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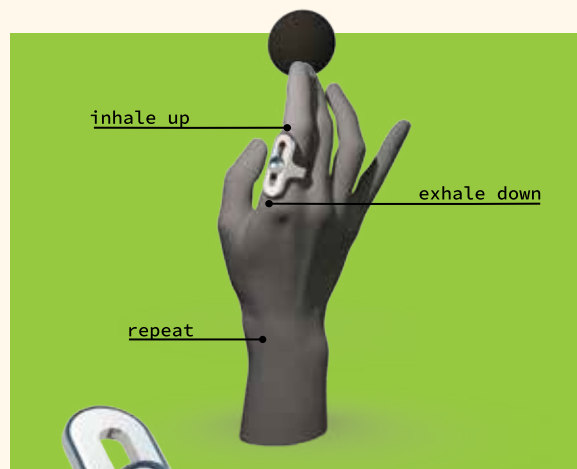


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Corrections: • In the June issue’s “Crafting Personal Fuel,” the link to the recipe for Cinnamon Apple Date Bars was incorrect. The correct link is: bit.ly/cinnamon-apple-0625. • In the news brief, “Well of Roswell Offers Emotional Freedom Program,” the phone number was incorrect. It is 770-778-2051.

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Microadventures, Protein Requirements and Yoga Offerings

LO! I'm rarely "normal" in this space—providing a quick overview of the month's features—but this is one of those times when inspiration for writing about anything else escapes me. Maybe the lazy days of summer have arrived early to my doorstep.

Our lead feature is on micro-adventures, "brief and inexpensive outdoor jaunt(s) close to home." Writer Carrie Jackson interviews Alastair Humphreys, a British adventurer and author who spent a year discovering adventures within a five-mile radius of his home. Sounds like a daunting proposition to me, but I'm sure there's much more out there than I'm aware of. I invite readers to share secret Atlanta gems that most of us probably don't know about!

Our Conscious Eating article is about protein-forward breakfasts, and given the reality of my age, *sarcopenia*—muscle loss that occurs with age—getting enough protein has become a recent concern of mine. I don't think I've ever come close to the recommended amount of daily protein intake, and that situation has not been helped by trying to eat less meat. Now, it's further aggravated by the fact that seniors' need for protein increases due to sarcopenia.

My difficulty with protein consumption is magnified considerably when I try to accommodate my pitta-kapha constitution. An Ayurvedic practitioner has already raised a warning flag around dairy for me; Greek yogurt is seen as particularly bad from an Ayurvedic perspective. And ChatGPT tells me that eggs in the summer can increase internal heat, which is not a good thing for pitta types.

I'm sharing this for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, assuming it has been correct—which is not a particularly good assumption—ChatGPT can be quite helpful in identifying the best dietary alternatives if you'd like to dive deeper into what works best for *your* body. I've had several deep-dive conversations with the AI in this regard. Second, one can certainly be vegetarian or vegan and still adhere to Ayurvedic principles. However, I'm



One of my fave places for a microadventure, Dillsboro Inn, 50 miles west of Asheville.

okay with cutting corners while minimizing physical impact as opposed to trying to eliminate all "not recommended" foods and ingredients. All in all, it is better to be informed than not. For example, ChatGPT tells me that cottage cheese is considerably better for me as a dairy product than Greek yogurt. That will make a difference in what I eat.

Finally, this month, our Yoga Department offers a double barrel of delight! Yoga editor Patty

Schmidt looks at yoga in America over the last 50 years through the lens of *Yoga Journal*, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Given my advanced age, it is still a wonder to observe the changes we've experienced over the course of decades and to be starkly reminded of one of Buddhism's first lessons: *impermanence*. In a recent lunch with our first yoga editor, Graham Fowler, founder of Peachtree Yoga Center, we talked about his early days and the years he spent looking up to such early greats as Rodney Yee. Now, decades later, he says the young people he trains haven't a clue as to who Yee or his contemporaries are; they might as well have been explorers in Africa, for all the young ones know. No crime here at all—just a reflection on how life and all its aspects are fleetingly impermanent.

Our second yoga story is from Graham himself! Ever the teacher of yoga beyond the mat, he writes about the "yoga of daily life." As readers of this magazine know, yoga isn't just asanas; it's a complete spiritual path. Nevertheless, even those just practicing asanas will realize before too long that lessons on the mat somehow extend beyond it. In his first contribution to us since his editorship, Graham explicitly conveys how to make the benefits of yoga training resonate in all other aspects of life. Truly, yoga is life. 🧘



Publisher of Natural Awakenings Atlanta since 2017, Paul Chen's professional background includes strategic planning, marketing management and qualitative research. He practices Mahayana Buddhism and kriya yoga.

Seniors Helping Seniors Buckhead Opens



Lara Smith

Pharmacist Lara Smith recently opened Seniors Helping Seniors Buckhead, a non-medical in-home care service dedicated to supporting older adults living in Buckhead, Brookhaven, Chamblee and surrounding areas. Services focus on helping seniors age in place through companionship, light housekeeping, meal preparation, transportation and personal care assistance.

The company's unique approach is to hire active older adults to support other seniors who need a little help. The organization matches caregivers and clients by personality and interests, fostering meaningful relationships while providing much-needed assistance. Allowing seniors to care for seniors is beneficial for both the caregiver and the client. "Keeping seniors involved, feeling a sense of purpose and making a difference in someone's life is a rewarding experience that also provides a little income," says Smith.

A long-time Brookhaven resident, Smith has served the Buckhead and Brookhaven communities as a pharmacist for more than 25 years. She retired from pharmacy in 2022 and transitioned to senior care, combining her community commitment and healthcare background to support aging adults. She is also a certified yoga instructor.

"After 23 years in pharmacy, I missed connecting with people in a meaningful way. This new path allows me to continue making a difference while empowering other seniors to do the same," she says.

In-home care services start at \$34 per hour with a three-hour minimum and a nine-hour weekly commitment. Caregivers are paid \$15 to \$18 per hour.

For more information, call 470-604-0789 or visit bit.ly/shs-buckhead. Seniors Helping Seniors Buckhead is located at 4062 Peachtree Road A569 in Brookhaven.



CLAUDHAUS Launches Breath-Focused Wellness Ring

Claudia Ross, founder and lead designer of Atlanta-based wellness brand CLAUDHAUS, announces the official launch of her patented Calm Ring—a wearable designed to help users connect breath and movement for a more grounded experience. The Calm Ring, available in precious metals and colorful nylon, just hit the market in February.

Ross merges her background in yoga, sustainable living and industrial design to create tools that support mindful living. A certified pranayama expert and Ayurvedic massage therapist, she spent years studying in South India and living off-grid in North Carolina before returning to Atlanta in 2020 with her young son. She earned her degree in industrial design from the Georgia Institute of Technology, where she won the Humanitarian Design Awards and the IDSA Student Merit Award.

The Calm Ring is inspired by a breathing technique Ross uses to manage anxiety. "I'm excited to bring genuine peace and comfort to the modern world through well-designed and beautiful objects," she says. "I use my deep breathing ring all the time, and I believe it's an invention that can really help people become more grounded and aware."

Calm Rings are priced between \$40 and \$200 to ensure accessibility. They are currently available online and at pop-up events throughout Atlanta.



For more information, call 404-666-1820 or visit claudhaus.com/.

Exhibits Feature Local Artists Spiegelman, Etheridge, Hou

The Well of Roswell presents Pieces of Me, the wellness center's fifth solo exhibition of works by mixed-media artist Madelyn Spiegelman, on view from June 14 through September 13. The show highlights Spiegelman's diverse artistic range, featuring a variety of styles and mediums, including geli monoprints, acrylics, pastels and multimedia works. A public reception will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. August 10.



"So many of our artists work in large format," says Becky Arrington, co-owner of the Well of Roswell, a holistic healing and events center. "But I was intrigued with Madelyn's ability to create large montages or collages out of small prints or paintings. They are intricate and evocative and create interesting visual textures." Prices for individual works vary.

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For more information, call 770-778-2051 or visit TheWellOfRoswell.com. The Well of Roswell is located at 900 Old Roswell Lakes Parkway, Suite 300, in Roswell.

Heart Soul & Art, an eclectic metaphysical store in Marietta, announces a solo exhibition of works by artist Samantha Ramirez Etheridge from August 23 through September 18. The show opens with a public reception in the gallery from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on August 23.



Combining acrylic and mixed media on canvas, Etheridge has received First Place honors in two previous shows at Heart Soul & Art. "Samantha's main objective is to motivate and inspire those who are in need of encouragement," says Sharron Ragan, the store's owner. "Her whimsical and spiritual art comes from deep within her soul. It's the kind of art that you can get lost in the hundreds of details within the theme."

For more information, call 770-241-6200 or visit HeartSoulAndArt.com. Heart Soul & Art is located at 1474 Roswell Road in Marietta.

Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore extends its annual May Day Show through July 27, offering works by emerging artists from Kennesaw State University. Curated by Rachel Mara in collaboration with Robert Sherer of Art Career Mentoring Services, the show features 22 student artists working in a range of fine art mediums.



Painter Qixuan Hou stands out in this year's group with imaginative works that explore themes of childbirth and motherhood. Using oil paint on canvas, Hou represents the body with symbolic objects like fruit, lace and staples. "The fruit is luscious, but the magic is in the composition," says Mara. "They spoke to my inner mother goddess and evoked this very visceral reaction." The popularity of Hou's work prompted the decision to keep the gallery open to the public for an additional four weeks.

For more information, call 404-255-5207 or visit PhoenixAndDragon.com. Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore is located at 5531 Roswell Rd. in Atlanta. Admission is free.

Giving Tree Yoga Fundraiser in Late September



Karina Carmichael

Giving Tree Yoga Smyrna announces its Giving Tree Charity Festival on September 21 and 22 to raise funds for Atlanta's homeless and a rural school in South India. The event takes place at the Smyrna Community Center.

September 21 features yoga classes, workshops, talks and demonstrations from

8 a.m. to noon. September 22 offers the group experience of 108 sun salutations followed by a sound bath. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The festival was founded in Scotland by Karina Carmichael, where it raised thousands of dollars to support education for underserved children. Now co-owner of Giving Tree Yoga Smyrna with her husband, John, Karina continues the mission in Atlanta. "Yoga is not only something we do on our mat," she says, "it's how we can use our passion to help others."

This year's proceeds will benefit Food4LivesATL, a grassroots nonprofit serving vegan meals to Atlanta's homeless. "We go beyond filling plates, aiming [to] connect with the people we serve," states the organization's website.

