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Correction: In our July news brief "Giving Tree Yoga Fundraiser in Late September," the dates of the fundraiser were incorrect. The event will take place September 20 and 21. Also, in our News Brief on the Calm Ring, we misspelled the company's URL. The correct spelling: claudshaus.com.



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Working on Healthspan at 60+ Strength Training



Anete Lusina/Pexels.com

My single best habit is working out. I rarely need to talk myself into doing it. I’m pretty automatic. Well, okay, I did get lazy yesterday and skipped.

But while consistent, I really haven’t been very thoughtful about it. By thoughtful, I mean actually having goals and training for something specifically. I just know that exercising is good for you, and I generally feel good after doing so.

That is until now. At my age—I’m 67—healthspan, the topic of a June Healing Ways article, is now very much top of mind. And that’s because of all the little physical conditions that are appearing. My right knee has been bothering me for a while, putting a halt to jogging. My right shoulder had some pain for most of last year, but that has receded. My left elbow has a sharp pain on occasion. Elbow???

Fortunately, as my body is demanding more careful attention, AI is providing more considered answers. I’ve had a series of conversations with ChatGPT and thought I’d share them here for those readers who are older than 50, and especially those older than 60.

My ideal workout schedule, with emphasis on “ideal”—since practice rarely meets plan—is to do two sessions of strength training and two sessions of aerobic training and one session of yoga each week, plus after-meal short walks on my two days of rest. What I

share here are specifics of the strength training, but the reason I’m sharing the “ideal” is because ChatGPT concluded thusly: “You’re doing nearly everything that modern exercise science recommends for maximizing healthspan.”

First and foremost, strength training is the most important of these. When I turned 50, a similarly aged friend gave me a book on a particular style of strength training. Now that we’re in our 50s, he said, strength training becomes more important because of *sarcopenia*, the loss of muscle mass and strength. Indeed, the graph shown here is a “hypothetical and illustrative” one created by ChatGPT that “illustrates the typical decline in muscle mass due to sarcopenia as people age, starting from a peak at age 30.”

When talking about working out with weights, there are three general approaches one can take to a given session: increase strength, increase muscle mass (*hypertrophy*) and increase endurance. They are differentiated by the number of repetitions of a given exercise until failure. If one is training for strength, the target number of reps is one to five. For hypertrophy, six to 12 reps. And for endurance, 13-plus reps.

I previously came upon some apparently bad information/advice that said that someone my age should only train for strength 10% of the time, or just once out of every 10 sessions. That seemed too low, so I intuitively came up with this pattern: one for endurance,

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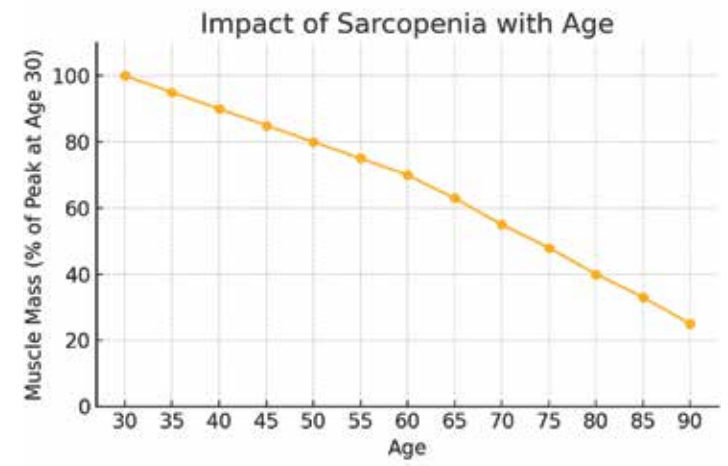
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two for hypertrophy, then one for strength. Repeat. ChatGPT approved, but switched the order to hypertrophy-strength-hypertrophy-endurance.

I have been doing six exercises per session, three sets per exercise, with the first set always being lower weights to warm up. ChatGPT says six exercises per session is a great number, with a reasonable range being four to eight. The choice of exercises has been a function of opposing muscles, e.g., quads/hamstrings, biceps/triceps, but I do believe this is the area in which I can improve the most. To be sure, it's the one aspect of strength training about which I haven't talked with ChatGPT!

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We're pleased to introduce a new monthly column on aromatherapy. It is the idea of our longtime customer, Roz Zollinger, director and co-owner of Heal Center in Sandy Springs and Atlanta's "grande dame" of aromatherapy. In other words, she has been giving in-depth instruction to Atlantans on aromatherapy for more than 30 years! And by in-depth, we're talking about 50 in-class hours. According to the company's website, the classes help people "build a strong foundation of knowledge and experience in safe therapeutic applications and blending of over 40 essential oils."

Actually, the aromatherapy column began last month with "Staying Safe in the Sun with Aromatherapy." This month's and next month's columns will be published exclusively online, which will be the pattern going forward; published in print on a quarterly basis, online otherwise. And we will always publicize the online titles in our print magazine's Online Table of Contents.

Besides sharing a lifetime of expertise, Roz's columns include at least one recipe. We're hoping Roz's offering becomes our next big hit! 🙌



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.



Get Off the Grid Fest Returns with Solar Fest

Blending music, activism and sustainable living into a family-friendly event, the biennial Get Off the Grid Fest returns to the Southeast with a Solar Fest on August 23 and 24 at Goose Pond Colony Resort in Scottsboro, Alabama. Designed for homesteaders, homeowners and sustainability enthusiasts, the festival centers on solar energy, resilience and off-grid living. Admission is \$55.20 and \$81.88 for a one-day and two-day pass, respectively.

“The express purpose is to educate and inform homesteaders and the ‘solar curious’ as to how they can become producers of their own electric power rather than mere consumers and, in so doing, kiss the power monopolies goodbye, save the planet and have fun doing it!” says co-founder and producer Bill Fleming. It includes a solar expo, a sustainability fair, hands-on workshops, live music, vendors, food and beverages—all intended to allow attendees to fully experience alternatives to living on the “grid.”

