a toolkit for these summer months! In her second article in two months, Susan Gonzalez’s “The Age of Anti-Aging” on page 20 gives us an insightful glimpse into how to deal with the effects of aging on the skin. And

if travel is part of your summer plans, you’ll want to learn more about what vegan snacks to pack for a road trip in “Vegan Road-tripping” on page 12. If you’re planning a more ambitious excursion, you’ll find helpful tips for traveling with sustainability in mind in “Traveling for the Planet” on page 33.

We’re very pleased and excited to introduce the newest member of our team! Trish Ahjel Roberts, our consulting editor for African American issues, is an author, coach and yoga and meditation instructor. I find her to be an island of calm in a turbulent world, and I look forward to her continued contributions to this magazine! 🌿



Trish Roberts



Diane Eaton,
 Managing Editor



GIVING TREE

Expands Space and Scope

Smyrna's Giving Tree Yoga recently moved its studio from the first floor to the second floor of its building. By doing so, it more than doubled its footprint and added a second studio, yoga training and wellness services. The owner also changed the name of the studio to reflect its broader scope; the new name is Giving Tree Yoga + Wellness.

"Our goal in transforming from a studio into a yoga and wellness center is focused on bringing balance, harmony and intention to people's lives while expanding the mindset of wellness from something that is singular to something that is always evolving," says Melissa Lopez, founder and owner of the studio, which opened in 2018.

The studio's new wellness services include massage, Reiki, vibrational

sound therapy and craniosacral therapy. Emily Grey Mattocks and Jessie Hughes are both licensed massage therapists; Mattocks also offers Reiki and sound therapy, while Hughes offers craniosacral therapy.

Giving Tree will also launch its 200-hour yoga teacher training in late July with Christy Newsome as lead trainer. Lopez also introduced a lecture series, hosting speakers including yoga teacher Gina Minyard's "Evolving Beyond the Yoga Sutras: The Tantric Householder Path;" sound therapist Michael Burke's "Open and Awaken to the Energies Around You;" and somatic therapist Nicole Smith Levay's "Directions, Layers and Pressure: Breathing in Somatic Practices." The series is priced at \$40 per lecture.



Photos: Jason Meek

With the expansion, Lopez hopes to build community by hosting larger events that extend beyond yoga and that welcome a broader swath of the community.

Giving Tree Yoga + Wellness is located at 1295 W. Spring Street, Suite 200 in Smyrna. More at YogaSmyrna.com.

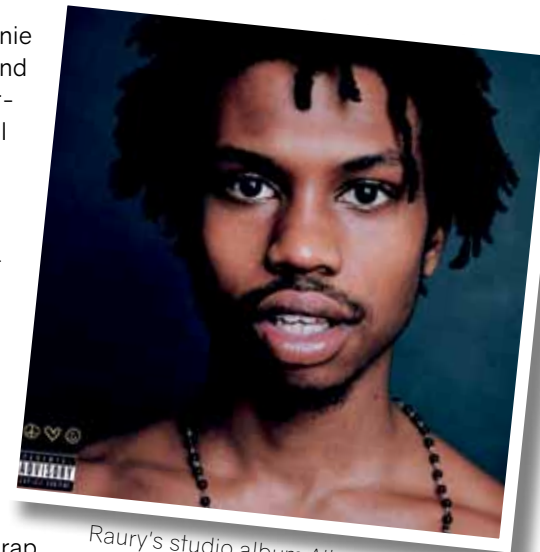
Wonderful Wizards of Raw Announces Speakers, Performers

Raury, BluePillar44 and StudioSteffanie are just a few of the many speakers and performers appearing at The Wonderful Wizards of Raw (WWR), an annual celebration of raw food that will be held June 4 through June 6.

Raury is a 24-year-old singer-songwriter/rapper from Stone Mountain who gained notoriety early; after seeing Raury's video *God's Whisperer*, Kanye West flew the then-18-year-old out to spend time with him. Raury has since toured with Macklemore and collaborated with Jaden Smith and Chance the Rapper.

Raury's most recent project, *Fervent*, is a departure from the folk-rap of *All We Need*. It is filled with messages that aim to disconnect listeners from the forces of division and destruction.

BluePillar44 is known for his ability to decipher metaphysical laws and



Raury's studio album *All We Need*

to bring clarity to what's behind the events, attitudes and behaviors of our times. Also known as BluePill, he will speak on the topic of "The State of

Affairs: How to Put Divinity Back in Masculine and Feminine Interactions—the theme of this year's WWR talks is relationships."

"Know Thy Self!" is the title of StudioSteffanie's presentation. "There are too many people walking around with false imagery, faking it to make it, meanwhile hating themselves," says the author and speaker, who overcame many obstacles to become who she is today. Having grown up in a motherless household, looking for love in all the wrong places, StudioSteffanie will explain how to fall in love with yourself, possibly for the first time.

The Wonderful Wizards of Raw will be held from June 4-6 in the backyard garden of Tasilli's Raw Reality, 1059 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. SW in Atlanta. For more information: bit.ly/WWR-2021.



Danielle Hall of SoundEmbrace (Photo: Paul McPherson Jr)

SoundEmbrace, an Atlanta-based sound healing company, has announced the immediate availability of high-quality sound healing recordings through the Mighty Network app.

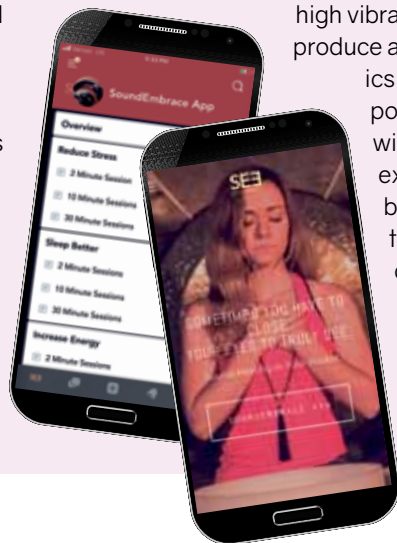
Membership is free, and users can access a number of sound sessions for free, but for unlimited access to SoundEmbrace's entire and growing library, a paid

SoundEmbrace Offers Sound Healing Anytime

membership is required. The cost is \$22 a month or \$200 a year paid upfront.

"I wanted to make sound healing accessible for everyone," says Danielle Hall, founder of SoundEmbrace. "I realized the one-on-one sessions and group sound bath gatherings were not enough for my clients and were limited by my availability."

Hall has recorded dozens of sound sessions and grouped them into four categories: Reduce Stress, Sleep Better, Increase Energy and Balance Chakras. Within each category, sessions are offered in lengths of two minutes, 10 minutes and 30 minutes.



To create sessions that address the four goals, Hall manipulates three variables: tonal frequency, beats per minute and instruments played. She recorded all sound sessions in a professional studio.

"I used an experienced engineer who knows the mechanics behind recording high vibrational instruments that produce a wide range of harmonics," says Hall. "This is important because customers will feel as though they're experiencing a live sound bath as they feel the vibrations from the instruments during their session."

To become a member of SoundEmbrace's network, visit SoundEmbrace.com.

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Vegan Road-Tripping

Travel Tips for Plant-Based Eaters

by Carol Sanders

To maximize health and minimize our impact on the planet, a whole-food, plant-based diet reigns supreme. Cooking at home ensures quality-controlled ingredients, but when traveling, extra measures are needed to enjoy healthy options while avoiding the allure of diet-busting, processed foods. The key to success is a combination of planning and resolve.



Much can be done before the trip begins. Research the destination and road trip stops, says Julieanna Hever, registered dietitian and author of *Plant-Based Nutrition (Idiot's Guides)*. She recommends reviewing online menus, calling ahead to clarify options and using apps like *Yelp.com* and *HappyCow.net* to scout for restaurants and grocery stores. Her favorite places are Thai and Mexican eateries, as well as steakhouses for their plant-based side dishes. Upon arrival at her destination, she hits a grocery store to stock up on fresh fruits and veggies.

"We live in an extremely difficult food environment, with a lot of triggers and inputs that don't go away even if you've been eating a healthy diet for a long time," says Micaela Karlsen, Ph.D., senior director of research at the American College of Lifestyle Medicine and author of *A Plant-Based Life*. "For people that are transitioning into this new lifestyle, the highly refined foods they are used to eating are kind of low-grade addictive substances and what

researchers call hyper-palatable foods like added fat, sugar and salt that stimulate the brain in a similar way as addictive drugs like cocaine or alcohol, so it's really a process of withdrawal for people initially."

To combat the temptations, especially when away from home, Hever advises writing down and clearly understanding dietary goals and the reasons for eating this way. "I work with people that are very sick and with elite athletes. Their goals may be different from everyday people that want to have a vacation," she says. "Do you want to have another heart attack or reactivate your diabetes? No. Are you totally healthy and consciously deciding to splurge once in a while? That can totally fit into a healthy lifestyle. What matters most is choosing to eat whole food, plant-based foods most of the time."