For vendors, table prices range from \$50 to \$100 per day. Sponsorship packages are available at three levels: \$250, \$500 and \$750.

The Smyrna Community Center is located at 1250 Powder Springs St. For more information, call 770-626-1559 or email Karina@givingtreeyogasmyrna.com.

Hands On Wellness Chiropractic and Tucker Yoga Cooperative Relocate



Hands On Wellness Chiropractic has relocated from 3652 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Suite 1, to 4118 Clairmont Road. In addition to family and pediatric chiropractic, the practice offers hyperbaric oxygen therapy, tissue regeneration therapy, bio-energetic wellness scans and nutrition response testing.

Hands On Wellness, founded by Dr. Miriam Croft in 2014, is also staffed by Dr. Lorna Diaz and Dr. Carmi Verano. A second location in Clayton, Georgia, is staffed by Croft on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

For more information, visit HOWchiropractic.com, email info@HOWchiropractic.com or call 770-452-2955.


The Tucker Yoga Cooperative (TYCO), originally founded in 2020 by Elizabeth Yates, Mandy Dixon and Kyle Dondero, has relocated from the lower level of the First Christian Church of Atlanta at 4532 Lavista Road to the offices of Massage Associates of Atlanta at 5165 Lavista Road.

TYCO offers an eclectic blend of classes that include graceful aging, mindfulness meditation, Svaroopa Yoga, Yoga of 12-Step Recovery, chair yoga, gentle yoga, tai chi and qigong.

For more information, visit Tucker-Yoga.com, email TuckerYogaCoop@gmail.com or call 404-969-5603.

My need for disciples who realise the dangers of the time is great.
I need, also, those who sense My Presence to make known this Promise to their brothers.
All who share the hope that mankind should live in peace together work for Me.
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Protein-Forward Breakfasts

Starting the Day Strong

by Marlaina Donato

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, approximately 85 percent of Americans aged 20 and older consume breakfast daily, with eggs being a common component. Eating protein during the first meal of the day can help us feel full longer, balance blood sugar levels and potentially alleviate chronic anxiety. In addition to complex carbohydrates, fiber and healthy fats, the Mayo Clinic recommends that a nutritious breakfast always include lean protein.

“Protein is the master synthesizer, essential in its role in muscle building, immune function and energy balance,” says Melissa Halas, a registered dietitian nutritionist and certified diabetes educator in California. “Including protein early in the day helps prevent the common energy dip mid-morning and keeps satiety levels high, supporting healthy metabolism and preventing overeating later.” Protein requirements increase during periods of stress, recovery from injury or surgery, pregnancy or breastfeeding, and life stages such as childhood, adolescence and the golden years.

Thinking Outside the Cereal Box

Typical sweet cereals favored by kids often contain a high sugar content of 12 grams per cup, which is half of the daily recommended added sugar allowance for young children, as outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Replacing low-nutrient, high-carbohydrate choices like white-flour pancakes and sugary cereal with delicious, plant-based scrambles, naturally sweet or savory breakfast bowls and delectable fruit parfaits can be both simple and satisfying.

Even if our breakfast choices are already healthier, a little extra fortification can do the body good. “Many common breakfasts like oatmeal and avocado toast don’t have enough protein, so it’s a good idea to be diligent about meeting your protein needs at breakfast. It’ll set you up for better energy, focus and satisfaction throughout

the morning, plus better metabolism. The key is combining protein with fiber and healthy fats to keep you full and fueled until lunchtime,” says New York City-based Samantha Cassetty, a registered dietitian nutritionist, author of Sugar Shock and founder of Sam’s Plate, an online nutrition and wellness source.



JenFoto/Shutterstock

Whether we incorporate a tablespoon of unsweetened organic almond or peanut butter into oatmeal or layer smoked salmon and cream cheese on multigrain toast, an added source of protein can provide a boost of energy and vitality.

As a single mom, Cassetty understands the challenges of transitioning kids away from sugary foods and highly processed ingredients. She suggests making smart substitutions, such as serving whole-grain

frozen waffles topped with berries and protein-rich Greek yogurt or breakfast nachos with whole-grain tortilla chips instead of breakfast tacos in highly processed taco shells. For a fun breakfast parfait, she heats frozen berries until they release their juices and then mixes the warmed fruit with plain Greek or plant-based yogurt. To enhance the texture and nutritional value, she adds a spoonful of chunky nut butter, a sprinkle of nutritious seeds or low-sugar granola.

Boosting the Protein Content

An extra-hearty breakfast can be as simple as adding a scoop of whey or plant-based protein powder into a whole-grain waffle mix or blending grass-fed gelatin powder into a smoothie. Protein-rich tofu, which is virtually tasteless when unseasoned, not only absorbs any flavors added to it, but also transforms into a luscious pudding when blended with a dash of plant-based milk, cinnamon and dates.

For Halas, tofu scrambled in a pan as an egg substitute and served on a whole-grain tortilla with turmeric and vegetables offers a



HONEY PAPAYA YOGURT PARFAIT

YIELD: 1 SERVING

- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt (low-fat or fat-free)
- ½ cup papaya, diced
- ½ cup low-sugar granola
- 1 tsp honey

Add ¼ cup of yogurt to the bottom of a 12- or 16-ounce glass. Add most of the diced papaya and granola and a drizzle of honey to the glass. Layer on the remainder of the yogurt. Top with the remaining papaya, granola and honey.

Recipe courtesy of Melissa Halas, MA, RDN, CDE.

SOUTHWESTERN-STYLE TOFU BREAKFAST SCRAMBLE

YIELD: 2 SERVING

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp ghee, butter or vegan butter, unsalted
- 1 block firm tofu
- ¼ tsp smoked paprika
- 1 dash turmeric powder
- Smoked salt to taste
- 2 Tbsp fresh salsa
- 2 Tbsp fresh guacamole

Drain water from tofu and pat dry, then crumble it by hand or smash it with a fork or potato masher.

Warm the olive oil and ghee or butter in a pan over high heat until melted. Add the crumbled tofu to the pan, moving it quickly from side to side with a spatula for about 2 minutes until it resembles the consistency of scrambled eggs.



GenAI/CanvaPro

Reduce the heat to medium and add smoked paprika and turmeric. Stir until spices are well distributed and the color is even throughout the scramble.

Serve immediately with a sprinkle of smoked salt. Add fresh salsa and guacamole, if desired, on the side or spooned over the scramble.

Recipe courtesy of Marlaina Donato.

well-balanced combination of protein and carbohydrates. She also recommends multipurpose cottage cheese, a favorite of generations past, for breakfast bowls mixed with berries, flaxseeds and walnuts, or spread onto toast with avocado. Full- or reduced-fat ricotta can provide a healthy alternative, as well.

Nutrient-dense pseudo-grains like quinoa and amaranth offer versatility. “Quinoa is traditionally eaten for breakfast in countries such as Peru as a warm porridge known as *pesque*,” explains Halas. “You can cook quinoa or amaranth in cow or plant milk and top it with fruit, seeds and cinnamon for a warm cereal bowl particularly well-suited for vegetarian, gluten-free and anti-inflammatory diets, making it an excellent alternative to conventional grains at breakfast.”

Cassetty offers a savory variation, saying, “You can use quinoa to make a breakfast grain bowl with sautéed spinach, eggs and a seasoning like pesto.” She also encourages using dinner leftovers for morning nourishment.

Most of all, breakfast should feel doable. “I recommend making breakfast nourishing, satisfying and practical—something you can prep ahead of time or whip up fast,” advises Halas. 🌱

Marlaina Donato is an author and artist. Connect at WildflowersAndWoodSmoke.com.

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The Microadventure Mindset

Finding Natural Splendor Close to Home

by Carrie Jackson



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While many of us dream of epic journeys to faraway places, humbler excursions can also provide unforgettable memories and experiences. British adventurer and bestselling author Alastair Humphreys coined the term “microadventure” to describe a brief and inexpensive outdoor jaunt close to home. From a weekend getaway on a nearby hiking trail to an afternoon visit at a local park, microadventures offer flexible scheduling, budget-friendly options, health benefits and a deeper connection to Mother Earth.

“I think that microadventures are popular right now because we are short on time, and money is tight for many people,” says Humphreys, a *National Geographic* Adventurer of the Year. “We are ridiculously busy in our daily lives, but we are also craving the physical and mental respite of time in nature—fresh air, exercise and time away from our cursed phones. It’s great to have the adventure of a lifetime, but until that

lucky opportunity comes around, why not try to have a lifetime filled with tiny little experiences squeezed around the margins of busy daily life?”

Nearby Adventures

Humphreys has traveled the globe experiencing extraordinary adventures such as rowing across the Atlantic Ocean, walking the length of the holy Kaveri River in India and traversing Iceland by foot and packraft. More recently, he dedicated a year to enjoying adventures in his own neighborhood, as recounted in his book *Microadventures: Local Discoveries for Great Escapes*.

“I focused on the single, small local map centered around my home, covering about five miles in each direction from my front door,” explains Humphreys. “At first, I worried that this would be too small, too boring or too claustrophobic. But I realized that once I slowed down, paid attention and had an adventurous mindset every day,

I started to discover new places close to home I’d never seen before—new streets, new parks, new patches of woodland, new places to run. I found fragments of wild places where I could sit with a cup of coffee, all within sight of the skyscrapers of the biggest city in my country.”

Humphreys encourages others to embark on a similar year of localized exploration, reminding them to establish realistic goals and remain open to novel experiences. He also suggests aligning activities with the seasons to harmoniously celebrate the natural order. Visit the same spot during each equinox and solstice, for example, to appreciate the way the landscape changes over the course of a year. A mountain view or shoreline feels and looks different in spring, summer, autumn and winter.

“Declare your intention and outline your plans,” Humphreys recommends. “Sleep outside one night. See a sunrise blaze across the sky for a romantic Valentine’s Day. Celebrate blue moons and other celestial events.” Natural splendor is all around us.

Awe and Resourcefulness

Kameron Stanton is the chief operating officer and event manager for Black People Outside, a Chicago-based organization founded during the pandemic to encourage people of color to get outside and explore. A weekend trip with his partner, Chevon Linear, to the Grand Teton National Park during lockdown was a memorable experience. “Seeing the stars so clearly at night unlocked something in us,” Stanton recalls. “We regained a respect for Mother Nature and what the beauty of the outdoors could do for your psyche.”