Music performances include Solar Family Jam, the Get Down Junkies, Amanda Platt and the HoneyCutters, Chikomo Marimba, and Sol Driven Train, among others. Yoga and tai chi sessions will be offered in the mornings.

Get Off The Grid Fest is a zero-waste event. Kids 15 and under get in free when accompanied by an adult ticket holder. Onsite camping is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Advance registration is not required.

For tickets and more information, visit GetOffTheGridFest.com. For sponsorship inquiries, email hello@getoffthegridfest.com.

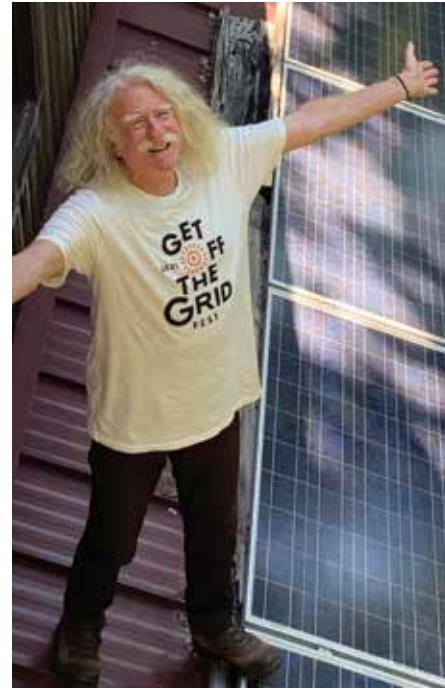


Photo: Lynn Marie Dwyer
Bill Fleming

ATL Pyramid Meditation Academy Plans Meditation Center in Cumming

The Atlanta Pyramid Meditation Academy (APMA) recently announced it has acquired a parcel of land in Cumming, Georgia and is planning to build a unique, pyramid-shaped meditation center there, designed to be a space of peace, healing and spiritual growth.



Members of the Atlanta Pyramid Meditation Academy

APMA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to spreading the power of meditation for physical, mental and emotional well-being. It is part of the Pyramid Spiritual Societies Movement, founded by Brahmarsi Patriji. The center teaches Anapanasati meditation, a breath-based technique that supports mindfulness, peace and spiritual growth.

All meditation sessions and community programs will be offered free of charge, making mental wellness and spiritual exploration accessible to everyone. Inclusivity is at the heart of the academy’s mission.

APMA is seeking donations and sponsorships to help bring its vision to life. Support from individuals and organizations will directly help run weekly meditation events, spiritual

gatherings, youth programs and wellness workshops. “We envision this center as a collaborative space,” says the APMA team. “Teachers, wellness guides, and volunteers from any tradition are welcome to offer sessions and workshops that align with our vision of inner peace and collective upliftment.”

For more information or to support the project, visit www.atlpma.org.

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Small but Mighty

Growing and Enjoying Microgreens and Sprouts

by *Chloe Karydes Krecun*



Dean Drobot/CanvaPro

Microgreens and sprouts are small but mighty, delivering considerable benefits for the health conscious. Whether grown at home or purchased fresh from a local grocer or farmers market, these superfoods make for an easy and accessible way to add texture, flavor and nutrients to everyday meals.

Subtle differences distinguish these two remarkable plants. Microgreens are edible, immature seedlings grown in soil or a similar medium and harvested upon the appearance of the first few cotyledon leaves. Sprouts are germinated seeds that are cultivated in water until they grow into an edible plant. Their roots, seeds and leaves are edible.

“Anyone can grow a small tray of microgreens on a windowsill or around a kitchen counter,” says Katie Staudt, owner and head grower of Meraki Urban Farm, in Chicago. She points out the common misconception that microgreens can only be grown in a liquid solution. While some do-it-yourself kits employ hydroponic techniques, they are not the most efficient growing method and may lead to mold growth.

“You don’t have to have a green thumb if you have the right information,” says Staudt. Because they can be easily propagated in small trays, microgreens are ideal for small, indoor spaces. She suggests using soilless media made of peat, coconut coir or hemp that allow for proper drainage while

holding the right amount of moisture. The plants demand little maintenance and are usually harvested when the greens are one to three inches tall, making them a perfect choice for individuals with limited gardening experience. Staudt recommends beginning with the radish sprout, which can grow and be ready to eat in as little as seven days. Kale, purple kohlrabi, red acre cabbage, bok choy and wasabi mustard sprouts are also easy-to-grow varieties.

Sprouts can be more challenging to grow because they require greater oversight to preserve food safety. It is important to soak the seeds in water and rinse them daily with clean water to maintain a moist environment while also reducing the risk of bacterial growth. According to agricultural experts at Penn State Extension, bacteria in the sprouting seeds “can continue to thrive if proper food handling techniques are not practiced during harvest, processing and preparation.”

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration provides good agricultural practices for growing, harvesting, packing and holding sprouts, which include using clean water, wearing disposable sterile gloves when handling the seeds and sprouts, and cooling the sprouts to 32° F immediately after harvesting. The FDA strongly recommends cooking sprouts thoroughly before consuming them to eliminate harmful bacteria. Children, the elderly, pregnant women and persons with weakened immune systems should avoid eating raw sprouts altogether.

According to Dominique Kline, farm manager of The Hope Farm, in Alabama, “Radish or broccoli sprouts would probably be the easiest ones to start out with at home, just because those are some of the most reliable and have the fastest turnover.” Alfalfa, mung bean and sunflower sprouts are also relatively easy to grow.

Packed With Power

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, microgreens contain five times

greater levels of vitamins and carotenoids than their mature plant counterparts, including vitamins C, E, K and A, as well as beta carotene, lutein/zeaxanthin and violaxanthin.

“You can eat 50 cups of broccoli or a single cup of broccoli sprouts for similar nutrition and benefit,” explains Emily Ho, nutrition professor and director of the Linus Pauling Institute at Oregon State University, in an article published by the American Heart Association.