Karlsen recommends always carrying snacks. "Don't let yourself get too hungry or too tired, because when people are extra hungry or run-down, the reward experience of eating goes up and willpower goes down," she explains, adding that dried fruit, nuts, rice cakes, individually packaged nut butter and fresh fruits are good portable snacks to carry. At the hotel, microwaveable popcorn, as well as oats and shelf-stable, single-portion almond or soy milk, will help stave off the munchies.

"I love granola, not only for breakfast, but also as a snack in the mid-afternoon," Karlsen says. "Most store-bought granola, however, is akin to food crime. Oats are whole, healthy and cheap, but once oil, sugar and other stuff are added, the commercial product is high in fat, way too sweet and really expensive. The first time I made granola myself, I was amazed at how I didn't even notice that the oil and sugar weren't there. It was delicious and so satisfying."

According to both experts, a cooler in the car or a refrigerator at the destination hotel expands the kinds of home-prepared foods that can accompany travelers, including hummus spread over crudites or sprouted, whole-grain crackers, as well as any kind of leftover dishes. They both tout the convenience and tastiness of nori rolls—a wide variety of ingredients wrapped in a sheet of dried seaweed. Among Karlsen's

favorite nori fillings are tempeh baked with tamari and a little maple syrup, topped with tomato and kale; peanut butter and pickles; avocado rubbed with umeboshi plum vinegar; and sweet potato, avocado, red pepper and thinly sliced carrots.

"Food is intertwined in our culture with entertainment, but thinking about food that way doesn't really serve our biological potential for wellness," says Karlsen. "People are so accustomed to these highly rewarding, intense foods like buffalo wings, pizza or chocolate cake that they actually don't know what it feels like to enjoy something that's simple and unrefined. There's a lot of enjoyment in healthy eating. The longer you do it, the more it becomes enjoyable."

Carol Sanders is a professional writer and can be reached at GoodEyePress@gmail.com.

Japanese Noritos

2 sheets nori
1 tsp low-sodium miso paste
¼ cup cooked brown rice
½ small Persian cucumber, julienned
1 ½ Tbsp shredded carrots (chard, dandelion greens, kale and/or spinach)
1 tsp low-sodium tamari
1 tsp sesame seeds

Place nori sheets on a flat surface. Gently and evenly place miso paste on half of each nori sheet. Add brown rice, Persian cucumber and shredded carrots on top of miso paste. Drizzle with tamari and lightly sprinkle sesame seeds over top. Tightly roll the nori sheets like a burrito from ingredient-filled side. Slice into pieces to make them easier to eat.

Courtesy of Julieanna Hever.
For more information, visit PlantBasedDietitian.com.



Almond Cinnamon Granola

1 12-oz jar unsweetened applesauce
10 dates, pitted
1 Tbsp vanilla extract
1 tsp cinnamon
6 cups plus 2 Tbsp thick rolled oats
1 cup sliced raw almonds (optional)
1 cup raisins (optional)



Blend the applesauce, dates, vanilla, cinnamon and 2 tablespoons of oats in a blender until smooth. In a large bowl, combine the applesauce mixture with the remaining oats. Spread mixture evenly onto dehydrator racks or baking sheets. Cook in a dehydrator set on high (160° F) for 7 to 8 hours or in an oven set at 225° F for 1½ hours until slightly brown and crunchy. If using an oven, make sure to break up the granola and turn it every 15 minutes to ensure even cooking. Once cooked, add almonds and raisins, if desired.

Courtesy of Micaela Karlsen.

Chocolate Chip Pumpkin Muffins

Preheat oven to 375° F. In a large bowl, combine mashed banana, pumpkin puree, maple

1 medium banana, mashed
15-oz can sweet pumpkin puree
¼ cup 100 percent pure maple syrup
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 cups gluten-free, all-purpose, whole-grain flour blend
½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
1 tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground nutmeg
¼ tsp ground ginger
1 cup dairy-free chocolate chips (grain-sweetened)

syrup and vanilla. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger. Transfer dry mixture to large bowl and mix together gently until well combined. Avoid over-mixing to prevent toughness in the final product. Fold in chocolate chips. Spoon batter into silicon muffin cups and bake for 20 minutes or until the muffins are lightly browned. Remove muffins from the oven and let cool for five minutes. Store in an airtight container.

Courtesy of Julieanna Hever. For more information, visit PlantBasedDietitian.com.



INTEGRATIVE HEALTH FOR MEN

Natural Approaches for Robust Vitality

by Ronica O'Hara



Statistically speaking, living long and well is an uphill battle for most American men. Compared to women, they eat worse, smoke more, drink harder, exercise less and suffer more injuries. They live on average five fewer years than women. At birth, they outnumber women 105 to 100, but by age 60, it's flipped to 95 to 100. Of the 15 leading causes of death, the only one men don't lead in is Alzheimer's, because many of them don't live long enough to develop it.

Men are markedly slow to consult doctors. Seventy-two percent would rather do household chores like cleaning toilets, one survey found, and 37 percent admitted that they withheld information from doctors to avoid hearing a bad diagnosis. When more serious symptoms arise like chest pain or painful urination, they can turn to medical specialists and the latest technology to get heart stents inserted, kidneys flushed out and pain lowered with pharmaceuticals. By then, however, disease can be advanced and the prognosis dimmer.

But that "macho man" approach is ebbing as men—especially millennials—increasingly adopt proactive integrative strategies to take control of their health. "As traditional gender roles continue to fade with the times, there will be less of a stigma around men's health care and we'll start to see more and more men placing greater importance on their health," says integrative internist Myles Spar, M.D., co-author of *Integrative Men's Health* and chief medical officer of Vault, a men's health care organization. By dealing head-on with not just a condition's symptoms, but also with its physical, mental and emotional roots, men can become better equipped to enjoy long

years of robust health.

HEART DISEASE

The leading cause of death for men in the U.S., heart disease kills one in four men. Half of those that died suddenly exhibited no previous symptoms. Men develop heart disease 10 years younger than women on average, possibly because estrogen has a protective effect on coronary arteries. Stress, especially in economically beleaguered occupations and areas, takes a toll, as evidenced by rising drug abuse among men nationwide. "Overall, it appears that men's coping with stressful events may be less adaptive physiologically, behaviorally and emotionally, contributing to their increased risk for coronary heart disease," concludes a State University of New York at Stonybrook study.

SYMPTOMS: chest pain, irregular heartbeat, dizziness, shortness of breath, extreme fatigue, sensations in arms and legs such as pain, swelling, weakness or tingling.

NEW RESEARCH: Active, 40-ish men that were able to do 40 pushups had a 96 percent lower risk of cardiovascular disease in the next 10 years than men doing less than 10 pushups, a Harvard study concludes. A 10-year study of 134,297 people from 21 countries found that eating six ounces or more each week of processed meat like bacon, sausages and salami was linked to a 46 percent higher risk of cardiovascular disease and a 51 percent higher risk of death.

INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES: "An integrative model for heart disease, when done properly, hunts down chronic inflammation in the body wherever it is and attempts to remedy it naturally, which is why we have had so much more success and significantly fewer side effects than conventional medicine," says naturopathic cardiologist Decker Weiss, of Scottsdale, Arizona, a pioneer in the field. Typically, integrative cardiologists will interview a patient to determine the root causes of inflammation, including diet, physical activity and emotional stress. After targeted lab tests, they may prescribe botanicals along with pharmaceuticals like diuretics and beta blockers to manage fluids and vital signs. They often focus on repairing the gastrointestinal tract with specific probiotics and restoring the endothelium (the inner lining of blood vessels) with nutrients like magnesium, coenzyme Q10 and alpha-lipoic acid. They'll encourage patients to switch to healthier, plant-based diets; perhaps to undergo a colon, liver or lymph cleanse; and exercise and use stress-reducing practices like meditation or martial arts.

ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

Erectile dysfunction (ED), the inability to get and keep an erection firm enough for sex, often drives a man to seek medical care. An erection—a complex interplay among the brain, hormones, emotions, nerves, muscles and blood vessels—can be

hampered by such conditions as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, high cholesterol, insomnia and alcohol use. Although a quarter of new patients with ED are under age 40, mild and moderate ED affects approximately 50 percent of men in their 50s and 60 percent in their 60s.

Integrative medicine offers potent strategies such as exercise, weight loss, good sleep and a varied diet, factors that can reverse ED, according to Australian researchers. "Men aren't ever going to stop eating hotdogs in the name of 'wellness', but if you tell a man that eating hotdogs will impact his ability to get erections, he'll never eat a hotdog again," says Spar.

SYMPTOMS: repeated difficulty getting or maintaining an erection, reduced sexual desire.

NEW RESEARCH: In a survey of 12 studies involving 8,300 participants, the longer-lasting erection drug Cialis (tadalafil) beat out Viagra (sildenafil) as the drug of choice by a three to one margin. Cornell researchers found that of the 48 percent of older men in one study with ED, only 7 percent had tried an erection drug, and fewer than half refilled the initial prescription, partly due to unpleasant side effects.

INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES: An integrative strategy typically involves a doctor checking and increasing a man's testosterone levels if necessary; a thorough checkup and lab tests to detect and treat causes such as diabetes and high cholesterol; and vetting and replacing medications such as antihistamines and blood pressure drugs that might cause ED. For relationship problems, anxiety or depression, a cognitive behavioral therapist might be recommended and mindfulness meditation might be encouraged to reduce stress.

A weight-loss plan featuring more produce and less meat is typically suggested: men with a 42-inch waist are 50 percent more likely to have ED than men with a 32-inch waist. Some foods like arginine-rich oatmeal and antioxidant-rich pomegranate juice, as well as supplements like DHEA, L-arginine, zinc and panax ginseng have also proven helpful in studies. Effective exercises include Kegels to strengthen pelvic floor muscles, Pilates to build core strength and aerobic workouts to strengthen blood vessels. Just 30 minutes of walking each day was linked to a 41 percent drop in risk for ED, Harvard researchers found.

PROSTATE CANCER

Prostate cancer affects one in eight men, 60 percent of which are over age 65. African American men get prostate cancer younger, have more severe cases and are twice as likely to die from it. Although it's not as virulent as most other cancers, it

requires monitoring, sometimes for decades, which compels some men to get serious about diet and exercise. "If you hear you have cancer, the rug is pulled out from underneath you and you feel you've lost your locus of control to surgeons and other doctors," says integrative oncologist Donald Abrams, of the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of California at San Francisco. "But lifestyle changes are important, useful and have an impact, and they're something patients themselves have control over and can decide to do."

SYMPTOMS: They may be silent or involve frequent urination, weak or interrupted urine flow, urinary leaking, needing to urinate frequently at night, blood in the urine, erectile dysfunction or discomfort when sitting.

NEW RESEARCH: The more faithfully that men with localized prostate cancer followed a Mediterranean diet, the better their disease fared, report University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center researchers. Drinking several cups of coffee every day may be linked to a lower risk of developing prostate cancer, suggests a pooled data analysis in the online journal *BMJ Open*. A new urine test for prostate cancer is so accurate it could have eliminated the need for one-third of biopsies in a recent study of 1,500 patients in the *Journal of Urology*.

INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES: In a 2018 comprehensive review of prostate cancer studies published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, Abrams recommends a plant-based, antioxidant-rich diet that emphasizes cruciferous vegetables, tomatoes, soy, pomegranate, green tea and fish-based omega-3s; limiting meat, sugary drinks and saturated fats; supplementing with vitamin D₃ and omega-3s while avoiding selenium and vitamin E; exercising daily, with yoga and tai chi especially providing mind-body benefits; and using acupuncture to manage the side effects of conventional treatments. To combat the anxiety that can arise during the period between a diagnosis and surgery, Abrams suggests stress-reducing therapies like mindfulness training, reiki and support groups.



A patient receiving NeuroStar transcranial magnetic stimulation therapy.

DEPRESSION

Up to one-third of men may experience depression, but it's marked more by bravado than tears. "Rather than appearing sad, men with depression are more likely to react with anger, self-destructive behavior, self-distracted, or numbing of pain with substance use, gambling, womanizing and workaholism," concludes a major University of Michigan study in *JAMA Psychiatry*. Irritability, blowing up at minor annoyances, sudden spells of aggression and risky behaviors are other hallmarks. Men are far less likely than women to seek treatment and four times as likely to die by suicide.

SYMPTOMS: Besides anger and irritability, depressed men are more prone to lose weight rather than gain it, become obsessive-compulsive rather than anxious and experience physical problems like headaches, stomach ailments and chronic pain.

NEW RESEARCH: Men with moderate to high levels of what Russian researchers call

"vital exhaustion", marked by excessive fatigue, demoralization and irritability, are 16 percent more likely to have a heart attack within 15 years. The risk doubles for men that never married, were divorced or became widowed.

INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES: "First, it is important to get a lab screening to rule out low testosterone, vitamin deficiencies, anemia and thyroid problems," says holistic psychiatrist W. Nate Upshaw, M.D., medical director of NeuroSpaTMS, in Tampa. He also checks for sleep disorders, treats with cognitive behavioral therapy and after getting lab results, suggests such supplements as vitamins B₁₂, D₃ and methylfolate. His lab focuses particularly on transcranial magnetic stimulation therapy, which a 2020 Stanford study found to be 90 percent effective in relieving drug-resistant depression. "It restores healthy brain function without medications, and with essentially no side effects," says Upshaw, adding that the approach is particularly good for men that want to avoid the sexual side effects of antidepressants. 🍀

Natural health writer Ronica O'Hara can be reached at OHaraRonica@gmail.com.

TO LEARN MORE

INTEGRATIVE CANCER CARE: A four-part video lecture series by integrative oncologist Donald Abrams, M.D., of the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of California at San Francisco. Osher.ucsf.edu/patient-care/patient-care-team/donald-abrams.

HEALTH SELF-QUIZ: Myles Spar, M.D., co-author of *Integrative Men's Health*, offers a simple quiz that helps identify health problems and proposes integrative strategies. Tinyurl.com/DrSparHealthQuiz.

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Beat the Blues Naturally Drug-Free Ways to Treat Depression

by Julie Peterson

Lack of interest, low energy, changes in weight, difficulty concentrating and feelings of worthlessness are some of the symptoms that can occur in varying degrees with depression. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, an estimated 17.3 million adults in the U.S. experienced at least one major depressive episode in 2017. With the pandemic, the rate tripled, with 27.8 percent of adults reporting symptoms, according to a September 2020 study published in *JAMA Network Open*.

Mainstream medical doctors typically prescribe antidepressant drugs, but the plethora of adverse effects such as anxiety, digestive disturbances, headaches, weight gain and sexual dysfunction can cause additional woes. In addition, efficacy is in question. In *The Emperor's New Drugs: Exploding the Antidepressant Myth*, Irving Kirsch, Ph.D., professor of psychology at the UK University of Hull, declares, "The belief that antidepressants can cure depression chemically is simply wrong."

Antidepressants may merely mask symptoms. "Covering over symptoms is a missed opportunity to resolve the root cause of the problem," says Manhattan-based holistic psychiatrist Kelly Brogan, author of *A Mind of Your Own* and co-editor of the textbook

Integrative Therapies for Depression.

Further, because many depressed people do not receive treatment due to financial, cultural or personal reasons, effective alternative therapies are necessary for improving public health.

Nature's Medicine

Before starting any treatment, it's important to verify that depression exists and rule out potential conditions like nutritional deficiencies, low thyroid function, food allergies or other issues.

Many people find that herbs provide gentler action and fewer adverse effects than conventional antidepressants. Even some conventional health practitioners are beginning to get on board. Women's health expert Nicole Galan, RN, wrote in a 2019 article in *Medical News Today*, "Medications and counseling are conventional ways to alleviate the symptoms of depression. However, some herbs and supplements may also help."

Common herbs include St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), which has been shown to work about the same as antidepressants for mild and moderate depression; American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) and Asian ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), which

improve mental clarity and energy, and reduce the effects of stress; and saffron (*Crocus sativus*), which is safe and effective, although expensive. While herbal medicines are available over the counter, it's important to consult with a doctor or herbalist, as some are not safe in conjunction with other medications or during pregnancy.

Homeopathic remedies are more complex, personalized and diluted, but have no contraindications. Lone Pedersen, a certified classical homeopath in Seattle, says that homeopathy treatments are "gentle, safe, non-toxic and side-effect free."

Clean Food Improves Mood

Several studies have found that eating a poor-quality diet high in processed meat, sweets, fried food, refined cereals and high-fat dairy leads to a higher likelihood of depression. "The single greatest thing anyone can do for their health is to eat whole foods, including organic vegetables, fruits, high-quality proteins, whole grains and healthy fats," says Dorothy Calimeris, an author and wellness coach in Oakland, whose cookbooks promote anti-inflammatory diets for optimal health.

Inflammation has been linked to numerous health issues, including depression. To start an anti-inflammatory diet, eliminate foods that commonly trigger inflammation, starting with gluten, soy, corn and the biggest culprit of all, sugar. A 2019 study by University of Kansas researchers and other studies indicate that sugar itself is a trigger for mental health issues.

Don't forget about the "food" the skin absorbs. Switching to organic body care and home cleaning products minimizes exposure to biology-disrupting toxins that have been linked to depression.

Set the Endorphins Free

Many studies have shown that exercise reduces the symptoms of depression. Extra boosts come from getting outside to increase levels of vitamin D and exercising with a friend to enhance social support. Just 20 to 30 minutes of activity several times each week improves well-being. The best news is that any movement helps—walking, tai chi, gardening, dancing—anything that feels good.

"Taking a yoga class helps to relieve depression by increasing focus

and attention, releasing endorphins and oxytocin, stretching the body, relaxing tension, creating community and adjusting breathing patterns," says Rose Kress, owner and director of LifeForce Yoga Institute, in Lebanon, Oregon, and author of *Awakening Your Inner Radiance with LifeForce Yoga*. She recommends determining one enjoyable pose and practicing it every day: "Five minutes a day is enough to make a change." ♣

Julie Peterson writes about wellness and environmental issues and has contributed to *Natural Awakenings* for more than a decade.