A microadventure in nature presents Stanton with unique survival challenges. “In the city, everything is zooming past you so quickly. When you are outside in the wilderness, you are often alone with your thoughts and have to fend for yourself in a different way,” he explains. “If you don’t build a fire, you’re going to be cold. If you don’t have the right equipment, you could get in trouble. There are little things the outdoors can teach you in a controlled manner. You learn lessons in planning and structuring your day, while still having fun and discovering new things about yourself and the world you’re in.”

Nature’s Rewards

“Activities like hiking help build strength, endurance, respiratory health, weight loss and so many other physical elements,” Stanton asserts. “Most people you meet who regularly spend time outdoors tend not to be angry and upset. They’re looking at the brighter side of things because they are literally around brighter things. Nature feeds you and helps you feel grounded with your thoughts and feelings.”

Microadventures can also be opportunities for social engagement. Stanton suggests joining a local club related to an interest such as fishing, running or birdwatching. “Once you start having microadventures, you’ll connect with like-minded people, and you never know where that may lead you,” he says.

There are myriad ways to enjoy a micro-adventure in almost any environment, including hiking, kayaking, biking, skiing, climbing, rollerblading and fishing. “Forest preserves and state and national parks offer incomparable views and trails year-round. They tend to have a low admission price, and most are accessible as long as you have a vehicle,” says Stanton, noting that a lazy afternoon fishing or tubing down a river may be just a short drive away.

Planning for a Hiking Trip

Day hiking has become a popular pastime, in part because it combines many of the advantages of microadventures. “It offers a perfect opportunity to break away from the routine, explore nature and enjoy the

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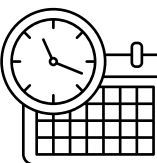
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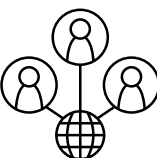
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mental and physical benefits of being outdoors," says Jacqueline Kehoe, a journalist and expert advisor for Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI), which provides a wide range of equipment, apparel, workshops and other resources for adventure seekers. Similar gear retailers include Backcountry and Sierra Trading Post.

"Whether you're planning a short stroll through a local park or a longer trek up a nearby mountain, you always want to be prepared," Kehoe advises. "Packing the right gear will help you make the most of your time on the trail, whether you're a seasoned hiker or just starting out." For most microadventures, a small hiking pack should suffice for carrying the necessary gear.

What to bring depends on multiple factors, including trail conditions, weather, the hike's difficulty and the duration, which can range from a couple of hours to an entire day. Kehoe recommends bringing ample food and water to stay energized and hydrated, even on shorter hikes. A good starting point is one liter of water per person per hour, but this amount should be adjusted based on individual needs and the intensity of the hike. "Once your hike is longer than a few hours or goes into unfamiliar or backcountry terrain, the essential gear list grows," Kehoe counsels.

Weather-appropriate clothing can make or break an adventure. "Dressing in moisture-wicking layers can help you stay comfortable. The weather may change quickly, so it's important to be prepared for various conditions. Choose sturdy, comfortable shoes that provide good support and traction. Proper footwear can prevent injuries and make your hike more enjoyable," says Kehoe.

Safety should always be the top priority. "If you're going somewhere that is unfamiliar, having the right tools can help you stay on course and find your way back if you get lost. Whether it is a smartphone app or map and compass, orient yourself with your tools and your surroundings before heading off on the trail," Kehoe suggests. "A basic first-aid kit is useful for treating minor injuries. Include items like bandages, antiseptic wipes and any personal medications. A knife or multitool can be handy for various tasks, from cutting food to making repairs."

Creating Memories

With a little creativity and planning, microadventures can become a joyful addition to an active lifestyle. Humphreys encourages people to step outside, even for short periods of time, asking, "What can you do in the evenings to relax rather than watching Netflix? Can you find a little patch of nature or even a tree to sit beneath when you eat your lunch? Maybe your kids would like to eat breakfast in the park this weekend rather than in front of the TV. Learn to identify a new bird. Forage for your own food. Sleep under a full moon. Share a microadventure with a child to create lifelong memories." 🌿

Carrie Jackson is a Chicago-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to Natural Awakenings. Connect at CarrieJacksonWrites.com.

Edible Landscapes

Creating Regenerative Sustenance

by Maya Whitman

The world's agriculture is largely reliant on the cultivation of single crops upon sizable tracts of land for staples like wheat, corn, soybeans and rice. Known as monoculture, this approach offers efficiency and low-cost produce, but it also carries significant ecological consequences, including the depletion of soil nutrients, ground pollution, increased carbon emissions, water scarcity, crop failures and the loss of pollinators due to degraded ecosystems.

One promising sustainable alternative is the development of decentralized food forests in small, local settings like rural backyards, urban parks, roadsides and vacant lots. Based on agroforestry—the practice of integrating trees and shrubs with diverse crops—food forests simulate the verticality of a forest while creating highly diverse ecosystems comprised of tiers of edible plants.

According to Science Mill, a Texas-based nonprofit that promotes scientific exploration and education, the ideal food forest is comprised of multiple layers, including a canopy of large fruit and nut trees, an understory of dwarf fruit trees, shrubs such as blueberries or currants, perennials and herbaceous plants, ground cover plants like creeping thyme, root crops and climbing vines.

These regenerative, edible landscapes replenish themselves, eliminating the need for annual replanting. Harmonious crops work as a symphonic whole, naturally repelling pests and fortifying the soil. The resulting benefits include water conservation, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, thriving pollinator populations, bolstered local economies and a reduction of food transportation costs.

"By creating a regenerative edible garden in whatever space you have available, you are creating habitats and food for the preservation of nature that allows all life—wild and

tamed, present and future—to thrive. No plot of land is too small to start a magic garden," says Maria Rodale, a master gardener and board member of Rodale Institute, as well as the author of several books, including *Organic Manifesto*. "For me, it's not regenerative unless it's organic, and it's especially regenerative if we are gardening with and for nature, rather than just for ourselves."



FarmVeld from Getty Images/CanvaPro

Tips To Create a Local Food Forest

The first step in planning an edible paradise is consulting a resource such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture Plant Hardiness Zone Map ([PlantHardiness.ars.usda.gov](https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov)) to determine which plants thrive in the local climate zone. Choosing native, food-bearing plants and using organic mulch year-round will enhance the garden's resilience against extreme weather conditions, and annual rotation of plant families will help prevent disease. In urban or small areas, vertical gardening, which is most easily achieved by adding trellises to raised beds, will maximize the available space for additional plants.

"It's absolutely not necessary to own a lot of land to create a food forest," says Rodale, noting that edibles can be grown in pots on windowsills, in the front or back yard, and even on rooftops. She recommends planting an understory of edible berries, as well as

herbs and vegetable crops at the ground level. Root vegetables such as purple sweet potatoes "make a beautiful ground cover, and the leaves are even more delicious than spinach. Other roots like horseradish make beautiful and productive landscape plants," she explains.

According to New Jersey horticulturist and certified arborist Melinda Myers, "Containers are great options for everyone. You can increase growing space and keep the plants handy for easy planting, care and harvesting. I like to invite my guests to pick their own salad ingredients, herbs for seasoning or fresh tomatoes for snacking from containers on my patio."

Myers, an instructor in The Great Courses series *How to Grow Anything* and the author of several gardening books, incorporates edible plants with flowers in her garden beds and containers. "Bright Lights' Swiss chard has colorful stems and makes a nice vertical accent in containers. It combines nicely with pansies and colorful lettuce in the spring and fall," she says. "I love to grow asparagus at the back of my perennial gardens. I harvest the spears in spring, and once the greenery appears to replenish the plant's energy, I have a nice, ferny backdrop for the flowers."

Community Consciousness

Sharing a garden surplus with neighbors, senior centers and other organizations that need nutritious produce can have a far-reaching positive impact. Collaborating with fellow gardeners to swap helpful hacks or share garden chores can also be a blessing. "People are so busy these days that working with others provides lots of benefits," says Myers, praising the round-robin approach "where you help each other tend your gardens, share food and drink and have some time to socialize."

Creating a food forest aims to foster a thriving ecosystem and a sense of community that extends to nature. "Let the weeds be part of your garden," exclaims Rodale. "Many common weeds are habitats for the bugs that feed birds and are edible and medicinal. I noticed that groundhogs and rabbits preferred the weeds to my vegetables when I stopped weeding so heavily." 🌿

Maya Whitman is a regular contributor to Natural Awakenings.



I’m Feeling Lost. How Can I Find My Way Back?

This question immediately resonated with me and took me back to my own experience of feeling lost in life. None of us is immune, and sometimes feeling lost can be the best motivator for finding our way to our purpose. In this column, I share a personal story in the hope that it will inspire you in your journey.

I was working on my website and reading my background story the other day. Although I had written it, it had been a while since I had read through it. I was touched in places deep within my heart, and tears were flowing down my cheeks as I read the words I had written.

I have been told that my story inspires others to hold on to hope, to take action and to reconnect with their bodies and authentic selves. But on that day, I inspired myself. I remembered how lost I had been and all that I had overcome. I remembered my strength and resiliency and my calling to help others find their way.

I was reminded that, at times, we all get lost. Things happen, and just like that, we step off the conveyor belt of life and find ourselves lost and unsure of what to do next or even what to feel next.

It could be the way of the universe to remind me of exactly where I was and what I had overcome. My war wounds were exposed once again, reminding me of what I had been through. Reminding me that I had made it.

These voices creep in, even in the strongest of us. We experience doubt and indecision about what to do next, where to go, and whether or not we should even be doing what we are doing.

My soul stands clear, but still, at times, my earthly mind wants to argue. It wants control, and those shadow voices in my head want to put me down. It is said that the first step toward finding our purpose is to hear and acknowledge the callings of the soul. But without action, we can remain trapped in the roles and lives that have been created for us and by us as part of the illusory nature of this life.

After that day, I was reminded not to pay much attention to those voices. I was reminded that I have a purpose, a plan and a journey that will never be completely known or revealed.

Life happens. An opportunity may fall through. Grief or tragedy can strike at any

time, even when you least expect it. Life events, such as a death, a child going off to school or a job change, can derail your mind train. Perhaps you’re uncertain about the significant life decisions ahead of you. And even if *none* of those things happen, you may feel that your life has become routine and aimless.

When your direction shifts or tragedy strikes, it’s easy to feel lost. What can you do when you feel like you’re struggling? Here are three steps to help you work through your feelings and reconnect with yourself.

Acknowledge.

Remind yourself that it’s perfectly okay to feel sad or hopeless because accepting your feelings is the first step toward change. Once you’ve acknowledged your lost direction, dig deep and define your feelings as specifically as possible.