It is important to understand that these plants’ shelf life is short once they are cut. “The closer they are to being alive, the better they are for you,” Kline asserts. For those that prefer to purchase their produce instead of growing it, local farmers markets or select grocery stores also offer fresh microgreens and sprouts that provide the same nutritional benefits and quality. This can be a convenient way to not compromise on freshness or effectiveness.

From Garden to Plate in Seconds

Not only are microgreens and sprouts relatively simple to grow, they are even easier to eat. Incorporating them into meals is quite straightforward. Kline recommends adding them to any hot or cold food as an easy nutrient boost. Sprinkle them on salads, eggs or pizza for added texture, contrast and flavor. Arugula and radish microgreens add a delightful peppery flavor, while mung beans offer a milder, slightly sweet experience, and sunflower sprouts lend a nutty flavor to any dish.

Whether enjoyed fresh from a windowsill at home or sourced from a local market, microgreens and sprouts bring nutrient density along with delicious flavors and textures, making them an attractive green to incorporate into everyday meals. 🌱

Chloe Karydes Krecun is a sophomore at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Connect at [LinkedIn.com/in/chloe-karydes-krecun](https://www.linkedin.com/in/chloe-karydes-krecun/).

SPICY-SWEET TOFU AND BEAN SPROUTS



GenAI/CanvaPro

causing excess water to be absorbed by the paper towels. Unwrap the tofu and cut it evenly into one-inch cubes. Set aside.

Add avocado oil or olive oil to a cast iron or other frying pan, set on medium-high heat until the pan is hot. Tilt the pan back and forth until the oil covers the entire surface. Be careful not to overheat the oil—it smokes if overheated.

Add the paprika, ginger, coriander, salt, chipotle, cinnamon, maple syrup and molasses to the pan. Using a fork, evenly distribute all of the ingredients in the hot oil.

When the spicy mixture bubbles, place the tofu cubes by hand into the pan. Lower the heat to medium. Brown the tofu about 2 minutes and then carefully turn it over to brown for another 2 minutes. Once browned, place the tofu onto a serving plate.

Add bean sprouts to the hot pan, stir with a fork until sprouts are hot. Add toasted sesame oil. Stir again and then remove pan from the stove.

Cover tofu with hot bean sprouts and serve immediately.

Recipe courtesy of Marlaina Donato. Connect at [WildflowersAndWoodSmoke.com](https://www.wildflowersandwoodsmoke.com).

- 1 pkg extra firm tofu
- 2 cups bean sprouts, rinsed (approx. 16 oz)
- 1 Tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 Tbsp ginger, freshly grated
- ½ tsp ground coriander seed
- ½ tsp sea salt or smoked salt
- ¼ tsp smoked chipotle powder
- ¼ tsp cinnamon powder
- 3 Tbsp avocado oil or olive oil
- 1 Tbsp maple syrup
- 1 Tbsp molasses
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil

Drain water from tofu then wrap it in paper towels and place it on a plate. Wait 10 minutes before gently pressing the tofu,

MICROGREEN SMOOTHIE

YIELD: 1 SERVING

- 1 cup frozen organic berries
- 1 cup coconut water
- 1 frozen banana
- 1 oz broccoli microgreens
- 2 Tbsp hemp seeds or chia seeds

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Pour into a glass and enjoy immediately.

Recipe courtesy of Katie Staudt.



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The Authentic Lifestyle

Learning To Realign With Our True Selves

by Carrie Jackson



peshkov from Getty Images/CanvaPro

Harmony in our daily routine provides a sustainable and fulfilling rhythm. A life in balance accommodates ambition and rest, effort and ease, honoring our individual energy and purpose. Instead of pursuing future goals and equating success with monetary gain or accomplishments, we can learn to appreciate the present moment and align our choices with personal values. By shifting from a rigid, externally oriented idea of success to a more holistic, harmoniously driven approach, we can experience greater joy, purpose and authenticity.

Connecting to the Web of Life

In 2022, Yoli Maya Yeh, a yoga teacher, shiatsu therapist and educator whose work revolves around Indigenous preservation, healing arts and social justice, embarked on an adventure of global nomadism and worldschooling her now 13-year-old child.

Their journeys have taken them to many countries, including Morocco, Italy, Malta and Senegal. Yeh asserts that her lifestyle was not the result of a single decision but rather the culmination of focus, willpower and the strength of those that have walked before her.

“While entrepreneurship flows through my veins, without a clear vision, a sense of purpose and a deep well of confidence, I would not be able to be this assertive and daring in my approach to how I want to fulfill my dreams. I could decide to play small and feel contracted in my body, but that was not the intuitive guidance I have come to trust,” Yeh explains. “My vision is a life where I can be in spaces of belonging, collaborating and problem solving, dreaming and world-building our collective liberated future. In the present moment, I explore my inborn gifts and hone them to be of maximum service.”

She maintains that a path of development cannot be solely cerebral, sharing, “A traveling lifestyle provides me with a high level of changefulness in which I can cultivate growth and adaptation through constant new experiences that challenge me to navigate unknowns. We must bring the transformative process into the body through active restoration tools and meaningful engagement with self.”

Harmony and resistance are felt in the body, and tapping into those signals enables us to deeply connect with our true selves. As Yeh puts it, “Perpetual analysis in the mind disconnects us from the experience of resonance, thus distancing us from actual alignment. A daily centering practice that draws on a collage of breathwork, mantra and meditative techniques allows us to hone our connection to the sensations in the body.”

As a respite from the demands of modern society, Yeh turns to yoga nidra, a yogic sleep meditation originating in South Asia, as well as other Indigenous wisdom traditions. “Living in the modern era presents us with contradictory factors,” she says. “We have more automation and digital support, while at the same time, we are cut off from our ancestral rejuvenation practices such as sacred dreaming, ritual and community celebration.”

Another valuable practice is rematriation, or “returning to the Sacred Mother”, which emphasizes the restoration of Indigenous knowledge and connection. “In this practice, we lay our tired bones down on the earth to rest and revive the

ancestral wisdom that lives within. Like so many meditative and trance practices, one explores liminal states of consciousness where the mind expands well beyond the confines of the awake, thinking mind and amplifies creativity and a sense of freedom,” Yeh explains. “To experience fulfillment in life, we need a recipe that combines resonance of expansion and a sense of belonging. Success is the embodied expression of this connection to self and collective at the same time.”