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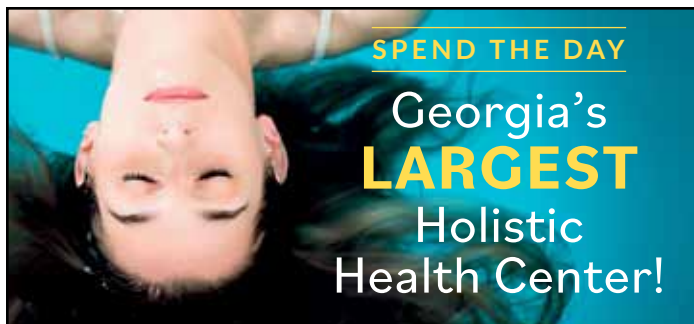
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The Age of ANTI-AGING

by Susan Gonzalez

From the moment of birth, our bodies begin to age; it's a natural process that cannot be avoided.

The anti-aging skincare industry, however, wants to help us try. In 2020, U.S. consumers spent over \$52 billion on anti-aging skincare products alone. While getting older might be inevitable, looking older isn't something many will accept without a fight.



Skin's Aging Process

Here's a brief overview of the aging process of the skin: Inside the body, aging depletes hormones, skin's oil production and water retention. The resulting dryness, combined with a lack of collagen and/or elastin, helps to form wrinkles in the skin. Collagen and elastin are the substances in the skin's deep layers that keep skin plump and firm.

Externally, skin is exposed to solar radiation, pollution and poor skincare habits, which lead to sagging skin and dark spots.

There are ways to combat aging skin, both on the inside and the outside. First, keep in mind that every routine that seeks to turn back the clock must be met with strict routine and patience. Most wrinkle creams that actually do help fade wrinkles—and don't merely “reduce the appearance” of them—take about 80 days before you can begin to see their effects. A good anti-aging skincare regimen incorporates a multitude of products and strategies that work from many angles to get real results, especially if a more natural method, without injections and fillers, is desired.

How to Maintain a Youthful Appearance

There are many lifestyle habits that promote a youthful appearance, including:

- Avoiding smoking and secondhand smoke
- Getting at least eight hours of sleep per night
- Maintaining a regular exercise routine that includes getting your heart rate up
- Addressing any estrogen loss, if applicable
- Drinking half your weight in ounces of chlorine-filtered water

- Avoiding the sun, wearing sunscreen or wearing physical protection
- Adopting a diet that's high in colorful fruits and veggies and low in animal protein
- Avoiding processed foods and foods with added sugars that cause spikes in blood sugar
- Maintaining a healthy gut by eating fermented and raw foods

Don't forget that skin is deeply entwined with every other system in the body, so keeping the body healthy keeps skin looking its best.

One should know that 80% of premature aging damage comes from sun exposure. When people ask me to tell them the number one anti-aging product on the market, I always respond, “Sunscreen!” The damage that can occur from the sun alone is significant, as the sun's UVA rays penetrate deeply into the layers of the skin and wreak havoc with the elastin that holds the skin taught. It also creates damage in the form of “age spots” that come to the surface years later. Whether it's a chemical sunscreen, which absorbs radiation from under the skin, or mineral sunscreen, which reflects it from the surface, SPF of 30 or more should be part of everyone's routine, regardless of age.

Just Google “truck driver sun damage” to see how aging the sun's rays can be!

Ingredients to Watch For

A few ingredients can penetrate deeply into the skin to rejuvenate it and to combat wrinkles, fade dark spots and give skin a youthful

glow. Read the labels of your skincare products and look for the following:

Antioxidants

Antioxidants act by stopping the cell damage caused by “free radicals” that are produced by pollution, poor diet and stress. They prevent the destruction of the DNA and slow the aging process. They include vitamin C, vitamin E, alpha-lipoic acid, idebenone, stearyl glycyrrhizinate, green tea, pomegranate and coenzyme Q-10.

Peptides

Peptides are very small molecules that stimulate actions in the skin, such as creating more collagen, firming tissue, and strengthening cells. Some peptides act on the nerves like liquid Botox, stopping the contractions that cause wrinkles, and some inhibit the enzyme that causes melanin to create dark spots. Peptides are very safe, have little or no side effects and are usually able to penetrate deep into the skin. Some of the most popular ones include palmitoyl tetrapeptide-7, palmitoyl pentapeptide, acetyl hexapeptide-8 and acetyl tetrapeptide-9.

Acids and retinoids

These chemical exfoliators serve to constantly resurface the skin by forcing it to replenish the surface with healthy new cells. Acids and retinoids can help diminish fine lines and wrinkles, hydrate



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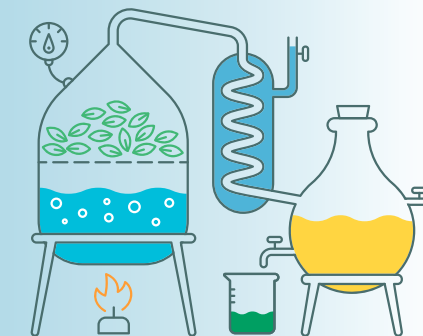
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the skin, help encourage new collagen formation and help control acne. Any anti-aging routine should include something from this category. They include glycolic acid, lactic acid, mandelic acid, retinol and tretinoin (Retin-A). [For more about this, see "Exfoliation Explained" in our May 2021 issue.—Ed.]

Polyglucans and beta-glucans
These sugars, found in the cell walls of plants, are great for sensitive skin. They are high in antioxidants, slowing the rate of cell damage and aging. Polyglucans and beta-glucans are also super hydrators; they can absorb 10 times their weight in water, and some think they hydrate the skin better than hyaluronic acid. They protect the skin barrier that keeps skin healthy. They include mushroom extracts, yeasts, algae extract and oat extract.

Plant stem cell extracts
Stem cells are special. They can regenerate and form new cells and tissue of the specific structure or organ from which they came. The stem cells used in cosmetics are derived from plants and are sometimes labeled "plant extracts," "phyto stem cells" or "fruit extracts." Plant stem cells can only cause the growth of new plant parts, but stem cell extracts are high in antioxidant power and can stimulate the production of fibroblast cells, which are the most common cells of connective tissue in animals and are responsible for synthesizing collagen. Studies demonstrated that apple stem cell extract alone could reduce crow's feet wrinkles by 15% in four weeks.

The real power of the plant stem cell will

come in the near future when live stem cells will be deeply absorbed into the skin and generate new skin cells and new collagen! It will be a game-changer for the anti-aging industry. Apple, tomato, ginger and grape stem cells are some of the ones in use today.

Glycoproteins
Glycoproteins help maintain a healthy skin barrier by binding to water and increasing cell oxygen. They are molecular chains of carbohydrates and proteins derived from algae, and they work great with other hydrators and moisturizers, such as hyaluronic acid and ceramides. Glycoproteins help protect the skin's surface.

There are many strategies that help combat the effects of aging on the skin. As you put them into play, remember that aging is affected by what goes on inside, outside, and around the body. There isn't one magic bullet that will fix all aging issues. The skin needs support from all angles, including diet, exercise, product choices and management of stress. For best results, work with a licensed esthetician to create an optimal skincare plan. 🌿



Photo: Audrey Pruitt

Susan Gonzalez is a holistic licensed esthetician, author, nurse and owner of MOON Organics, a skincare company providing clean, healthy skincare and personal care products. Reach her on FB, IG and TW at @MoonOrganics or visit MoonOrganics.com.

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Simple Ways to Calm Anxious Children

by Sandra Yeyati



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It doesn't take a full-on tantrum for children to experience or exhibit stress. According to licensed school psychologist and spiritual counselor Zemirah Jazwierska, anxiety is a child's natural response to not having consistency or predictability in their environment. During the pandemic, with school closings, social isolation and associated challenges, childhood angst is on the rise, says the Boulder, Colorado, blogger at *KidsRelaxation.com*.

Setting a Calm Example

Jazwierska believes that it's never too early to expose kids to relaxation practices. She invites moms to incorporate meditation even while they're pregnant, "to bathe their little babies in lots of good-feeling hormones and chemicals." After birth, while an infant may be too young to learn how to meditate, she recommends that parents create relaxing home settings where impressionable kids will naturally learn to chill out. "Babies are continually sensing their environments," she says. "Just speaking in a calm voice or

slowing down the pace of life, taking time to connect or practicing infant massage can prime their little minds and bodies for learning how to self-regulate, cope with life and default to relaxation mode just as soon as they feel stressed."

Benefits of Kid Relaxation Techniques

From breathing games and animal-like yoga positions to meditative art activities and mindful nature walks, child-friendly relaxation techniques are limited only by our imagination. When practiced consistently, they offer numerous benefits, including increased awareness, attention, empathy, resilience and generosity; less emotional reactivity; and improved memory, according to Whitney Stewart, meditation teacher and author of *Mindful Kids: 50 Mindfulness Activities for Kindness, Focus and Calm* (BarefootBooks.com/mindful-kids).