Write down what you’re feeling and why you think you feel like that. All feelings arise from something you need to know about your life, so do the work to figure out why you feel lost. Ask yourself the hard questions. It’s a great way to spark your cu-



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riosity, which can lead to innovation, new ideas, options and opportunities.

Be persistent, and you may gain new self-awareness of your mind, heart and soul. Realizing that you feel lost means that you are willing to change directions. Seize, don't dread, the opportunity for change.

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Act.

Now that you have acknowledged what has made you feel lost, it's time to act on your new self-awareness. First, reduce your discomfort with yourself. Confide in a friend. Reach out to your higher power. Practice calming your mind and body by

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meditating, practicing yoga or engaging in exercise. Get out of your house and take a walk outside. Do what it takes to feel steady, and once you feel steady, it's time to push out of your comfort zone.

First, shift to accomplishable, short-term goals. What can you make happen in one

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day, one week or one year? Turn your focus to “The Week of Me” instead of “The Year of Me,” and you might feel less overwhelmed. Consider hiring a coach to assist you in crafting a specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-sensitive plan. Once you have your plan or steps in place, be patient. Sometimes, in our hurry-up, instant-information world, practicing patience can be the most centering thing we do for ourselves.

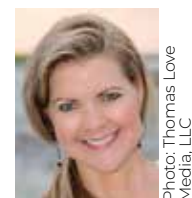
This is a good time to practice self-care. Have a massage, a haircut or a manicure. Take positive steps to boost your self-confidence.

Accept.

Once you have begun taking steps toward finding yourself, you might realize that your life could change permanently. Accept (and even embrace!) your new normal. And if you find yourself alone or feeling lonely, take a deep breath and enjoy your own company.

As I step back on the conveyor belt of life, I once again begin to move forward. I still have thoughts that don't serve my greater calling. However, I return to work, stepping into the flow of this beautiful moment called “now” with renewed gratitude for all that has brought me to this moment and for this opportunity to continue following the callings of my soul.

Remember, you don't have to have all the answers immediately, all the time. Don't be scared if you don't have the answers. Tackle the act of finding yourself and setting your direction slowly, one step at a time. 🌱



Based in Atlanta, Hope Knosher is the founder of Healthy Living with Hope, offering health coaching, yoga classes and retreats. She is a national board-certified health and wellness coach, a certified yoga therapist and a certified E-RYT 500 yoga teacher. Contact her at 770-789-7782.

What Does Lymphatic Drainage Do for Skin?

by Susan Gonzalez



When considering facial rejuvenation, the term *lymphatic drainage* is often heard. For many, if a device or technique is said to “promote lymphatic drainage,” it somehow takes on a magical value that's hard to resist. Why? What is so important about lymph to the face, specifically the skin quality and appearance, that makes it so sought after?

To answer that, it's important to understand the function of the lymphatic system as a whole, focusing on the head and neck.

The lymph system is composed of:

- **tubules.** These are pathways that carry the lymph fluid, connecting the nodes to the lymphoid organs
- **lymph nodes.** These are small, bean-shaped structures that filter lymph fluid and house cells vital to the immune system
- **lymph fluid.** Composed of water, white blood cells, salts, fats and proteins, this fluid runs through the lymphatic system

but is in close communication with the circulatory system.

- **lymph organs.** The thymus, spleen, tonsils, bone marrow and adenoids each play a role in the lymph system.

There are 600 lymph nodes in the body, and 300 of them are located in the head and neck region. It's not hard to see why face and neck lymphatic drainage is important.

It should be noted that the lymph system is a closed system and is closely tied to the circulatory system. Fluid from blood plasma—the liquid part of the blood—ebbs and flows in and out of the lymphatic system and into the circulatory system based on need. However, the exchange of fluid is regulated largely by the lymphatic system. The lymphatic flow uses muscular contraction to help push the lymph fluid along through the tubules. There are valves

in the lymph tubules that keep the flow heading in the right direction. Muscular contraction is vital for a healthy lymphatic system.

So why is facial lymphatic drainage so important? Healthy, luminous skin relies on the optimal function of all parts of the skin. Skin cells need nutrients, fats and proteins to regenerate new skin cells and create collagen, while waste and toxins need to be removed quickly so cells can function optimally. The lymphatic system does just that. Further, those with acne, eczema or unhealthy skin conditions have an even greater need for the lymph system to bring healing nutrients and remove excess fluid and waste to heal.

The bottom line is that luminous skin requires a constant in-and-out flow of lymph fluid.

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How to Promote Lymphatic Drainage

There are several effective ways to increase lymphatic drainage from the face and neck. Four key strategies are exercise, hydration, breathwork and manual lymphatic massage.

Facial and Other Exercises. The lymph system does not have a pump and relies on the body's movement and muscular contraction to move lymph fluid around. Performing facial exercises contracts and relaxes muscles and, in turn, moves the lymph fluid through the face and neck. Simple exercises can be done anytime, and they only take a few minutes. Tight, stiff muscles in the face and neck are unable to contract and relax properly, so the lymph can't move. This leads to stagnation, which slows down nutrient delivery and waste removal in the cells and severely hinders immune function responses in general since most viruses and bacteria enter through the mouth and nose.

When it comes to lymph, any exercise moves the fluid. Check out the Mayo Clinic's head and neck lymph drainage exercises to get started. [bit.ly/msk-head-neck] Even activities like walking, yoga, tennis, or anything else that involves movement can help. Vibration plates have recently emerged as a great way to easily keep the lymph fluid moving. Doing simple routines while standing on a specially constructed vibration platform is an easy way to move lymph while also increasing balance, strength and bone density and creating collagen in the face.

Staying hydrated. Maintaining a healthy level of hydration is important for many reasons, and improving lymphatic drainage is a big one. When the body is dehydrated, stress occurs. Dehydration can cause both the blood and the lymph to become thicker, which slows down the flow. (Think of pouring apple juice vs. molasses). Drinking plain filtered water is best compared to drinking sweet beverages or coffee since the body has to break those products down in order to use their water. Easy tips to remember are to drink a liter of water before lunch and drink half your body weight in ounces daily.

Belly breathing. The simple act of belly breathing, or using the diaphragm to push the belly out on an inhale, will stimulate the flow of lymph. It's important to remember that the lymph system is a closed system, so moving fluid along in one area helps to move it everywhere. Engaging the diaphragm and changing the pressure inside your chest cavity helps to push lymph through the chest and allow flow from the head and neck. Using simple deep breathing before and after any lymphatic drainage technique will enhance the practice.

Dry brushing. Dry brushing is an Ayurvedic practice that involves a body massage using brushes with stiff bristles. When done properly, it can exfoliate the skin and increase circulation. The gentle movements, done in a specific pattern, help with lymphatic flow and improve lymphatic function and detoxifica-

tion. This video demonstrates how to dry brush yourself: bit.ly/dry-brushing-0725.

Gua sha. This is an ancient Chinese facial and body massage practice that dates back to as early as 1335. Gua sha stone tools come in different shapes and are made of materials to accommodate certain areas of the face. Tools can be formed from different materials like rose quartz, jade, stainless steel or amethyst. Gua sha tools can be used with heavy pressure for muscular work, but only light pressure is needed to move lymph. An interesting study done in 2007 at Beth Israel Hospital in New York showed that gua sha also has pain relieving effects. Gua sha tools can also be wired and linked to tiny currents of electricity, or *microcurrent*, to increase the power of the tool and lymphatic flow. You can find more information on gua sha practices at bit.ly/guy-sha-0725.

Skin cells need nutrients, fats and proteins ... and waste and toxins need to be removed quickly. The lymphatic system does just that.

Massage. Manual lymphatic drainage massage can also be performed by specially trained practitioners such as physical therapists, massage therapists, estheticians and other medical professionals. The service is gentle, rhythmic and very relaxing. The practitioner can use their fingers, a light suction device or light suction cups for the service. In some cases, professional lymphatic drainage may be prescribed by a facial surgeon to help with swelling after facial surgery. True facial lymphatic drainage massage is technical and requires special certification in the technique, so be sure to see a qualified therapist.

Manual massage can also be done without a practitioner. To perform a simple self-lymphatic massage, check out the Cleveland Clinic's How-to at bit.ly/cc-lymph-drain-0725

Skin health and appearance can benefit from techniques that improve and encourage lymphatic drainage. It's not always necessary to seek out a special practitioner as there are many self-care practices that give great results and don't cost anything. Topical skincare products are important, but don't forget to address what's beneath the surface!

Important: Those with swollen lymph nodes, those being treated for cancer or anyone with serious illnesses should consult their medical practitioner before engaging in any lymphatic drainage techniques. 📌



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: @MoonOrganics or visit MoonOrganics.com.

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Staying Safe in the Sun with Aromatherapy

by Roz Zollinger

As the long days of summer settle into Georgia, many like to enjoy the outdoors. But with the beauty of the season comes intense heat, high humidity and increased exposure to sun and insects. Aromatherapy can provide gentle, effective ways to support healthy skin and well-being through the warmer months.

Oils, the Sun and Phototoxicity

When using essential oils, it's important to be aware that some oils can increase one's skin's sensitivity to sunlight and UV radiation. It's called *phototoxicity*, which occurs when certain chemical compounds in essential oils, particularly *furanocoumarins*, react with UV light. It can lead to a reaction on the skin that mimics severe sunburn and can result in symptoms such as inflammation, blistering, reddening, burning and skin discoloration that can last for months.

Oils to be cautious with include:

BERGAMOT (CITRUS BERGAMIA)

An aromatic citrus oil, bergamot hails from the Italian town of Bergamo and is also grown in Tunisia. It is cherished for its mood-boosting properties, particularly for easing depression and emotional tension. However, when applied to the skin before sun exposure, it can cause significant photosensitivity, resulting in severe sunburn or dark spots.

LIME (CITRUS AURANTIFOLIA)

Bright, fresh, and uplifting, lime essential oil is another summer favorite—but it's also highly phototoxic. Even the juice of fresh lime on the skin can cause sun sensitivity. Use this oil in evening blends or after-sun applications only.

OTHER CITRUS OILS

Oils such as lemon, grapefruit, tangerine and sweet orange also carry some risk of phototoxicity, although to a lesser degree. During the summer months, these are best reserved for post-sun care or nighttime use. It is



elenathewise, matka_Wariatka/DepositPhotos.com

mostly the cold-pressed citrus oils that react to the sun. However, steam-distilled versions of citrus oils have less phototoxicity.

Note: Always dilute essential oils before applying them to the skin. If you're using a new oil, patch-test it before using it.