Fulfilling Our Journey

Brianna Wiest is the bestselling author of numerous books, including *101 Essays That Will Change the Way You Think*, *The Pivot Year* and *The Mountain Is You*. Her personal reflections are derived from years of self-inquiry and meditation practice, and her writing emphasizes emotional intelligence and self-awareness as keys to meaningful success.

She notes that the conventional standard of success varies depending on an individual’s upbringing, network and environment. “There are ways in which society measures and corroborates a concept of success, and many people feel beholden to this definition. But this can become more defeating than motivating, as the idea of success is often divorced from the essence of what it should actually mean,” she says. “Success is effectiveness, but the question becomes:

Effectiveness at what? Fulfillment is when we’re effective at something meaningful. It’s an internal gauge, rather than an external measure. Fulfillment is when we feel deep peace and inner satisfaction, regardless of how others may perceive our endeavors or pursuits.”

Shifting the focus away from the outcome, and more on our journey, is a practice that strengthens within the interplay of momentum and inertia. Wiest states, “The more we acknowledge and feel good about the progress we’re making, the more inclined we feel to make more of it. Often, we use the inverse on ourselves: We try to focus on the ways in which we’re falling behind (or imagine that we are) so as to motivate ourselves to move forward. This usually just compounds the mindset that we are incapable, and it’s not worth the effort. The best way to become more of anything is first to find evidence of the ways in which you already are that thing.”

Wiest recommends striking a balance between ambition and rest by fine-tuning intuition and strengthening the ability to respond effectively. “There’s no right way to divide up your time, and everyone’s needs differ,” she points out. “Rather than waiting until you’re at the point of depletion to think about taking care of yourself, sit honestly with the question of where you’d like your bandwidth to expand and how your body and mind signal that it’s time

to decompress. In the same way that you have to rest a muscle after exercising it for it to strengthen, repair and grow, the rest of the body works similarly. It’s part of the process, not antithetical to it.”

Reflective practices such as meditation and journaling can enable us to be more

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mindful and make decisions that align with our values, instead of acting impulsively. Wiest suggests looking at life from the perspective of our 90-year-old self and considering what we would have done differently. “Mindfulness is a way of both stilling the waters of the mind and calming the inner chaos, while at the same time, giving us the chance to pause between having a thought and a feeling and then immediately responding to it,” she says. “It’s that gap of time where we get to consciously decide how we will react that ultimately creates our personal freedom.”

Living Our Soul’s Purpose

Author, podcaster and co-founder of the Dharma Coaching Institute, Sahara Rose Ketabi helps people discover their soul’s purpose. “Your dharma is the big reason why you are here,” she explains. “It’s your sacred mission, your truth and the sacred intersection of your joy and the world’s needs. When you’re aligned with your dharma, life begins to feel like a divine dance—yes, with challenges, but also with deep meaning. It’s not about being the best at something; it’s about being you, fully and unapologetically.”

Ketabi contends that the pursuit of success alone does not yield happiness; it is happiness that brings true success. “Success isn’t just about ticking boxes or climbing ladders. It’s about alignment,” she clarifies. “We can shift this mindset by tuning into our bodies, emotions and passions, asking, ‘Does this feel expansive? Does this nourish my soul?’ When your success is in service of your dharma, it feels sustainable, fulfilling and soul-led.”

Ketabi incorporates Ayurvedic wisdom into her teachings to help people tune into their own energy. “Ayurveda is the science of life, and your dharma is the reason you’re alive. They’re inherently connected. By understanding your dosha—*vata*, *pitta* or *kapha*—you understand your strengths, challenges and soul gifts,” she explains. “It’s not just about food or herbs; it’s about rhythm. If you’re a fiery pitta trying to force your purpose, you may burn out. A dreamy vata may need structure to bring ideas through. Ayurveda teaches you how to work with your energy, not against it, so your dharma can blossom naturally.”

Living as your most authentic self ultimately has a butterfly effect for making positive changes in the world. “When one person lives in their dharma, it shifts the field for everyone around them. It creates a ripple of remembrance,” says Ketabi. “I believe that your dharma is not just about you, but it’s about the impact you create through being you. It is not selfish to follow your joy; it’s necessary. When you do what you love, you become magnetic. You inspire others to stop settling, to heal and to rise. You become the permission slip they didn’t know they needed. Living your dharma is the highest form of spiritual activism.” 🦋

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

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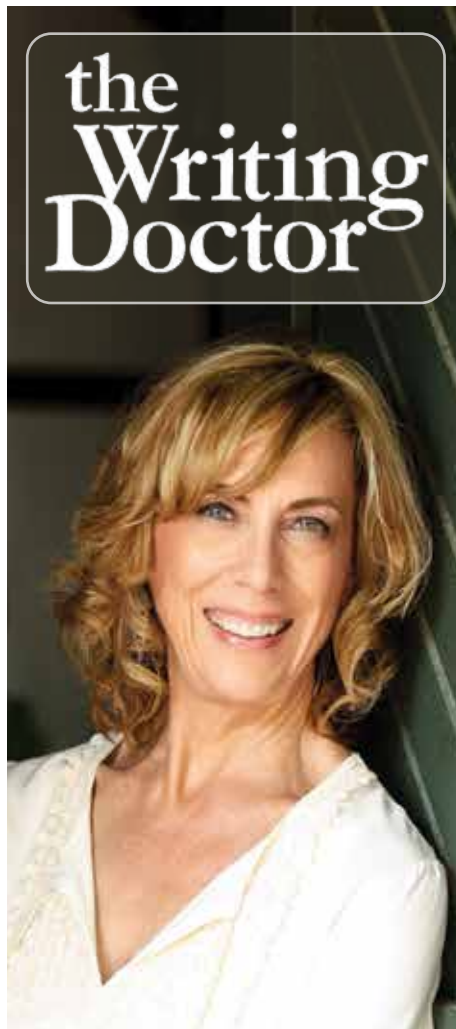
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Understanding Cat Supplements

Tips for Safe and Fruitful Nutritional Support

by Ruth Roberts, DVM, CVA, CVH, CVFT, NAN

Cats are often seen as low-maintenance companions, but they may still need supplements to support their health and well-being. The feline supplement market is one of the fastest-growing segments in pet health, with an expected annual growth rate of 8.7 percent through 2029. With so many available options, choosing the right supplements requires careful consideration.