Getting Started

Stewart recommends that parents and caregivers consider adopting their own mindfulness or meditation practices before introducing them to their children. "The next step could be to invite children to practice with you," she advises. "With toddlers, this may be an invitation to sit or lie down with hands on their tummy or chest to let them feel their breath coming in and going out of their body. Young children don't always have an awareness of their breath. Parents and caregivers can help them understand how we breathe in different situations; how breath can speed up or slow down in response to our physical and emotional state."

Making Relaxation Fun

According to Stewart, small children respond best to mindfulness exercises that are both physical and fun. Her *Animal Antics* is one example, in which kids explore movement meditation by pretending to be different animals. Another is *Shake the Sillies Out*, which involves "happy-shaking until you finally flop on the floor

Continued on page 35

Andria Somers on HOLISTIC PARENTING



a safe, supportive environment in which families can access resources and experience camaraderie in attaining natural living and gentle parenting.

How has HMN impacted your life?

I attended my first HMN meeting in 2012, after my oldest daughter was born. I became a member after learning about the organization and all that they offered. That was a life-changing moment for me. HMN very quickly became a central aspect of my mothering journey. I joined the national team in November of 2012, and my role evolved to executive director in 2017. Parenting has been my most transformative experience thus far, and HMN inspires me every day on this journey with all that its volunteers, members and advocates give as far as support, knowledge, ideas and most importantly, community.

What is holistic parenting?

Holistic parenting begins with an understanding and respect for how all living things are connected and how we impact one another. Holistic parenting embraces green and non-toxic living, non-violent communication and natural health. We be-

Andria Somers is the executive director of the Holistic Moms Network (HMN), which connects families interested in positive, holistic parenting, health and green living, providing them with helpful information and other support. The organization was formed in Essex County, New Jersey, in 2002 by a handful of mothers seeking to associate with others sharing the same goals. One of the moms, Nancy Peplinski, decided to expand the vision of the informal group and established it as a nonprofit in 2003.

Rapid growth made apparent the need for community support of naturally minded families across the country. In its first year of operation, HMN evolved from a local group to a nationwide organization with more than 25 chapters in 14 states. Founded on the cornerstones of community and connection, the mission of HMN is to provide



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The Mantram of Unification

The sons of men are one
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I seek to love, not hate;
I seek to serve and not
exact due service;
I seek to heal, not hurt.

Let pain bring due reward
of light and love.

Let the soul control the outer
form, and life and all events,

And bring to light the
love which underlies the
happenings of the time.

Let vision come and insight.
Let the future stand revealed.
Let inner union demonstrate
and outer cleavages be gone.

Let love prevail.
Let all men love.

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lieve there are seven guiding principles for holistic parenting which we follow: make informed and educated parenting decisions; seek respectful and nurturing relationships with others; actively participate in one's own healing process; balance and integrate physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of being; teach children how to respect and care about the natural world; limit children's exposure to advertising, marketing and a consumer-driven culture; and live more simply and consume less.

How does HMN differ from other parenting groups?

The heart and soul of HMN is to connect families through volunteer-led chapters and intentional communities across the country. We are authentic, passionate about our purpose and committed to our mission. HMN is how we bring together local parents for support and join our voices as a national community. We recognize that everyone is on their own path, yet on this journey together. Members are encouraged to respect one another's views, offer support and learn from each other. HMN wants to generate national awareness, education and support for holistic parenting and green living. Our groups meet about once a month in a public venue where all are welcome. We provide nurturing, open-minded and respectful

local community networks that encourage families to share these ideals and learn from each other.

What advice would you offer to a new parent just beginning their journey of holistic parenting?

As a parent, it's important to have a network of support. Being connected to like-minded individuals who do not judge makes all the difference in the world. It truly does take a village to raise a child, and you can choose how you build your village. There will be countless people offering advice, so be discerning and see what resonates with you. I truly believe that we are all here to help and support one another. HMN is a way to build relationships and connect with other parents to form friendships that last a lifetime. 🌱

For more information, including on becoming a member, visit HolisticMoms.org.

This article was written by a KnoWEwell (KWW) staff member. Holistic Moms Network and Natural Awakenings are collaborative partners of KWW, a benefits and services company that operates the global Regenerative Whole Health community and marketplace platform KnoWEwell.com.

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Local Holistic Moms Learning and Growing Together

by Diane Eaton



DIY Rose Bath Tea gathering February 2020 (Photo: Jennifer Letzer)

It all seemed to fall into her lap. A few years ago, when Gabriela Monge and her growing family were still living in Virginia, she had reached out to the Holistic Moms Network (HMN) to inquire about openings to co-lead a local chapter. She had recently begun learning about diet and health, and once that door opened, she never looked back. "Since then, it's been a constant forward movement of better choices for mind, body and spirit in parenting and in health—physically, mentally, emotionally. And it hasn't stopped," she says.

So when Monge and her family moved to Atlanta in 2019, HMN returned the favor. They asked her if she was still interested in co-leading a chapter. Atlanta didn't have one yet.

Meanwhile, Jennifer Letzer had joined some HMN meetings in California and loved them. "It felt so great to learn from other moms and other people who had so much knowledge about different kinds of natural practices and healthier ways of doing things," says Letzer. "That experience of community and feeling like you have a place to talk about things you're interested in with other

parents—it just felt really special."

It just so happens that Letzer and her family moved to Atlanta from Southern California in 2019, too, which is when she found Monge's fledgling West Atlanta Metro HMN chapter on Facebook. When the two finally connected, it felt right. And Atlanta had its two co-leads.

They had a successful kickoff meeting in December of that year and rented their ideal venue for February 2020—an assisted living facility about halfway between them. Everything seemed to be in motion. Then, of course, the pandemic shut everything down.

Monge and Letzer had to pivot. Fast. "We immediately switched to virtual meetings and kept the momentum going," says Letzer, a certified labor doula and trained lactation educator. In March, they checked in personally with all of the members to see how everyone was "really" doing. Then they set up twice-monthly Zoom "coffee chats" to be supportive and helpful during such demanding, stressful times.

They stayed focused, filling the calendar with fun, informative topics or DIY projects to engage in. For the March gathering, the group learned

to make DIY Fire Cider, an immune-boosting winter tonic—with a kick—that's made with apple cider vinegar, ginger, garlic, cayenne and honey and fermented for a couple of months. "It nips sore throats in the bud!" says Letzer.

Over the last year, members have presented a wide variety of topics, including the uses and benefits of turmeric, making rose tea baths, mindful parenting, vision boards, and the pros and cons of cloth diapers. They've also had a day of group shopping to get discounted volume pricing on spices, oils, teas and other things they needed.

But the exchange of tips, ideas and information isn't the only draw to the group. "You're in a community, a band of families," says Monge, "all sorts of people who have ideas and passions, all in the realm of mindfulness, gentle parenting, recycling, caring for the earth, caring for our bodies, caring for one another."

"It is so nurturing and feels so natural to have a community that is with me," adds Letzer. "Holistic parenting has allowed me to have a better understanding and respect for how we're all connected and how we can impact one another."

Both leaders are passionate about making sure people know that there are no requirements about who can participate or join. "We don't want people to think this is just for moms. It's for anyone," says Monge. "And we don't want people to fear being judged, either. We don't want someone to think, 'You know, I formula-fed my baby. I don't want to be judged.' They won't be."

Topics for upcoming months include DIY kombucha, foraging family hikes, healthy lunch ideas and homeopathy for sleep and stress.

Attendance at West Atlanta Metro Holistic Moms Network meetings is free, but membership is encouraged after two or three visits. The cost of membership is \$30 for the year, which helps to pay for visiting speakers. The organization is a nonprofit, and leadership is on a voluntary basis. For more information, visit their Facebook page or Chapters.HolisticMoms.org/Chapters/GA-WestAtlanta/ 🌱



Jennifer Letzer
(Photo: Jennifer Letzer)



Gabriela Monge
(Photo: Ivette Gonzalez)

CHAIR YOGA

Adapting the Practice to Fit Your Needs

by Sheila Ewers



Have you avoided a traditional yoga practice because of an injury? Do you struggle with balance or mobility? Have you been diagnosed with arthritis or osteoporosis? Is it difficult for you to get up from a seated position on the floor? Do you spend many hours at your desk? Do you have limited floor space for a yoga mat? If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, chair yoga might be for you.

Chair yoga is an adaptation of traditional hatha yoga. Virtually every yoga pose can be modified with the use of a chair as a supportive prop to make the practice more accessible and enjoyable. Many of the basic body mechanics of the poses remain the same. Practitioners can access deep stretches, twists, hip openers, core strengthening, back bends and more while seated in a chair. They can also derive the same benefits that they would in a full mat practice, including enhanced muscle tone, better balance, reduced stress and a heightened sense of well-being.

Many people who are not otherwise able to practice more vigorous types of yoga enjoy a chair practice, but some choose it simply for the convenience. A quick chair pose or two sprinkled throughout the day can break up the stagnation of desk work, relieve the aches and pains of long travel and revitalize the body’s energy.