Sunburn Soother Recipe

If you do happen to overdo it in the sun, nature offers some tools for relief. Cooling aloe vera combined with skin-soothing essential oils can help reduce inflammation, ease discomfort and support skin repair. Here's a cooling, calming blend for summer skin.

- 1 oz (30 ml) pure aloe vera gel
- 8 drops lavender essential oil
- 5 drops blue (German) chamomile essential oil
- 2-3 drops carrot seed CO₂ extract (optional for skin regeneration)
- 10 drops calendula-infused oil (optional for added healing)

Blend all ingredients in a clean glass or hard plastic jar. Apply gently to sunburned or irritated skin as needed. Store in a cool place and use within a few weeks. ☺



Roz Zollinger is the director and co-owner of Atlanta's Heal Center and is recognized internationally for her contributions in the fields of reflexology, aromatherapy and energy healing. She pioneered Aromatic Reflexology and developed the Zollinger BodySystems Method of Reflexology/Aromatherapy.

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Happy 50th, Yoga Journal! We Salute You!

by Patricia Schmidt

Yoga Journal (YJ) celebrates its 50th year in publication this summer. For many of those years, its content across multiple platforms—from its print and online publication to its practice media to its live conferences—has both reflected and helped to shape the lived practices of yoga students and teachers across the country. Indeed, the culture of yoga in America—in the Western hemisphere, even—would not have developed the way it has without *Yoga Journal*.

At the height of its print circulation around 2005, *Yoga Journal* reached over 350,000 subscribers. It enjoyed over a decade at that level of circulation, establishing itself as one of the most robust and influential health and wellness magazines of its time. It also developed a strong presence online and embraced web-based publishing. By 2017, though, its print readership had begun to decline. Responding to the rise of more diverse digital platforms and alternate engagement models, it began to reduce and eventually limit print publication.

Despite those developments as well as a series of leadership, staffing, and ownership changes, *Yoga Journal* continued to grow and diversify its online offerings, and web traffic, social media interaction, and practice subscribers reached an apex around 2019. Since then, the publication has been embraced within a group of outdoor, wellness and movement publications owned by Outside, Inc. and is now offered as part of its subscription bundle,

Outside+. Even in its latest incarnation, though, *Yoga Journal* continues to inform the public about a wide range of practices, poses, teachings, philosophy, meditations and more to continue to support engagement with yoga worldwide.

Shared Intention and Purpose

Yoga Journal was founded by a few dedicated yoga teachers with the explicit intention of serving the community and disseminating knowledge. As the founders sat around a kitchen table and plotted its launch from gentle newsletter to something much larger, they felt the weight and responsibility of their undertaking. The effect was to create a kind of parallel relationship between the magazine and the developing yoga culture in America. Renee Schettler, its current editor-in-chief, noted that in her own review of the magazine's history, "those early years were just so lockstep with everyday yoga life." Andrea Ferretti, who held multiple senior writing and editorial positions at the magazine from 2002-2012, explained that staff members made sure to educate themselves on all yoga styles, developments and cultural shifts as part of their daily work, no matter their area of expertise. "It was part of the job to try to understand the current zeitgeist as much as possible," she explained.

Thus, for a while, *Yoga Journal* became synonymous with yoga in the West. As many in the field have noticed, the maga-



Renee Schettler

Andrea Ferretti

Photo: Ashley Lima

zine's column headers—titled "Beginners," "Basics," "Asana" and "Props," for example—mirrored and shaped American yoga studio class content and teaching specialties—so much so, perhaps, that these categories are rarely queried now. Cover models, photo shoots and features both expressed and, to some degree, determined the values of American yoga culture. In many ways, the two grew up together: "It's hard to put into words," Ferretti notes, "how much time we spent on every issue, and every paragraph, and every word selection. We were the main source of yoga information outside of your in-person teachers. We took that mantle really seriously."

Yoga Journal as First Teacher

One of the most significant responsibilities *Yoga Journal* assumed in its earliest publications—and one it continues to shoulder—is that of the teacher. Ferretti says, "We were the adjunct to your classroom." Marti Yura, senior teacher and founder of Vista Yoga in Decatur, felt a student/teacher relationship when reading *Yoga Journal* each month. "When I first started practicing, *Yoga Journal* was the source for all things yoga. I looked forward to each new publication and read it from front to back." Before she worked for the journal, Ferretti felt the same way. "I was that person! I had every Master-

class bookmarked, and I would pour over them, sitting on my yoga mat!"

Marnie Memmolo, a senior teacher based in Atlanta, says that YJ's instruction carried her beyond her early student days and into teaching. "My first 200-hour training didn't have a sophisticated curriculum and tailored manuals like YTT trainings of today," she explained. "Back then, we were scribes at the feet of our trainer, and most of the supplementary information came from YJ articles." Susan Amick, an Atlanta teacher and minister who has taught all over the world, said that the magazine was especially helpful to her when she first started teaching. "I loved the simple, colorful drawings of sequences, which I did copy and share with students, even in India."

Like all influential teachers, *Yoga Journal* had reach; its content helped to establish best practices, new styles and practice values across America and beyond. As its influence grew, it was also able to increase the accessibility of yoga teaching lineages, which wouldn't have been available to many practitioners and communities otherwise. It incubated new teachers, helping them to craft voice and expertise while solidifying traditions and master teachers within them at the same time. In many cities, the existence of Iyengar and Ashtanga studios can be attributed in part to the teaching lineages made known by—and

Practice becomes firmly grounded when well attended to for a long time, without break, and in all earnestness.

—Yoga Sutras I.14



Susan Amick

Marti Yura

thoroughly instructed within the pages of—*Yoga Journal*.

Access to teaching lineages was paramount to the magazine's mission, according to Memmolo and Ferretti, which made it a major influence on yoga in America, particularly before the rise of the internet and social media. "Going back 25 years, yoga info was sparse," says Memmolo. "YJ was a trusted authority for access to yoga information from contributors that actually studied first-hand with many of the great masters."

YJ's teachers, such as Patricia Waldon, Mary Taylor, John Schumacher and Rodney Yee, had, in turn, studied with BKS Iyengar. Maty Ezraty and Richard

Freeman were students of Pattabhi Jois. Hari Kaur Khalsa was a student of Yogi Bhavan.

"YJ's instructors passed down that lineage to people of my generation, or they blended [the teachings of] masters to create their own American style." That had a strong influence on shaping yoga in America today, she says.

"I think we saw our role as tuning into what the master teachers were teaching," says Ferretti, "and then we translated that to the page so that people could have access." Not everybody could study with the likes of Patricia Walden, John Schumacher and Maty Ezraty, so they deferred to them as the experts. "I guess we saw ourselves more as interpreters and educators," says Ferretti.

The very existence of Acroyoga, for example, is in part due to the live conferences hosted by *Yoga Journal*. Students could experience something new—with the authority and blessing of the magazine.

"We were a great [early] venue," says Ferretti, "both conference-wise and then magazine-wise for Acroyoga. I remember at an early conference, Acroyoga founders Jenny Sauer-Klein and Jason Nemer were there outside of classrooms just offering to fly people. No one had even seen it before, and they were demonstrating ... And that built into a huge movement."

In addition to yoga styles, adjacent practices and interrelated fields such as Thai massage, meditation, mindfulness, Ayurveda and Buddhism found a place



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Pilates in the Park – 10-11am. Join a fun, challenging, community-based classical mat Pilates class in Grant Park. Free, but spots are limited. 759 Boulevard SE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Pilates-In-The-park-070625.

Yin & Chow: Yoga and Brunch Series – 10:30am-1:30pm. Enjoy meditative Yin yoga followed by a pop-up chef brunch in a relaxed community setting. \$28.52. 2440 Piedmont Rd NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Yin-And-Chow-Yoga-Brunch-070625.

RnB Yoga: A High Frequency Flow – 12-1pm. Heated beginner yoga flow with sound bath and breathwork for alignment and intention-setting. \$20; 2-for-1 deal available. 2030 Bolton Rd NW, Atlanta. bit.ly/A-High-Frequency-Flow-Registration-070625.

Sound Bath & Restorative Yoga – 1-3pm. Deep relaxation through supported yoga poses, chakra work, Reiki, and immersive sound bath. \$25. Healing Hands Reiki, 27 Waddell St NE, Ste A, Atlanta. bit.ly/SoundBath-Restorative-Yoga-070625.

MONDAY, JULY 7

Yoga presented by Kaiser Permanente 2025 – 6:30-7:30pm. Unwind on The Plaza Green with a free yoga class as part of The Battery Atlanta's Wellness Series. Registration required. 775 Battery Ave SE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Yoga-By-KaiserPermanente-070725.

SATURDAY, JULY 12

Flo Outside: Outdoor Yoga with Justflo Wellness – 10-11am. Beginner-friendly yoga and meditation in West End Park led by Missy Goss-Coln. Bring water and mat. Sliding scale: \$14-\$24. West End Park, 1111 Oak St SW, Atlanta. bit.ly/Outside-Yoga-with-JustFlo-Wellness-071225

FELDENKRAIS – From Stress to Serenity – 3-5:30pm. Mindful movement workshop to release tension, improve posture, and restore balance using the Feldenkrais Method®. \$70 early, \$75 at door. Guided by Aruna. bit.ly/3SAxxla.

FREE Reiki Infused Yoga & Meditation – 3:30-5:30pm. Vinyasa yoga with Reiki during meditation

to calm the mind and balance chakras. Free. Healing Hands Reiki, 27 Waddell St NE, Ste A, Atlanta. bit.ly/Reiki-Infused-Yoga-Meditation-071225.

SUNDAY, JULY 13

Flex and Flow: A Mindful Stretching Session – 12-1pm. Gentle, intentional movement to release tension and restore balance. All levels welcome. Donation-based. 4760 Austell Rd, Ste 5, Austell. bit.ly/Flex-And-Flow-Stretching-Session-071325.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

Restorative Yoga + Sound Bath – 7:30-8:30pm. Heal and unwind with gentle yoga followed by a nourishing sound bath. \$28 walk-in; new student pass available. Joiful Yoga, 205 Hilderbrand Dr, Sandy Springs. bit.ly/Restorative-Yoga-SoundBath-071625.

EARTHSTRONG Vol 3: A KHŌNA Yoga Series – 6:30-7:30pm. Join Shelby Adina for yoga, meditation, and sound healing in nature. Free. Yard space at Ponce City Market, 675 Ponce De Leon Ave NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/EarthStrong-Khona-Yoga-071625.