Changing Interests of Pet Owners

Melissa Sherman, a holistic pet health coach and nutritionist, notes that the increasing interest in feline supplements stems from two primary reasons: a shift toward integrative wellness and a heightened emphasis on the unique needs of cats. “People are looking beyond conventional care and asking what more they can do to help their cats thrive, not just survive,” she explains.

A recent survey of pet parents conducted by market research publisher Packaged Facts reported that 76 percent of dog and cat owners were interested in finding health and wellness products for their pets. Nearly half of the respondents said

that they were paying closer attention to their pets' health in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the number of U.S. households with at least one cat grew from 25 percent in 2016 to 29 percent in 2022. As more families welcome cats into their



Merrimon Crawford/Shutterstock

homes, interest in long-term feline wellness continues to rise. An aging pet population and the growing availability of veterinarian-formulated supplements further contribute to this rising trend.

Foundational Supplements

To promote general feline wellness, Sherman's top supplement recommendations fall into the following three categories:

- 1. Immune Support:** Medicinal mushrooms such as reishi, turkey tail and shiitake are rich in beta-glucans, which help modulate the immune system and reduce inflammation.
- 2. Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Marine-based sources such as anchovy or krill are preferable. “Cats are obligate carnivores,”

Sherman explains. “It's essential they receive bioavailable, animal-based omega-3s rather than plant-based sources, which are harder for them to convert.” These nutrients contribute to skin health, joint function, cardiovascular well-being and cognitive performance, making them indispensable for cats of all ages.

- 3. Emotional Wellness Support:** “Cats are deeply sensitive creatures, and their emotional state directly affects their physical health,” says Sherman. “Supplements that support the nervous system, including certain adaptogens or vibrational remedies like flower essences, can be incredibly helpful, especially for cats dealing with anxiety, transitions or trauma.”

Targeted Support

Beyond the foundational supplements, others can be added on a case-by-case basis as specific needs arise. Sherman recommends a comprehensive assessment of the animal's diet, lifestyle, health history and symptoms, noting, “I evaluate food quality and variety, energy levels, digestion, coat condition and behavior. If the cat thrives on a balanced, species-appropriate diet with no signs of imbalance, supplements may be needed only for foundational support like omega-3s. Life stage and unique needs are also considered. Kittens, seniors, stressed cats or those recovering from illness often benefit from targeted supplementation to optimize their health.”

In cases of chronic kidney disease, hyperthyroidism or taurine deficiency, especially in cats fed home-cooked diets, targeted supplements may be necessary. These situations often require meticulously adjusted nutrient levels and additional support, such as glandulars (organ-based supplements) or adaptogens (stress-modulating herbs), tailored to the cat's specific condition. In such cases, oversight by a veterinarian and/or nutritionist may be advisable.

Supremacy of a Healthy Lifestyle

Supplements are often viewed as a quick fix for health issues. Without addressing root

causes such as poor nutrition or unresolved medical conditions, supplementation may lead to poor results. In some cases, they may even mask symptoms rather than support true healing. “One of the most important things to understand is that supplements can't replace a high-quality diet or proper veterinary care. They're powerful tools, but they work best as part of a holistic wellness plan,” says Sherman.

Dosages and Other Safety Concerns

A common misconception is that more supplements are better. Cats often thrive with less. “Over-supplementation can strain organs like the liver and kidneys and may even contribute to the very issues we're trying to resolve,” Sherman explains. “Just because something is natural doesn't mean it's always safe or necessary. Cats are incredibly sensitive, and even beneficial ingredients can become harmful if used improperly.”

The selection of supplements should be purposeful and precise. Fat-soluble vitamins A and D can accumulate in the body over time and lead to toxicity. According to VCA Animal Hospitals, vitamin A toxicosis in cats, often caused by excess raw liver or supplement intake, can result in joint pain, lethargy, weight loss and skeletal deformities.

When selecting cat supplements, Sherman recommends looking for those made with high-quality, naturally derived ingredients and no synthetic additives or fillers. Choose species-appropriate formulations and brands that employ good manufacturing

practices. Companies that share third-party testing results are best.

Exercise caution with essential oils, particularly those incorporated into other supplements, as they can be harmful to cats if not used properly. It is best to work with a professional experienced in essential oil use for animals. 🐾

Learn more about Dr. Ruth Roberts' approach to holistic pet care and wellness at DrRuthRoberts.com.



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Yoga 

Finding Balance and Stability in Sama-sthiti

by Patricia Schmidt

In her poem "August," poet Dorothy Parker famously wrote, "Summer, do your worst." The month can bring a challenging spate of heat and humidity, sapping energy, spirit and initiative all at once. And yet, despite the continued haze of summer, schools resume their activities, professional and recreational organizations return to their regular programming, and there is an expectation of a return to productivity. Thus, the season seems to invite one approach, while the daily schedule calls for something else altogether. One can feel pulled in opposite directions.



Competing messages in life are commonplace. A felt sense of center and the feeling of balance between effort and ease can often be hard to find. Yet yoga practice can inform these situations. One-legged standing poses such as tree pose, or *vrksasana*, can challenge balance, composure and concentration. Sustaining high-effort poses such as chair pose can help foster resilience and grit in the face of adversity and discomfort. And one little cue—often mentioned as students settle into standing or sitting upright—can guide practitioners to centeredness and even ease in daily life. That cue is *sama-sthiti*.