Tips for Practicing Chair Yoga Safely

- Place the chair on a non-slip surface like a yoga mat to prevent accidental sliding.
- Use a sturdy chair. A folding chair is fine, but a heavier chair is ideal so that you can lean into it without fear of it tipping or falling.
- Use blankets or cushions behind you to help support your spine, and use blocks as needed beneath your feet to optimize blood flow.
- If you experience difficulty with balance, keep one hand on the chair at all times, especially when transitioning from one pose to another or from the chair to the floor.

A Yoga Sequence to Practice in a Chair

Seated Mountain Pose

Sit upright in the chair with your hands resting gently on your lap. Plant your feet firmly on the floor or blocks. Elongate your spine and take several deep, diaphragmatic breaths.



Photos: Sheila Ewers

Seated Cat/Cow Flow

Sit on the chair with your spine long and with both feet on the floor. Place your hands on your knees or the tops of your thighs. On an exhale, round your spine and drop your chin to your chest, letting the shoulders and head come forward. This is Cat position. On an inhale, arch your spine and roll your shoulders down and back, bringing your shoulder blades onto your back. This is Cow position.

Continue moving between Cow on the inhalations and Cat on the exhalations for five breaths.



Spinal Twist

With your legs facing forward in the chair, turn your torso toward the left and hold onto the back of the chair with your left hand. Place your right hand on your left leg for a spinal twist. Lengthen your spine on each inhale and twist gently on each exhale for five breaths. Then repeat on the opposite side.



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Crescent Warrior

Turn your whole body towards the right side of the chair. With your right hand, firmly grasp the back of the chair. Then grasp the front edge of the chair with your left hand while you slide your left leg behind you. Keep your toes turned under, and press the heel of your back foot away. If you feel stable, reach one or both arms overhead. Hold for five breaths.



Seated Extended Side Angle

From Crescent Warrior, pivot your left heel down to the mat, externally rotating your left hip. Be sure that you are fully supported on the chair. Rest your right forearm on your right thigh, and stretch your left arm overhead, creating a straight line from your left heel to your left finger tips. Hold for five breaths.

Turn forward on the chair. Rest for a moment. Then repeat Crescent Warrior and Extended Side Angle on the opposite side.



Seated Pigeon

Sitting upright in the chair, bring your right ankle to rest on your left thigh. Flex your right foot to strengthen the right ankle. You can remain upright or bend forward to intensify the stretch if you like. Hold for five breaths, then repeat with the left leg.



Supported Downward Facing Dog

Ensure that your chair is stable and secure, then walk to the back of the chair and grasp firmly. Walk your feet back and lean forward until your head and torso make a ninety-degree angle. Engage your abdominal muscle for support. Hold for five breaths.

Legs on a Chair

If you can comfortably get up and down from the floor while using the chair to assist, try this pose instead of *shavasana*, or Corpse pose. If you feel safer in the chair, come back to seated Mountain pose, softening the shoulders away from your ears and breathing gently.



To do Legs on a Chair, place your calves on the seat of a chair with bent knees to alleviate strain on your back. Depending on the length of your thigh bones, you might need to add some padding to support your calves. Make sure your back is resting comfortably on the ground, and improvise with blankets or cushions if you feel they will support your relaxation here. Remain for five to 10 minutes.



Sheila Ewers, ERYT500, YACEP, owns Blue Lotus Yoga in Johns Creek. A former professor of writing and literature, she leads group and private lessons, yoga philosophy workshops, yoga teacher training and retreats. Contact Sheila at Sheila@JohnsCreekYoga.com.

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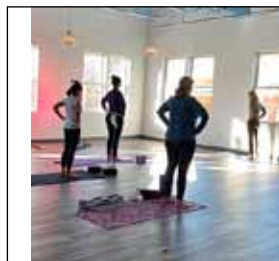
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Traveling for the Planet Sustainable Ways to Explore the World

GREEN LIVING

by Sandra Yeyati



After more than a year in social isolation, many of us are ready to hit the road, meet new people, fly to exotic locations and enjoy the sights and flavors of anywhere-but-here. Although the travel industry is raring to serve pent-up demand, this unprecedented respite can be an opportunity to reset priorities. When choosing hotels, modes of transportation, places to shop and dine, and other activities, consider their sustainability. Tourism need not harm the planet. With proper planning, it can enrich it while benefiting the people living in the places we visit.

Fly Direct and Economy

"Flying is the most carbon-intensive thing we can do in our lives," says Holly Tuppen, author of *Sustainable Travel: The Essential Guide to Positive Impact Adventures*. To reduce emissions, she recommends flying direct in space-saving economy seats; taking longer, less frequent vacations; and using trains or other overland transportation whenever possible.

Take it Slow

In 2010, Tuppen travelled around the world without flying for 20 months. "We walked, biked, sailed across the Atlantic, got on a container ship across the Pacific, took trains, hitchhiked—a whole heap of transport cobbled together," she recalls. "It's not that

bucket-list idea of flying into a place, doing everything quickly and ticking off experiences. With slow travel, you're letting the journey be part of the experience and inevitably, you meet more people along the way."

Don't Overdo It

In another eco-friendly aspect of that excursion, Tuppen visited places that weren't tourism hotspots. "From Venice to Bali to Mexico, there are examples of places that before the pandemic had too many visitors—more than the infrastructure could handle," she says. "That's a massive problem, because it harms the life of local people. When the cruise industry started to stop in Dubrovnik, Croatia, for example, local amenities like hairdressers and grocery stores became souvenir shops."

Keep it Local

According to Tuppen, the needs of locals should take precedence over those of tourists. A related problem is tourism economic leakage. "If you spend \$2,000 on a trip to Thailand, my hope would be that I'd be contributing \$2,000 to the economy in Thailand, but in reality, the way that the tourism supply chain is set up, a huge proportion of that money will end up in the hands of international companies," she explains. "Ideally, we should be looking for accommodations, experiences, stores, restaurants that are all locally owned

rather than being part of an international chain. If you're booking a hotel, 70 percent or more of the workforce should be local."

Pack for a Purpose

To help travelers express their gratitude to a community for their hospitality, Rebecca Rothney founded *PackForAPurpose.org*, which lists items locals need and the accommodations and tour companies that deliver them to more than 450 community projects worldwide. Travelers dedicate a portion of their luggage space to carry in-kind donations and drop them off when they arrive at their hotel or meet their tour guide. Common items are medical and school supplies, as well as crafting materials for women to make and sell items like jewelry and trinkets, providing money to pay for their children's education. "A stethoscope weighs less than a kilo, but it can touch 10,000 hearts," she says.

Book Kind Hotels

Finding sustainable accommodations can be challenging and time-consuming, but *KindTraveler.com* is helping to change that. Recognized by *Travel + Leisure* as a 2020 Global Vision Award recipient, the hotel booking platform offers exclusive rates and perks from vetted, Earth-friendly accommodations when travelers make a nightly donation to a local charity that positively impacts the community visited.

"A \$10 donation will provide care for a rescue kitten for one month in Belize, clean 250 pounds of trash out of a waterway in Sonoma, California, or provide 40 nutritious meals to individuals in need in New York City," says co-founder Jessica Blotter. There are hundreds of participating hotels in 22 countries benefitting 70 global charities with an emphasis on fighting poverty, advancing environmental sustainability and reducing inequalities in communities.

"It's a way to connect, feel good and have meaningful experiences, knowing that your travel dollars are leaving the destination better than before you arrived," Blotter says. ♡

Sandra Yeyati, J.D., is a professional writer. Reach her at SandraYeyati@gmail.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Publicize your event! This section hosts free and paid listings. Each month, we select a limited number of events — they must have broad appeal and cost no more than \$10 to attend — to list for free. Otherwise, basic listings are \$35 and enhanced listings are \$75.

Submit free listings to calendar@naAtlanta.com and paid listings to ads@naAtlanta.com.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2

Virtual Crystals to Ease Transitions – 6pm. Whether you're changing residences, blending families, starting a new school year, changing your diet, or slightly shifting your daily routine, crystals can deliver support and bring ease to your journey through transition. \$10. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

SATURDAY, JUNE 5

Flying Colors Butterfly Festival – June 5-6. 9am-3pm, Sat; 12-5pm, Sun. Visit with live butterflies at the Butterfly Encounter. Meet with pollinator experts and educators. Take part in the Migration Game throughout the festival and learn about monarch migration. Enjoy tasty food and live entertainment. \$12/general, \$10/members, free/children 2 & under. CNC, 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. Registration required: ChattNatureCenter.org.

Free First Saturday: Explore the Creek – 11am-12pm. Wildcat Creek is an important part of all life here at the Nature Center, come find out how. Look for critters, learn about the water cycle, and hike the creek with one of our knowledgeable educators. Free. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. Registration required: 770-394-3322 or DunwoodyNature.org.