SATURDAY, JULY 19

IGNITE THE INNER FLAME: Breath & Sound for a Cosmic Rebirth – 3-5:30pm. Transformative breathwork and gong immersion with Ananda & Gretchen. \$55 advance, \$65 at door. Bring blankets, pillows, eye mask. Vista Yoga, 2836 Lavista Road. bit.ly/vista-yoga-events

SUNDAY, JULY 20

SUN'FUN YOGA..... – 9:30-10:30am. All-ages yoga class designed to relieve stress and build strength through mindful movement and breath. \$13.51. Starr Park, 5031 Park Ave, Forest Park. bit.ly/Sun-And-Fun-Yoga-072025.

Outdoor Yoga & Mimosas at Shops Around Lenox – 10:30-11:15am. Enjoy a beginner-friendly Vinyasa flow led by CorePower Yoga, followed by complimentary mimosas. Free. 3400 Around Lenox Rd NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Outdoor-Yoga-Mimosas-072025.

SUNDAY, JULY 27

Hops & Flow Beer Yoga at Three Taverns Imaginarium – 12-2pm. All-levels yoga under the covered patio with your first beer included. \$20.42. 777 Memorial Dr SE, Ste B103, Atlanta. bit.ly/Hops-Flow-Beer-Yoga-Three-taverns-072725.

THURSDAY, JULY 31

Senior Chair Yoga Thursdays – 10-11am. Gentle, chair-supported yoga to enhance flexibility, balance, and relaxation. All levels welcome. Suggested donation \$10. Hampton Farms Club, 235 Club Ridge Dr, Marietta. bit.ly/Senior-Chair-Yoga-073125.

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to get known and flourish in the publication's various media outlets, and the relationship between the magazine and yoga grew more established. For example, Yura first learned of Thai massage and its relationship to yoga from the pages of the magazine—establishing a relationship most students take for granted today. "I read an article about Thai massage in *Yoga Journal*, and when Saul David Raye came to Atlanta, I was delighted to attend his workshop. From there, I sought out trainings, and I'm still practicing that today, 25 years later."

Eyes to the Future

Over the years, *Yoga Journal* has weathered criticism for its representation of who does yoga and how, for the way it has navigated the sometimes competing priorities of business and yoga, and for the ways it has codified certain aspects of Western yoga culture at the expense of others. Both Schettler and Ferretti confirm that those have been challenging lines to walk, yet both come back to their earnest intention to serve and disseminate information with clarity and dedication. One could say that this *is* yoga practice in action, and it's never easy or black and white.

According to Schettler, balancing tradition and change and educating while staying in business has been quite challenging over the past decade, as a result of the dominance of social media and other online publishing platforms. Revenue streams have shifted, as has the yoga content that people are initially drawn to—measured now in click-through rates and time spent on a page instead of head turns and sales at the newsstand. Most notably, the broader yoga community has seen a shift in the way it frames the teacher/student relationship and the way it understands and elevates those who teach.

So, with eyes on the future, *Yoga Journal* is shifting, too. "Maybe we needed to not have yoga celebrities anymore," says Ferretti. "We're no longer in a place, in terms of yoga in America, of having a handful of teachers, where you hang on their

every word," says Schettler. Rather, she emphasizes that *YJ* now functions less as the educator and more as a platform for a diverse range of educators and teaching voices. She believes that is the future of the *Yoga Journal*.

"We are always coming back to our roots [with] articles that beautifully articulate ancient traditions and practices, lessons about the application to everyday life," says Ferretti. "But we are dedicated to having a multiplicity of content on the site for everyone, a multiplicity of voices and perspectives."

She feels strongly about a need "to normalize *every body* being a part of yoga" and sees the magazine as a platform for a variety of teachers and students to share their experiences and insights, feel understood and make connections. "We want to create space for discussion and understanding," says Ferretti. "There is this abundance of yoga content out there, and our question is: How do we continue to support what people have been experiencing and also maybe tease them a little further forward in terms of that integration [of] yoga and life? Over the expanse of a week, a month, we want everyone who comes to our site to see themselves reflected there and to think, "*Yoga Journal* gets me."

As *Yoga Journal* celebrates its 50th anniversary and looks back on its influence and forward to its future role in shaping and reflecting yoga culture, it remains dedicated to "this very earnest exploration and education around all facets of yoga," says Shettler. "It's humbling to be part of this long legacy." 🙏



Patricia Schmidt, C-IAYT, E-RYT 500, YACER, is a certified yoga therapist specializing in pelvic health, accessible yoga and yoga for cancer support.

She is a Franklin Method trainer, Roll Model method teacher and somatic movement specialist. To learn more, visit PLSYoga.com.



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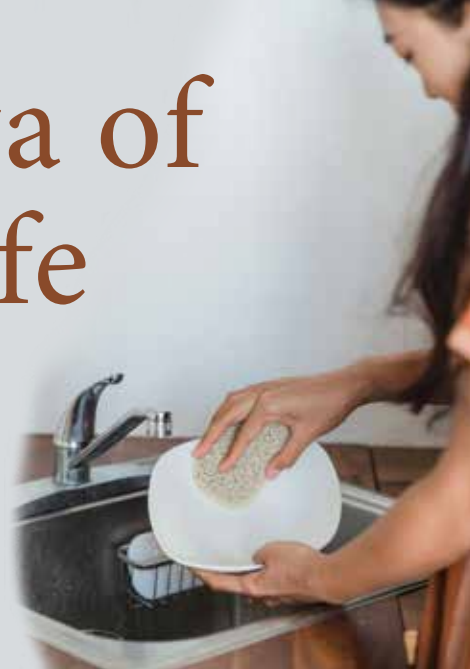
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The Yoga of Daily Life

Dishwashing, Conversations and Traffic Jams as Sacred Practice

by Graham Fowler



Creta Hoffman / Pexels.com

We often speak of yoga as a path to awakening, as a return to our essential nature through the body, the breath and the quieting of the mind. But here's the secret most spiritual texts whisper only between the lines:

Yoga doesn't just happen on the mat. It happens when the world forgets you're a yogi. When the dishes are stacked like small ceramic mountains. When the phone rings mid-savasana. When the traffic light turns red—again.

This is the yoga of daily life—the messy, sacred, exquisitely ordinary laboratory where presence is either remembered or lost, moment by moment. And in this lab, every act is an asana. Every interaction is pranayama. Every frustration is a mudra pointing you home.

Let's explore how to turn the mundane into the miraculous—and why it might be the most advanced practice of all.

1. Dishwashing as Devotion

You walk into the kitchen. The sink is full—again. Something crusty stares at you from the edge of a plate. You sigh, roll up your sleeves, and begin. And here is the question: Will you perform the task or enter the ritual?

Try this:

- Stand tall. Feel your feet grounding.

- Take one conscious breath before you begin. Feel your feet on the ground.
- As you wash each dish, bring full attention to the feel of the water, the texture of the plate, the sound of the rinse. Let it be sensual.
- You're not "getting it done." You're offering care, cleansing, attention.

Mantra:

"I wash this bowl as I would wash the feet of my teacher."

This is *karma yoga* in its simplest form: action offered without ego, with total presence.

2. Conversations as Consciousness Practice

Not all yoga involves silence. Some of the most potent awakenings happen in the fire of relationship—when you're triggered, tired or tempted to check out. That moment someone says something sharp. That urge to interrupt, correct or defend. That subtle contraction in the belly or chest. These are the places where yoga begins again.

Try this:

- Notice your breath as the other speaks. Stay rooted in your own body.
- Can you listen without planning your response?
- If you feel reactive, name it silently: Tightness. Defensiveness. Breathe there.

- Before speaking, ask: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?

This is *jnana yoga*—the yoga of insight. Not through abstract philosophy, but through the wild intimacy of human connection.

3. Traffic Jams as Training Grounds

Stuck at a light. Someone cuts you off. You're late. You're fuming. The body contracts. The mind races. You want to do anything *but* feel this moment. Perfect. That means it's ripe for practice.

Try this:

- Soften your shoulders. Unclench your jaw.
- Drop the story. Feel the sensation instead.
- Take three conscious breaths. Inhale: "This is what's here." Exhale: "Let it be."
- Try blessing the other drivers. Yes, even that one.

This is *tapas*—the fire of discipline. Not control, but *choice*. Choosing presence over performance—again and again.

4. The Sacred Hidden in Plain Sight

The *Bhagavad Gita* reminds us: "He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is wise among human beings..." We don't need to retreat to a cave to be spiritual. Sometimes, we just need to fold the laundry with love. Or speak the truth gently. Or feel our breath while waiting in line at the grocery store. Every one of these is an invitation to remember who we are.

5. Mantras for the Mundane

- "This moment is the path."
- "How I do anything is how I do everything."
- "This breath, this dish, this conversation—is yoga."
- "Nothing is beneath my reverence."

The Invitation

Start small. Choose one task each day—brushing your teeth, tying your shoes,

answering emails—and make it your *sadhana*. Let it slow you down. Let it soften your edges. Let it show you where you're still performing, still resisting, still half-asleep. And if you forget? Good. That, too, is practice.

Yoga is not about never drifting. It's about always returning. So return. Again and again.

To your breath. To your body. To the bowl in your hand. To the one in front of you. To the radiant now.

Because this—all of it—is yoga. And the mat was just the rehearsal. 🙏



Graham Fowler, founder of Peachtree Yoga, no longer owns it, but they can't get rid of him. He co-leads its Teacher Training program. Email

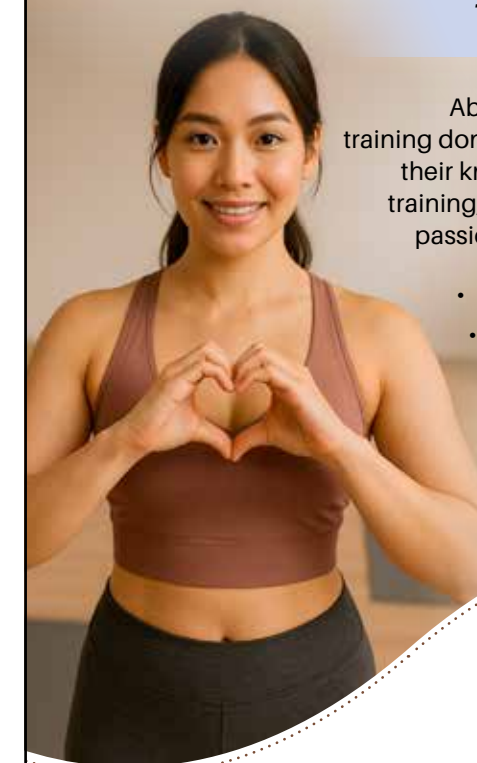
him at graham@peachtreeyoga.com and let him know what spiritual lesson you learned while scrubbing a pot.