"Equal-Sided" Steadiness

Sama-sthiti is a compound Sanskrit word with multiple complex and cumulative meanings, but it's often simply translated as "equal steadiness" or "equal-sided standing." In some yoga traditions, such as Iyengar-style yoga classes, it is cultivated and taught

with exacting alignment cues. In ashtanga classes, on the other hand, it is usually used in conjunction with other postures, more as a sense of steadiness within a posture rather than a posture itself. In this context, it's not so much taught as something in the physical body but as a sense of equality and steadiness that is allowed to expand and develop in the student.

As a root, "sama" refers to equality and balance. It is used to describe equanimous mental states, breath patterns, efforts, perspectives and approaches; it always indicates a sense of balance. It confers both the *intention* for as well as the *achievement* or establishment of that balance. Sanskrit functions this way: The root of a word gathers meaning over time, shaped by the many ways it has been used in different texts and contexts.

"Sthiti" refers to steadiness and firmness. It confers a sense of being established. Solidity. Like sama, it can be applied to states of mind, moral values, sense of self/ego, states of the body and even places of practice. It invokes Ayurvedic qualities of stability and solidity, too.

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, Book Two, number 46, can be roughly translated as "The posture should be steady and comfortable," and "sthira" appears again to convey that steadiness and firmness.

Students often experience sthira in the symmetrical upright pose called "mountain pose," or *tadasana*. If so, they're encouraged to find a sense of balance, both

in the tissues of the body and through muscular engagement. They're also guided to experience sthira in their perception of the body—from front to back and from side to side—as well as through the center-plum line that extends both from the base of the pelvis downward and up through the crown of the skull and beyond.

Through the cuing of sthira, many teachers encourage their students to cultivate a felt-sense of balanced, equal effort, which lays the groundwork for the feeling of a balanced, equal self. Patanjali's yoga sutra promises *sukham*—"ease" as well as "sweetness"—that is, the sweetness and comfort that blossom from the steadiness.


Build Sama-sthiti in your Mountain Pose

It is often easiest to build a sense of equal balance and centeredness in an upright position such as that found in mountain pose—having no balancing, twisting or asymmetries to contend with. Even so, it can be deceptively difficult both to build well and to sustain—and it doesn't help that it looks like it should be easy! Try these steps to build mountain pose and find sama-sthiti.

1 Come into a place of "uprightness." Traditionally, this is a standing pose, but if you're practicing in a chair, it can be accomplished by sitting firmly with feet supported if possible.


2 Begin to establish your mountain pose from the ground up by connecting with the bottom of your feet.

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Veranda Vinyasa – 10-11am. All-level vinyasa yoga indoors/outdoors with Highland Yoga at The Veranda. Free. Buckhead Village District, 3035 Peachtree Rd, Atlanta. bit.ly/Veranda-Vinyasa-080925

FREE Reiki Infused Yoga & Meditation – 3:30-5:30pm. Vinyasa yoga, chakra-focused meditation, and distant Reiki in a calming, supportive space. Free. Healing Hands Reiki, 27 Waddell St NE, Ste A, Atlanta. bit.ly/Reiki-Infused-Yoga-and-Meditation-080925

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10

Sunday Morning Yoga @ The Interlock – 10-11am. Outdoor yoga led by lululemon ambassadors in Highline Park. Open to all levels. Free. The Interlock, 1115 Howell Mill Rd NW, Atlanta. bit.ly/Sunday-Morning-Yoga-081025

Yoga in the Park & Reynoldstown Farmer's Market – 10-11am. All-level vinyasa flow followed by local market browsing. Donation-based. Lang Carson Park, 100 Flat Shoals Ave SE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Yoga-in-the-Park-and-Reynoldstown-081025

Yin & Chow: Yoga and Brunch Series – 10:30am-1:30pm. Enjoy meditative yoga followed by a pop-up chef brunch. \$28.52. Uptown Atlanta Test Kitchen, 2440 Piedmont Rd NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Yin-and-Chow-081025

MONDAY, AUGUST 11

Yoga presented by Kaiser Permanente 2025 – 6:30-7:30pm. Free evening yoga on The Plaza Green as part of The Battery Atlanta's Wellness Series. Pre-registration required. 775 Battery Ave SE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Yoga-By-Kaiser-081125

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13

Restorative Yoga + Sound Bath – 7:30-8:30pm. Unwind with gentle yoga followed by a sound bath to support deep relaxation and harmony. \$28 drop-in or \$48 new student pass. Joiful Yoga, 205 Hilderbrand Dr, Sandy Springs. bit.ly/Restorative-Yoga-Sound-Bath-081325

RnB Yoga: A High Frequency Flow – 7-8pm. Beginner-friendly yoga in a gently heated room with breathwork, sound bath, and great vibes. \$20. 2030 Bolton Rd NW, Atlanta. bit.ly/RnB-Yoga-081325

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14

Sacred Mantra Soundbath + Veg Dinner – 7-8:30pm. Heart-opening meditation, chanting, and soundbath followed by Ayurvedic vegetarian dinner. \$5 donation suggested. 1315 S Ponce De Leon Ave NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Sacred-Mantra-SoundBath-081425.

Senior Chair Yoga – 10-11am. Gentle, supportive yoga with breathwork and relaxation for seniors and all abilities. In-person or Zoom. Suggested donation \$10. 235 Club Ridge Dr, Marietta. bit.ly/Senior-Chair-Yoga-081425.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16

Community Kirtan & Mantra Sound Bath – 4-6:30pm. Radha Rose and Josh facilitate a call-and-response devotional chanting and a restorative crystal bowl and mantra sound bath will cleanse your cells from the inside out. Vista Yoga, bit.ly/vista-yoga-events

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20

Flow After Five Yoga – 6:30-7:30pm. Unwind after work with an all-levels yoga flow to reset body and mind. Ages 18+. Free. Milford Recreation Center, 675 Smyrna Powder Springs Rd SW, Marietta. bit.ly/Flow-After-Five-Yoga-083025

SATURDAY, AUGUST 30

Yoga on the Green – 8-9am. Outdoor yoga with Eva followed by treats and lunch nearby. Bring a mat and a friend for movement and community. Donation-based. 2315 Cascade Rd, Atlanta. bit.ly/Yoga-on-the-Green-083025

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31

Sound Bath & Restorative Yoga – 1-3pm. Relax deeply with restorative yoga, sound healing, and Reiki for chakra alignment and inner calm. \$28.45. Healing Hands Reiki, 27 Waddell St NE, Ste A, Atlanta. bit.ly/SoundBath-Restorative-Yoga-083125

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Imagining a triangle shape works well for many practitioners—for each foot, imagine connecting the center of the heel with the ball of the foot on either side. Others prefer sensing the four “corners” of the foot—the inner and outer heel and the inside and outside of the ball of the foot. Roll through these points, shifting weight around the base of each foot before settling into active stillness. Raise the toes and spread them wide, and then lay them down again, releasing any gripping.