TUESDAY, JUNE 8

Virtual A Shamanic Drumming Journey: Deepen Your Relationship with Plants – 1pm. Allow the beat of the drum to take you on a journey to the underworld to connect with a special plant and find a new understanding and relationship with it. \$10. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

THURSDAY, JUNE 10

Picnics with Pollinators: Monarch Butterflies – 6-7pm. Bring your picnic dinner, some drinks,

and some friends to the meadow of DNC to enjoy while learning about some of Georgia's most popular pollinators. With Trecia Neal. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. Registration required: 770-394-3322 or DunwoodyNature.org.

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

Advanced Reflexology Program – 10am-5pm. Attend 1 weekend module per month, June-Oct. A 60-hr, in-depth study of anatomy and physiology, biomechanics, pathology of the lower leg and foot, and advanced reflexology skills including hand reflexology. Course leads to a National Certification by ARCB. Heal Center, 270 Carpenter Dr NE, Ste 505, Sandy Springs. 404-303-0007. HealCenterAtlanta.com.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16

Online: How to Talk to Your Body – 7-8pm. Join Licensed Unity Teacher, Larry Bergmann, for this powerful healing service. Learn techniques for connecting your mind and body together for healing, empowerment and more. Love offering requested. Visit the calendar listing for Zoom link: UnityAtl.org.

FRIDAY, JUNE 18

Remote Healing Through the Holographic Records – 12:15pm. With Jamie Butler and Tatiana Johnson. This guided experience will be remotely repairing your energy tears, removing the energy that is no longer needed, and strengthening your chakra system to a heart-centered focus. \$15. More info & register: JamieButlerMedium.com.

SUNDAY, JUNE 20

Summer Soulstice Yoga – 7-8am. Bring in the new season with yoga in the outdoors led by yoga instructor Kim Hobbs. Dunwoody Nature Center, 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. Registration required: 770-394-3322 or DunwoodyNature.org.

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FRIDAY, JUNE 11

Poetry Open Mic Night – 7-9pm. With Michael Burke. An evening of splendor with enchanting and thought-provoking spoken word performances from some of Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore's flourishing community of poets. Poets of all ages. Free.

FRIDAY, JUNE 18

Online: Past Life Regression – 7-9:30pm. With Don Simmons. Discover for yourself through past life regression why you are the way you are; the hidden meaning of your intimate relationships; the understanding of any difficulty within your life. By seeing it, clarity takes place and healing begins. \$25. Via Zoom.

THURSDAY, JUNE 24

Wisdom and Healing Through Shamanic Journeys – 7-8:30pm. With Vicki Evans. An opportunity to connect with Spirit and your guides for healing and direction. You can use the journeys to ask about all areas of your life, not just the spiritual side. \$20 via PayPal. To register: PayPal.me/vickievanhealing.

THURSDAY, JUNE 24

Virtual Nature Club – 7-9pm. Animal Adaptations with Kathy Church. \$10/general, \$5/CNC Members. Via Zoom. Registration required by June 23: 770-992-2055 or ChattNatureCenter.org.

Online Transmission Meditation – 7:30pm. A meditation to help the world. Sponsored by Share International USA SE Region. Free. Via Zoom. Info: 404-680-7423, Info-SE@Share-International.us. Register: Tinyurl.com/328jh766.

SATURDAY, JUNE 26

Ocmulgee River Day Paddle – 9am-5pm. Explore roughly 13 miles of flatwater river, stopping periodically at the many sandbars (water-level dependent) for a summertime swim. Hawkinsville. More info: GeorgiaConservancy.org.

Refugee Recipe Celebration – 10am-2pm. Special guest cooks with Friends of Refugees will be spicing up the Outdoor Kitchen. In honor of World Refugee Day, short cooking demos from afar will be highlighted. Atlanta Botanical Garden, 1345 Piedmont Ave NE, Atlanta. Space limited; register: AtlantaBG.org.

MONDAY, JUNE 28

Virtual Opening to Inspiration – 11:30am. A life alignment experience. Open the door to your inspiration. Allow your creative side to open up. Listen to your own inspiration and let it shine. \$10. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30

Online: Evening Prayer – 7-8pm. Join Rev. Jennifer L. Sacks and Unity Atlanta for a monthly time of prayer and guided meditation, as we rest from our daily activities and find renewal for a new day. Love offering requested. Visit the calendar listing for Zoom link: UnityAtl.org.

ONGOING EVENTS

sundays

Online Sunday Experience – 9am, Adult Study; 9:30am, Meditation; 10am, Music; 10:30am, Service. With Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta. slc-atlanta.org. To watch: Facebook.com/spirituallivingcenteratlanta.

Red Clay Sangha Sunday Morning Service – 9am, meditation; 10:30-11:30am, dharma discussion. Via Zoom. To watch: RedClaySangha.org.

Online Meditation Open House – 10am. A 30-min meditation and a 30-min discussion via Zoom. To watch: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

One World Spiritual Center Sunday Service – 11am. To watch: OneWorldSpiritualCenter.net.

Shamanic Journey – 11am. 1st Sun. A virtual healing experience brought to you by Heron House via Zoom. Free; donations accepted. To register: Tinyurl.com/yctrp49j.

Unity Atlanta Sunday Services – 11am. Watch live stream or register to attend in person. 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Sunday Morning Talks and Discussion – 11am-12pm. With Vedanta Center of Atlanta via Zoom. To watch: VedantaAtlanta.org.

Unity North Online Sunday Service – 11:15am. To watch: UnityNorth.org.

Last Sunday Social – 12:12-3:33pm. Last Sun with Kosmic Brew. Join us and our community of vendors as we share a healing space, engage in meaningful dialogues and create lasting memories. Gallery 992, 992 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd, Atlanta. More info: Hi@KosmicBrew.com or Linktr.ee/KosmicBrew.

mondays

The {SAMA} Class: Virtual – 9am. Also held Thurs & Fri. Incorporates 25 mins of yoga, 10 mins of breathwork, finishing off with 10 mins of meditation. Each teacher will bring their own spin to the class based on their particular lineage of training. More info: SamaFoodForBalance.com.

tuesdays

Heart Jewel Chanted Prayers and Meditation – Mon-Fri, 8-9am. Chanted Buddhist prayers and meditation. Free. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

Online Meditation Open House – 7pm. A 30-min meditation and a 30-min discussion via Zoom. To watch: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

wednesdays

Zoom Check In: Wellness Wednesdays – 10am. Check in with your community during COVID-19 crisis. slc-atlanta.org.

Decatur Farmers' Market – Thru Nov 17. 4-7pm. Local farmers, artisanal food makers and crafts. Masks required. First Baptist Church Decatur, 308 Clairmont Ave, Decatur. cfmatl.org/decatur.

Unity North Online Wednesday Evening Experience – 7pm. To watch: UnityNorth.org.

Weekly Wednesday Meditation Class – 7-8:30pm. Open to all levels. Experience true inner peace. With the Venerable Nicholas Thannissaro of the Georgia Meditation Center via Zoom. To register: MeditationCircle.org.

thursdays

Dunwoody Beekeeping Club – 6:30-7:30pm. 1st Thurs. Meeting features a program, followed by a question and answer session with the ability to meet and learn from other local beekeepers. Free. 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. DunwoodyNature.org.

Twin Hearts Meditation – 7pm. This meditation is an act of service. We use divine energy to bless the planet, our loved ones and every part of our life. With Atlanta Pranich Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: AtlPranicHealing.com.

fridays

Qigong Exercises & Meditations – 12-12:45pm. 1st & 3rd. Led by Master Cheng, who has been teaching in Atlanta since 1976. Free/member, \$8/nonmember. Tai Chi Association, 3079 Midway Rd, Decatur. More info & registration: Tai-Chi-Association.com.

Drumming Is the People's Medicine – 4-7pm. There is liberation, experimentation, meditation and laughter at this supportive, donation-based gathering for beginners led by Daniel Ellis or Kim Hobbs. Santosha Studio, 896 Davis Dr, Atlanta. More info & to register: Santosha-Studio.com.

Prayers for World Peace – 6:30-7:15pm. An opportunity both to simply pray for world peace and to be a part of the solution. Includes a guided meditation, a short teaching and chanted prayers for world peace. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

saturdays

Free Saturday Meditations – 8-8:30am. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

Dunwoody Nature Center Saturday Volunteers – 9am-12pm. 2nd Sat. For anyone in the community who wishes to volunteer. A wonderful way to start off your weekend in nature and service. To promote social distancing, sign-up is mandatory; limited to 24 people. 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. DunwoodyNature.org.

Oakhurst Farmers' Market – Thru Dec. 9am-1pm. Closed Dec 25. Fresh produce, meat, baked treats, and more. Additional offerings include live music and chef demonstrations featuring seasonal recipes. Masks required. Sceptre Brewing Arts, 630E Lake Dr, Decatur. cfmatl.org/oakhurst. Free Online Guided Meditation for All – 9:45-11am. Will go over basics and guided meditation. No prior experience is needed. Classes meant to come together and meditate and learn little by little. Via Zoom. Register: Tinyurl.com/y3x5yy2s.

Continued from page 24

with a deep exhalation, followed by three mindful breaths. This one really helps work out kids' excess energy," she says.