So You've Fallen in Love with Yoga.

Now What?

Maybe it's time to go deeper. Or share the Love. Or both.

Join our 200-Hour Yoga Teacher Training starting August 16



About half of those who take yoga teacher training don't intend to teach! They want to deepen their knowledge and experience. This isn't just training; it's *transformation*. With kindred spirits, passionate mentors and a whole lot of magic!

- Build your own powerful daily practice
- Learn to teach with confidence & heart
- Explore chakras, breathwork, meditation & anatomy
- Laugh, cry, grow, stretch—literally and figuratively



This 57th cohort is led by Ilona Moore & Graham Fowler, both E-RYT500. And yes, we're still having fun!
Space is limited, ♥s are not.

For more information and answers to your questions:
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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 \$35 to attend — to list for free. Otherwise, basic listings are \$40 and enhanced listings are \$75. Submit free listings to calendar@naAtlanta.com and paid listings to ads@naAtlanta.com.

Sunday, July 6

Honess-Fit Sunday's – 5-6pm. Join a high-energy group fitness session to boost your mood and movement. All levels welcome. Free. 3181 Midway Rd, Decatur. bit.ly/Honess-Fit-Sunday-070625.

Monday, July 7

Evening Nature Hike at Wilburn Farm – 6-9pm. Explore Arabia Mountain's hidden gem with Ranger Shaundon on a guided hike through restored meadows and wild-life habitats. Free. 3899 North Goddard Rd, Stonecrest. 470-464-0136. bit.ly/Evening-Nature-Hike-070725.

Tuesday, July 8

The B.A.R. (Basic Abdominal Routine) with Guru of Abs – 7:15-8:15pm. Core workout using all planes of motion, led by Guru of Abs. All fitness levels welcome. Free. The Home Depot Backyard, 1 Backyard Way, Atlanta. bit.ly/Basic-Abdominal-Routine-Gurus-Abs-Registration-070825

Thursday, July 10

Love & Hiking Date For Couples (Self-Guided) – Atlanta Area! – 1-5pm. Enjoy a self-guided hike with interactive digital activities designed to strengthen your bond. Donation-based. Elwyn John Wildlife Sanctuary, 1520 Kittredge Park Rd NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/3FVtEEj

Transmission Meditation online via Eventbrite – 7:30pm. Sponsored by Share International USA. Free. Info: 770-302-2208 or Info-se@Share-International.us. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/4ew65x8n>

Friday, July 11

Small Group Training – 10:30-11:30am. Fast-paced, dynamic training session designed to deliver maximum results in a fun group setting. Free. Snap Fitness, 805 West Lanier Ave, Fayetteville. bit.ly/Small-Group-Training-071125.

Qigong with Meri – 3-4pm. Rejuvenate with gentle Qigong movements to restore energy and balance. Free for veterans 65+; \$15 others. Kindred Healing Center, 1800 Jonesboro Rd SE, 4th Floor, Atlanta. bit.ly/Qigong-With-Meri-071125.

Friday Night Sound Bath – 7-8pm. Let go in this immersive experience to calm the mind, relieve stress, and boost well-being. Bring a mat and blanket. Ages 16+. \$30. Kennesaw Recreation Center, 2737 Watts Dr. bit.ly/Sound-Bath-Therapy-071125.

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Register for events online or call us.

Saturday, July 12

Full Moon Sound Bath – 10-11:30am. A deeply immersive, full-body healing experience that uses specific frequencies to facilitate healing. The vibrations allow you to release lower frequency thoughts, emotions and experiences, and resonate with the higher frequencies of love, light and healing.

Thursday, July 17

Candlelight Restorative Yoga – 6-7:30pm. A deeply relaxing practice to restore the nervous system. Profoundly effective for people with chronic stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, illness recovery, neurological issues and over-work. Practice involves props— bolsters, blocks and blankets—to create well-supported yoga poses.

Saturday, July 26

Reflexology for Self-Healing – 10am-1pm. An effective, safe and accessible tool for everyone. The soles of the feet have hundreds of reflex points that correspond to every organ in the body. Stimulating these points brings increased circulation, nerve flow and detoxification.

Saturday, July 12

Red Light Running Society: Run or Walk (and more!) – 10am-1pm. Join walkers, joggers, and runners for fitness, community, and post-run espresso at Red Light Cafe. Free. 553 Amsterdam Ave NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/3FMPARR.

Free Saturday HIIT Workout Class – 10-11am. Burn calories and boost fitness with a high-intensity interval training session followed by meditation. Free. Jamie The Motivator, 3365 West Hospital Ave Ste G, Chamblee. bit.ly/4eRhDvx

Veranda Vinyasa – 10-11am. Enjoy a 50-minute Vinyasa Flow with Highland Yoga in the covered Veranda at Buckhead Village. All levels welcome. Free. 3035 Peachtree Rd, Atlanta. bit.ly/Veranda-Vinyasa-071225.

Sunday, July 13

Guided Nature Hike with Arabia Mountain Naturalists – 8-10:30am. Discover Arabia's unique ecology and human history on a guided hike with park naturalists. Free. 3787 Klondike Rd, Stonecrest. 770-484-3060. bit.ly/41H00It.

Gentle Stretching And Breath-Work: Mind-Body Connection Through Movement – 10-11am. Korean-style class blending yoga, Tai Chi, and meditation for relaxation and wellness. Free. Body & Brain, 4641 Roswell Rd Ste C, Atlanta. bit.ly/Gentle-Stretching-and-Breath-Work-071325.

Unity Atlanta Church “12 Powers Workshop” – 12:30-2pm. You're invited to explore how you can use your twelve God-given powers to improve your life. Licensed Unity Teacher, Freda Steward, will present the power of ZEAL in this month's workshop. Feel free to bring a bag lunch. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Tuesday, July 15

S.A.F.E Self Defense with Sule Welch – 6-7pm. Learn practical, instinct-based self-defense emphasizing awareness and survival over flashy moves. Free. The Home Depot Backyard, 1 Backyard Way, Atlanta. bit.ly/Self-Defence-With-Sule-Welch-071525.

Wednesday, July 16

Weekly Wed Meditation Class – 7-8:30pm. Stretch, meditate, and explore wisdom teachings with a supportive community and certified instructors. Free; donations welcome. Georgia Meditation Center, 4522 Tilly Mill Rd, Atlanta. bit.ly/4cTyVJ3.

Saturday, July 19

Weekly Wellness Walk Club – 9-11am. Celebrate National Self-Care Day with a morning walk on the Atlanta Beltline. Connect, recharge, and embrace movement. Free. Meet at tables outside Krog Street Market. bit.ly/3EgwBID

Healing Psychic Fair – 10am-7pm. Experience spiritual readings, healing, and divination from Atlanta's esoteric leaders. \$20 admission; discounts for kids and seniors. Healing Hands Reiki, 27 Waddell St NE, Ste A, Atlanta. bit.ly/416kld4

Sunday, July 20

Unity Atlanta Church “Living Originally Class” – 9:30-10:45 am. Join Jan Gurr, Licensed Unity Teacher, in rediscovering your true origin. This monthly class is based on the book, "Living Originally: Ten Spiritual Practices to Transform Your Life," by Robert Brumet. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Thursday, July 24

Healing Sound Bath with Raye Andrews – 7-8 pm. Join Certified Vibrational Sound Therapist, Raye Andrews, for a beautiful symphony of sound that will help ease you into balance with the flow of the season. This immersive, full-body listening experience

can bring relaxation to your mind, body and spirit. Suggested love offering \$20-\$40. Held in the Chapel. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Saturday, July 26

Family, Fun, Health, and Wellness Day – 9am-12pm. Enjoy free student health screenings, school enrollment support, and family activities. Hosted by Marietta City Schools. Free. Park Street School, 105 Park St SE, Marietta. bit.ly/Family-Health-and-Wellness-Day-072625

Faithful Flow: Graceful Movements with God's Guidance – 10-11:30am. Gentle stretches, guided meditation, and scripture reflection in Piedmont Park to deepen faith and peace. Free. North Meadow, Piedmont Park, Atlanta. bit.ly/Graceful-Movements-with-Gods-guidance-072625.

A Better U: Learn to treat your metabolic illnesses at the root cause – 11am-1pm. Discover how to manage obesity, diabetes, and more through time-based eating and simple food tools. Free. 395 Mount Vernon Hwy, Sandy Springs. bit.ly/A-Better-U-072625

Mind, Body, & Soul: Mental Health Awareness and Back to School Readiness – 12-4pm. Family-friendly workshops on mental wellness, fitness, and self-care to prepare for the school year. Free. Burdett Park, 2945 Burdett Rd, College Park. bit.ly/Mental-Health-Awareness-072625.

Reiki Share – 3:30-5:30pm. Group healing session for Reiki practitioners to practice techniques, meditation, and energy work. \$21 donation. Healing Hands Reiki, 27 Waddell St, Ste A, Atlanta. bit.ly/Reiki-Share-072625

Sunday, July 27

SOULFUL SUNDAYS Indoor Cycling Class – 9:30-10:15am. High-energy, 45-minute indoor cycling session. Download the GIT DIS WERK app to register, sign the waiver, and select your bike. Free. 2308 Henry Clower Blvd SW, Snellville. bit.ly/Indoor-Cycling-Class-072725.

The Healing Vibe: Sound Bath & Meditation for Emotional Balance – 10-11am. Relax, recharge, and restore emotional balance through sound bath and guided meditation with Robyn Minefee, LPC. Donation-based. 4760 Austell Rd, Ste 5, Austell. bit.ly/Sound-Bath-For-Emotional-Balance-072725.

"Spiritual Keys to Aging Well" - 12:30-1:30pm. This monthly discussion group is based on the booklet, "Spiritual Keys to Aging Well," by Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village. Copies are available at the event. Facilitated by Elisha Fields. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Monday, July 28

BrickFit with DJ Bostick – 6-7pm. Burn calories, build strength, and tone with “bricks” in this high-intensity class. Bring gloves and mat. Free. The Home Depot Backyard, 1 Backyard Way, Atlanta. bit.ly/BrickFit-DJ-Bostick-072825.

Wednesday, July 30

Wellness Wednesday – Self-Defense with Wadi – 6:30-7:30pm. Learn practical self-defense skills to boost confidence and safety with Coach Wadi. Free. Atlantic Station, 1380 Atlantic Dr, Atlanta. bit.ly/Self-Defense-with-Wadi-073025.