3 If you're in a standing position, engage the large muscles of the thighs, being mindful not to clench the buttocks muscles. Notice how the engaged thighs lift the kneecaps. Spiral your inner thighs inward and backward, which helps bring the pelvis over the feet.

4 If you're in a seated position, connect with your sit bones, establishing your seat as a second kind of footing or base. Soften through the lower back and bring the pelvis, shoulder girdle and base of the skull into one line.

5 Whatever position you're taking, retract your chin as the shoulder girdle comes over the pelvis. As you draw the chin toward the sternum and as the base of the skull moves upward and backward, you might imagine creating a double chin on purpose. Notice the effect on your lower ribs, too, knitting them together and down, even as you cultivate an upward sensation in the lower belly—and uprightedness throughout the body.

6 Lift through the crown of the skull and maintain an even breath. Sustain for eight to ten breaths, cultivating sama-sthiti. Notice your effort to balance front and back body, side bodies, the weight in the feet and the bony pelvis, shoulder and jaw girdles.

7 Release your tadasana. You might need to shimmy, take hip circles, or open and close the jaw wide to release any tension that might have accumulated through the held posture. Notice what releases.

Cultivating Balance and Centeredness Off the Mat

Ideally, the benefits of the yoga practice travel with the student as they leave the mat. If sama-sthiti was available on the mat, it'd be a nice outcome of the practice for that sense of centeredness and even ease to be available in daily life, too. Consider these questions about daily life and begin to build a sense of centeredness off the mat:

- When do you find yourself most off-balance and uncentered? Is there a place or context in your life when you're aware of being pulled off-center and out of ease? Try using the mindfulness available through tadasana to be aware of your surroundings with a degree of distance from the context, and to see that you are separate from it, cultivating a kind of equanimous witnessing.
- The next time you notice you're feeling out of balance, look down at your feet. Can you begin to build from your feet into some version or portion of your tadasana? If so, notice how it affects your experience of what's happening in the moment.
- Do you have an image of ease and steadiness that you can use the next time you're feeling off-balance or pulled in many directions? For some, it might be an image of a mountain that remains steady and calm as the seasons and weather swirl around it. Or it might be a tree, firmly rooted, or a pillar of stacked stones. What works for you? What might feed your felt sense of steadiness and ease? 🌱



Patricia Schmidt, C-IAYT, E-RYT 500, YACEP, 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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Lorraine Maita

on A Natural Path Back to Health

by Sandra Yeyati

Lorraine Maita is a triple board-certified physician specializing in functional, integrative and anti-aging medicine. She is the author of *Vibrance for Life: How to Live Younger and Healthier*. The self-professed “Hormone Harmonizer and Detoxifier” has been featured on national media outlets, including ABC News and Forbes. She has served as chief medical officer at Prudential Financial, medical director of The Pfizer Health Leadership Team and medical director of North America for Johnson & Johnson Global Health Services.

Maita maintains a medical practice in New Jersey and is the CEO and founder of The Feel Good Again Institute, which offers do-it-yourself courses, supplement protocols, strategies, resources, coaching and live classes focusing on bioidentical hormone replacement therapy, weight loss, gut health, detoxification and improving the healthspan. The institute aims to provide health education and self-care options for those that cannot afford or do not have access to functional medicine.

What is a hormone imbalance?

If any hormone level is off, you're going to feel off. For example, high cortisol levels can drive down other hormones like estrogen, progesterone, testosterone and the thyroid hormones, causing elevated blood sugar, blood cholesterol and blood pressure;

weight gain; puffiness; fatigue; and forgetfulness. In women, estrogen dominance during PMS and perimenopause occurs when progesterone is low or absent, leading to anxiety, irritability, insomnia, weight gain, tender breasts, fibroids, irregular bleeding and physical aches, among other things. Those are just two examples of imbalances.

How do you treat hormone imbalances?

We always start with lifestyle changes, including diet, exercise and stress management, which help normalize cortisol levels, allowing other hormones to balance naturally. Initially, I'll run tests to measure the levels of everything, and then we'll start an elimination and detoxification diet to reduce inflammation, the root cause of illness. I may also add herbs and supplements to decrease inflammation, heal the gut and detoxify the liver.

After this process, 80 percent of people feel good to great. For those that don't, further investigation into the gut microbiome, mold, metals, infections or other inflammatory diseases may be needed. During menopause or late perimenopause, when eggs are depleted, progesterone and estrogen production may decline, necessitating hormone replacement therapy, as well.

Can you explain your detoxification protocol?

From the time you're born, toxins



Courtesy Lorraine Maita

accumulate in your fat and bone marrow, and even if you follow a clean lifestyle the effects of toxins can worsen, especially when women start to lose bone in menopause, because those metals and toxins start coming out.

To detoxify, you need to move your bowels every day. You need exercise to release toxins when you sweat and carbon dioxide when you breathe deeply. You need to hydrate to flush toxins through the kidneys. When you exercise the muscles, you bring toxins into your lymph system, which then get pumped into your bloodstream and liver to get detoxified.

What advice do you have for people taking conventional drugs for high blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar?

Too much cortisol raises your blood pressure, cholesterol and sugar levels. Stress can stimulate your body's stress reaction, causing cortisol to go up, and that's why many people are overweight and have high blood pressure, high blood sugar and high cholesterol.