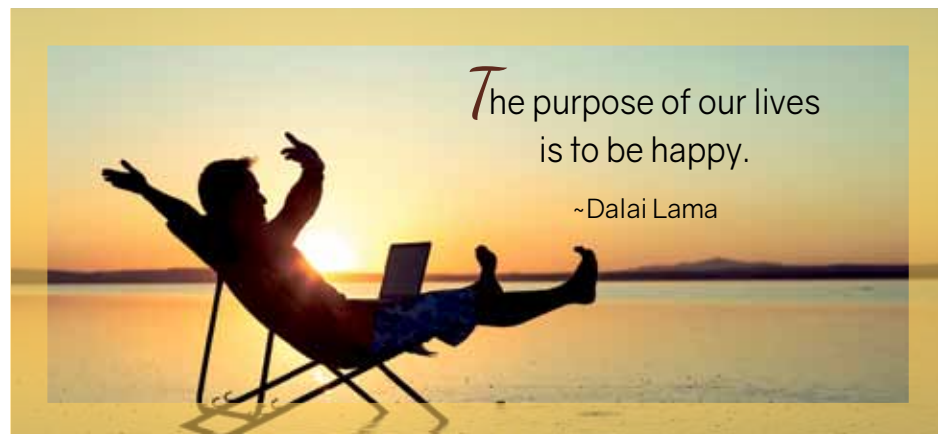
On her website, Jazwierska offers myriad examples of fun and creative activities to calm and awaken children. She teaches breathing techniques by offering imagery kids can understand, like smelling a flower to learn deep inhalations and blowing out a candle for the exhalations. When kids are overcome with strong emotions, she offers a snow globe. "It's a great tool for seeing how things start to swirl when our emotions are too strong and our minds too worried. As you take a deep breath and stop moving the globe, the snow settles. We have to stop moving, or move very slowly, for everything to settle for ourselves."

Jazwierska's Rock and Floppy Sock exercise instructs a child to make a tight fist—the rock—when they feel anger or another strong negative emotion, and then release their grip, turning it into a floppy sock. "It's related to progressive muscle relaxation where you provide tension in the body and then you provide the contrast and let go, training the mind. Next time they feel tension, they'll know how to relax," she says.

Planting Seeds for Inner Happiness

As children grow older, they can add visualization to their repertoire, like Stewart's Heart Garden exercise, in which the child sits mindfully while relaxed, takes three mindful breaths and then thinks of a word that makes them smile. "That can be anything—like butterfly, rainbow or watermelon," she explains. "Imagine planting that word like a seed in your heart. Repeat the word and imagine watering the seed in your heart garden. Repeat the word and imagine the seed opening and growing in your heart. What does it become? See it blossom. True happiness comes from inside. Everyone can plant their own inner happiness." 🌱

Sandra Yeyati, J.D., is a professional writer. Reach her at SandraYeyati@gmail.com.



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In Turbulence There's Opportunity

by Natasha (Chef Beee) Brewley, Ph.D., MBA, HHC



If I told you this past year has been challenging, it would be an understatement. With one family member succumbing to the virus and five others testing positive, I am grateful that we are all still here, alive and thriving.

Working from home for the past 14 months has been an interesting journey of discovery into the inner workings of myself and my family. I realized that when my husband and I shuttled our boys off to school in pre-pandemic days, we didn't have a full view of their complexity. I didn't really understand the nuances that made my boys intrinsically who they were. We each went off to our separate daily routines only to come back together later for short moments of check-ins, dinners together and then slumber, not really knowing much about each other beyond the surface. Combine a pandemic, lockdown and a four-member family forced together in a small two-bedroom bungalow for a year, and you get a ripe opportunity to examine some interesting reveals about yourself.

During this time, I gained clarity about my family dynamics and took a deep dive

into why I was often frustrated by their behavior. I realized I often looked at them from outside myself through a lens of judgment. I wondered why they were not doing tasks and chores the way I wanted them to—like keeping the house clean or getting their schoolwork done on time. It seemed I was reactive to everything they did. I also felt as though they were becoming incredibly unproductive—not wanting to leave the house or fully participate in school.

The funny thing is, through that frustration, I didn't look inward at myself or how I was treating everyone else. I didn't realize that my behavior and attitude impacted them—just as they were impacting me.

I realized I missed my life of busy-ness; I realized I often left the house to retreat from my family life. I missed getting up and going to the gym, teaching classes on campus, shopping and visiting friends. My children missed their lives, too; in fact, they suffered the most during that time. In an instant, their world of social engagement was turned upside down. They lost the tangible connections to their peers, and they started acting out as a result.

The pandemic allowed me to see myself and how I was showing up for my family. I was no longer able to do my regular routines and, while I did not blame my family for it, I punished them with occasional disconnection and lack of engagement, as if I did. I was not as nice as I thought. I was not as loving as I could be. I was not as compassionate to my boys and my husband, not understanding that they had lost something very precious, too—freedom.

An opportunity for self-reflection gives us time to think about what we want and how we want to be in the world. I knew that I wanted to be a better mother and wife. My family life was important to me, and it was time to shift. We started having more conversations and talked about what was on our minds and what we felt was missing. We knew that we loved each other, but we were clear that time with others was just as important. We started focusing on what we had and not what was missing. We practiced meditation and named things we were grateful for, and that helped shift the conversation and mood when our time together intensified.

I used the time to connect deeply with my family. I learned what each of my family members needed and how to support them in accessing it. We also prioritized getting the children time with one or two friends as long as it was a safe social setting.

The pandemic has been a time of turmoil for many. Yet, even in turbulence, there is an opportunity for reflection, expansion and elevation. I am grateful for this time to learn more about who my children and husband are and to fully and authentically accept them. I can truly say that I love them and, as in most relationships, I see that ours is evolving. As long as we remain grateful and remain open for the lessons, the blessings come. 🌱



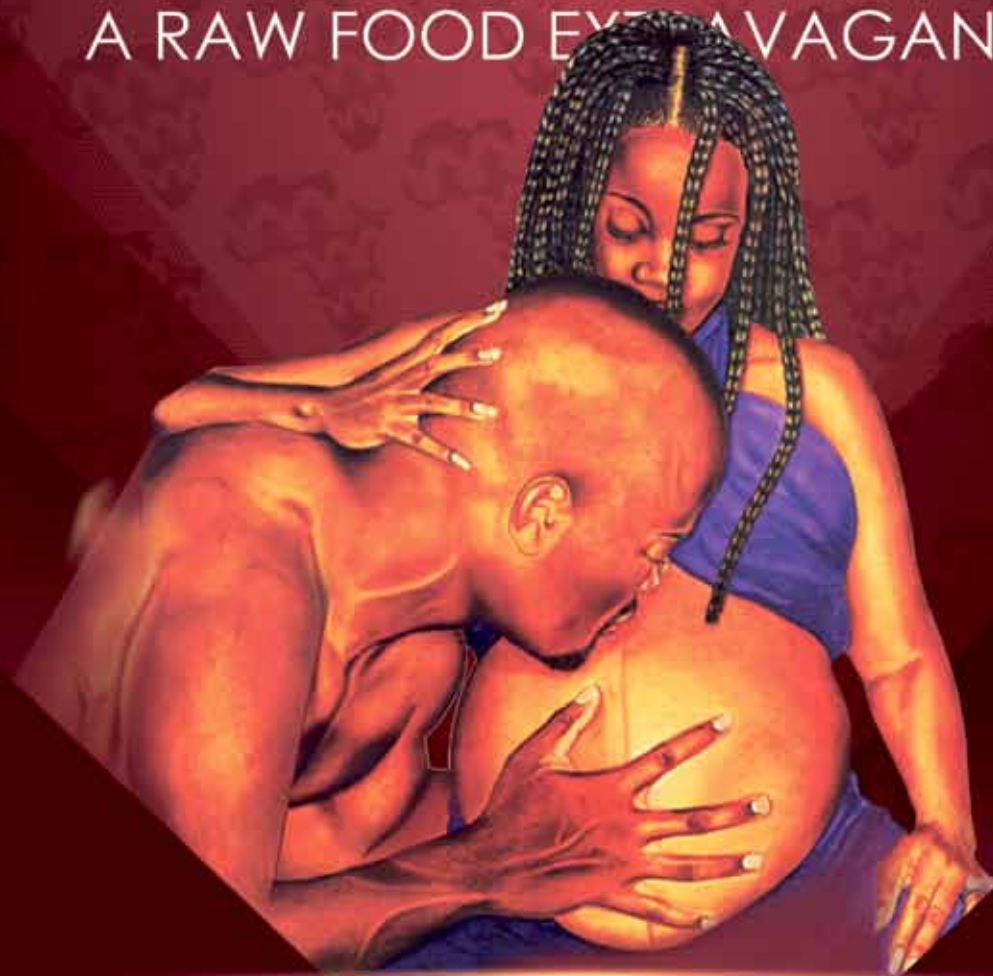
Photo: Maurice Evans

Dr. Natasha Brewley, better known as Chef Beee, is a lifestyle medicine health coach, a raw and plant-based chef educator and author of the cookbook

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