Walk & Talk Decatur – 6-7pm. Enjoy a friendly fitness walk through Downtown Decatur with Clarity Fitness and the City of Decatur. Free. Starts and ends at 1 West Court Square, Ste 100, Decatur. bit.ly/Walk-and-Talk-Decatur-073025.

Saturday, August 2

"More Than A Health Fair" Community Event At Lakewood Christian Manor – 10am-2pm. Enjoy free screenings, workshops, resources, and community connections addressing total well-being. Free. Lakewood Christian Manor, 2141 Springdale Rd SW #930, Atlanta. bit.ly/Health-Fair-Lakewood-Christian-Manor-080225

Angel & Ancestor Spirit Jam – 6-8pm. Receive intuitive messages from the Angel and Ancestor realms channeled by psychic medium Summer. \$10 at door. Healing Hands Reiki, 27 Waddell St, Ste A, Atlanta. bit.ly/Angel-and-Ancestor-Spirit-Jam-080225.

Sunday, August 3

Dementia in the Community: Health, Faith, and Inviting Spaces – 1:30-3:30pm. Explore how faith, design, and healthcare support those affected by dementia. Free. Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church, 471 Mount Vernon Hwy NE, Sandy Springs. bit.ly/Dementia-In-The-Community-080325.

ONGOING

Sundays

Practicing the Presence-A Course in Miracles – 8:45-10:30 am. This weekly Zoom study group aims at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence. Facilitator: Michael Wilkinson. An open and ongoing class. All are welcome. For more info and to receive the Zoom link, email: MWilkinson@leadstrat.com. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Online & In-Person Sunday Experience – 9-10:30 am Adult Study; 3pm, Music and Message; 4pm, Food and Fellowship; 5pm, New Thought Education Workshop. Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta, 3107 Clairmont Rd, Ste A, Atlanta. More info: slc-atlanta.org.

Red Clay Sangha Sunday Morning Service – 9am, Sitting/Walking Meditation; 10:30, Morning Service; 10:45am, Dharma Discussion; 11:30am, Closse and Brunch. Via Zoom or in person. 3420 W Hospital Ave, Ste 102, Chamblee. More info: RedClaySangha.org.

Grant Park Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. The Beacon ATL, 1030 Grant St SE, Atlanta. cfmatl.org/markets.

SRF Atlanta Meditation Service – 10-10:45am. An opportunity to meet with other truth-seekers to commune with God and

share spiritual fellowship. 4000 King Springs Rd, Smyrna. 770-434-7200. srfatlanta.org.

Meditation Healing & Wellness Course

Sundays • 10:30am-12:30pm

Six-week course meets once weekly, Sundays or Wednesdays. Deepen your meditation or explore healing paths. Transform your life and connect spiritually.

Andrea, 404-557-4306. Norcross.

Meditation Open House – 10-11:30am. Discussion at 11:30am and tea at 12pm. Meditation instruction available from 10-11am for those new to the practice. Atlanta Shambhala Center, 1447 Church St, Decatur. More info: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

Online: UUCA Service – 11am. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta: uuca.org/live.

Unity Atlanta Church Sunday Services – 11am-12pm. Attend in-person or watch via livestream. Youth Sunday School is in-person at 11am for ages 5-18. Nursery service is available 10:30am-12:30pm. 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Twin Hearts Meditation – 11.00 am – 12.30 pm. 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 Pranic Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: AtlPranicHealing.com.

Tarot and Mocktails – 1-2.30 pm. 1st Sunday. Designed for experienced and beginner tarot readers. Bring a deck of cards or buy onsite. Enjoy mid-day snack and drink. Learn about tarot and oracle cards. With Holistic Health & Wellness - 3372 Canton Rd Suite 116, Marietta, GA, 30066. 678-471-6587. Holistichealthse.square.site/events

Tuesdays

The Art of Preserving Balance and Vitality Through Movement – 6-7pm. Discover the ancient art of cultivating Chi to enhance well-being. Learn to manage stress, channel emotions, and deepen your connection with life. \$18/class; packages available. Zoom. Efrain Brady, 470-281-8645. PathsToIntegration.com.

Online Meditation Open House – 7-8pm meditation, 8-8:30pm discussion, followed by tea and cookies. To watch: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

Classifieds

To place a classified ad, email your listing to ads@naAtlanta.com. Cost is \$1/word; minimum \$25. Deadline: Fifth of each month for the next month's issue.

Space for Rent

SPACE FOR RENT – For private sessions, classes, meetings, receptions, performances, ceremonies, conferences. AV and kitchen options. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners, 770-441-0585, Pam@unityatl.org.

Twin Hearts Meditation – 7-8:30pm. A short, guided meditation blessing the Earth with loving kindness, peace and good will. Donation. Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta, 3107 Clairmont Rd, Unit A, Atlanta. 404-417-0008. Meetup.com/Twin-Hearts-Meditation.

Wednesdays

Meditation & Modern Buddhism – 7:00-8:30pm. With Resident Teacher, Gen Kelsang Dechok. Talks, guided meditation, discussion and Q&A. All welcome. Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia, 741 Edgewood NE, Atlanta. 678-453-6753. MeditationInGeorgia.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.

Weekly Group Meditation Session – 6:30-7:30pm. All levels of meditation experience are welcome. A simple, five-step meditation process will be presented before the 10-15 minute meditation session. Afterwards, conversation and questions are welcomed. Facilitated by Elisha Fields. Love offering. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Thursdays

Beyond Limits Weekly Conscious Dance – Between 8pm in Smyrna and 7pm in Roswell, GA at Awareness Studios. With Marisa Skolky. An intentional dance activated by vocal toning and singing during an hour and a half dance through our emotions, lifecycle, archetypes and levels of consciousness. Followed by a singing bowl meditation, a closing circle and community tea time. \$20. Beyond Limits Expressive Arts Therapy LLC, 4528 King Springs Rd SE, Smyrna. 770-235-3183. MarisaSkolky.com.

Saturdays

Morningside Farmers Market – 8-11:30am. Year-round. Offers organic produce, bread, pastries, grains, meat, honey, along with chef pop-ups, prepared foods, coffee, in-season fruits, and locally produced crafts. Morningside Presbyterian, 1411 N Morningside Dr NE, Atlanta. MorningsideMarket.com.

Oakhurst Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. Year-round. Fresh produce, meat, baked treats, and more. Additional offerings include live music and chef demonstrations featuring seasonal recipes. Sceptre Brewing Arts, 630 E Lake Dr, Decatur. cfmatl.org/oakhurst.

Tea & Tarot – 11am-2pm. 1st Sat. A tea party and tarot mixer for people of all ages and experience levels. Hosted by Amy Cathryn. \$25. Forever And A Day, 7830 Hwy 92, Woodstock. 770-516-6969. ForeverAndADay.as.me/TeaandTarot.

Free Reiki-Infused Yoga & Meditation – 3:30-5:30pm. 1st & 2nd Sat. Vinyasa flow classes enable you to move slowly, while focusing on strength, flexibility, concentration, breath work and meditation. Free. Healing Hands Reiki & Spiritual Development Inc, 27 Wad-dell St NE, Atlanta. Registration required: 313-671-5804 or Tinyurl.com/4mnww3t4.

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Those Who Balance You

by Tara Ochs

Here’s what I know about me:

- I live in the moment.
- I believe everyone is good.
- I am the Devil’s favorite advocate.
- I am always going to be five minutes late to everything.
- I love to make people laugh.

There’s plenty more, of course, but I just wanted to throw a few things out there because, for every charming trait of mine, there is an equal and opposite side of that coin. For example, I live in the moment—or perhaps you’d say I’m a terrible planner. I have never thought about the future for too long; I get distracted or overwhelmed by infinite possibilities. As a result, I haven’t done much about retirement or rainy days and I totally forgot to have kids.

But here’s the thing: Somehow, for every quirk of mine, I seem to have someone in my life who does a wonderful job of balancing me out.

This past weekend, that thought struck me like a gong. *Hey, look! This person fits you in ways that really matter.* It felt a little magical.

Here’s what I noticed: My friend and I had long conversations that were never stymied by interruptions or tangents; they held space for tough and differing perspectives. That alone is something unique. I have so many loved ones with whom I try to have conversations, but I walk away feeling like I just hiked up a very steep hill and covered very little distance. Which is fine. I can still make the effort. But how glorious it is when my mind can relax into its eddies and flows and only be greeted with encouragement to drift onward.

My friend and I had hours of meaningless wandering chats and a few moments of deep, weighty discussions. And I think our ability to do that so naturally is as much due to our opposite natures as our years of friendship.

In our heavier moments of conversation, she has railed passionately about the injustice in the world, how people are wasting their lives, how ignorance is a choice and how much time is lost in social media wormholes that could instead be used to improve ourselves and the world.



Image generated with AI in Adobe Photoshop

I presented my Devil’s Advocate Card and argued in favor of giving all these “unproductive others” the benefit of the doubt. I insisted that it was all going to be ok, that humans needed time to check out, that ignorance of some things was not ignorance of all—and more.

I saw her listen to my perspective and consider how she might leave room for grace. And I felt the undeniable urge to get back out in the world once more and look for ways to make a difference.

Thinking back on those conversations—conversations that could have been fraught with tension and frustration—I recognize

our fundamental differences. My friend wants us all to work harder and do better, and I want to give everyone a break. If you watched us in our cozy mountain cabin retreat that weekend, you would have seen those two opposites in action as well. She had to rally an army of excuses just to sit still and watch a second movie. Meanwhile, it didn’t even occur to me that less than 1,000 steps in a day might have explained my stiff back.

A perfectly balanced pair.

I need someone who nudges me to get off my butt and fight for good. And she needs someone who insists she take a load off once in a while and waste a day. The sweetness is in our mutual, unspoken ability to allow the pendulum to swing back and forth. There was a time in the past when I felt an anxious resistance to her natural pressure. But this weekend, I became acutely aware of our dynamic, and that same feeling of resistance became more like a gentle stretch. One that I felt deeply grateful for—knowing it widens the road I’m traveling and allows me to journey a greater distance.

Balance. What a beautiful thing. It makes me wonder who else has folded themselves neatly into my life in order to fill in the blanks of my soul. 🌱



Tara Ochs is a writer, producer and performer in Atlanta’s entertainment community. She produces content with Dagger, a creative agency, and can be seen on stage at Dad’s Garage Theater in the Old Fourth Ward performing live comedy.

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