We can measure cortisol very easily. If your cortisol is too high, that's a wake-up call to change your lifestyle and slow down. Sometimes people need permission to say I don't have to do absolutely everything on my to-do list and drive myself crazy.

Getting enough good-quality sleep is also important. Too many people get to bed too late. They're on their tablets and phones, and all that blue light disrupts their hormones, so they don't get a deep sleep, which is where you repair, rejuvenate and restore health, and also restore your hormones.

What advice do you have for people that struggle with cravings?

Sugar is as addictive as cocaine, and just like any addiction, you have to stay away from it long enough to stop the cravings. My “15-minute rule” is that you have to distract yourself for 15 minutes to forget about the cravings. Supplements like L-glutamine can help, but the best approach is a minor withdrawal period, such as two weeks, to diminish cravings.

Healing the gut will also help to eliminate cravings. Processed foods and simple carbohydrates promote yeast growth and cravings, while fresh fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and healthy fats support beneficial bacteria. Our approach combines detoxification, elimination, a healthy diet and sleep to make gut healing a habit.

When it comes to making lasting changes, what comes first, the emotional or the biological?

It depends on the person. The biological will drive the emotional and the emotional will drive the biological, and that's why having a good night's sleep is important. When you're tired, you're going to crave more. When you're tired, you're going to be less inclined to move or develop healthy habits. 🐾

Sandra Yeyati is the national editor of Natural Awakenings.



To read a longer version of this conversation, visit TinyURL.com/MaitaWW or scan the QR code.

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The Harmonious Home

Décor Strategies That Promote Well-Being

by Megy Karydes

The spaces we call home hold untapped potential to become powerful allies in our pursuit of wellness and tranquility. Creating a truly restorative environment goes beyond incorporating organic cotton throws and essential oil diffusers. The secret lies in recognizing that homes are living entities rather than mechanical constructs for shelter.

Nature's Blueprint

The human eye instinctively gravitates toward the soft curves and organic forms found in natural settings. Social psychologist Erich Fromm coined the term biophilia to describe an intrinsic affinity between living things. In architecture, biophilic design aims to create living spaces that foster well-being through a connection with nature.

One way to mimic nature indoors is through the use of curves and organic shapes, according to Lauren Riddei, a wellness interior designer and founder of Haus Holistics, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. For instance, consider replacing angular coffee tables with round styles or swapping rectangular mirrors for curved versions.

Riddei recommends starting with one curved element at a time, making it “a goal that any new piece of art, furniture or accessory brought into the space has curves in them.” The recent trend toward rounded furniture reflects our innate craving for spaces where energy flows freely, unobstructed by sharp corners where it tends to get stuck.

Color psychology extends this natural approach beyond shapes. Rather than following fads, hues should be chosen based on

current life needs, according to Lisa Morton, a holistic interior designer and founder of Pure Living With Lisa Morton. “Maybe the client doesn’t need calm. Maybe they’re in a rut and need revitalization, in which case they need oranges, yellows and pinks,” she advises, adding that if the primary objective is to create a soothing environment, blues, greens and creams should be considered.



Shcherban/CamvaPro

Morton also recommends that homeowners follow the seasonal rhythms as a way to “remind our body of being outdoors even when we can’t be.” For example, during the fall and winter months she incorporates chunky rugs and throws crafted from natural fibers. As she explains, such textures resonate with the earth element of feng shui—the ancient Chinese practice of creating harmonious living spaces—thereby creating a sense of stability and grounding.

Intentional Energy Flow

The Bagua Map, a feng shui blueprint for energy centers, charts a path for establishing harmony throughout the home. “The centermost area of your home connects to every other important energy center,” Morton asserts. “By lifting the energy of your center area, it affects every other part of your home.”

This intentional care radiates outward. Identifying the home’s center point (imagine a bird’s-eye view of the floor plan) and showering it with attention involves replacing burned-out bulbs, thoroughly vacuuming, fluffing pillows and adding thriving plants or fresh flowers. “If your whole home feels stuck and stagnant, and you do work on this living area, it’s going to radiate out,” she remarks.

According to Morton, the front door deserves equal attention, because in feng shui, it is associated with new opportunities and fresh energy. “A lot of people don’t use their front door. They come and go through the garage,” she observes, recommending that people find ways to regularly use the front door—whether walking the dog or taking morning strolls—as a way to invite new, restorative energy into the home. Shaking out welcome mats, ensuring the smooth functioning of locks and adding seasonal wreaths all contribute to this goal.

Licensed therapist turned interior designer and author of *Home Therapy* Anita Yokota takes this intentional approach further with her concept of “core desire.” Rather than making design decisions first and seeing how they make inhabitants feel, she flips the process by asking, “How do you want to feel and be in this space? What relationships do you want to thrive here?” This therapeutic approach ensures that every choice serves deeper needs, rather than following external trends.

Creating Sensory Sanctuaries

Another overlooked aspect of holistic home design is sound. While homeowners may obsess over visual elements, they often ignore



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Time to wake up spiritually? I'm a spiritual practitioner with a background in mystical Christianity, metaphysics, meditation, Joel Goldsmith's "Infinite Way," Eckhart Tolle's "Power of Now," non-duality. Accepting and discreet.

how acoustic pollution affects well-being. “We are sensitive to loud noises and vibrations,” Riddei says. “We need an environment that won’t keep us on edge when we come home from a long day.” Her unconventional solution involves wind chimes tuned to the healing frequencies of 432 or 528 Hertz

(Hz), which she asserts are associated with peace and love. This is particularly helpful for people that live on a noisy road.

Research published in the journal *Health* found that music tuned to the frequency of 528 Hz significantly reduced stress after

only five minutes of listening. For those sensitive to auditory stimulation, Yokota suggests implementing additional insulation or sound-absorbing wall panels. 🌿

Megy Karydes is a Chicago-based writer and author of 50 Ways to More Calm, Less Stress.

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.

Friday, August 1

Karaoke & Open Mic Night – 7-9 pm. All are invited to this family-friendly evening of entertainment and fellowship. Karaoke music provided or bring your instruments, poetry or any form of artistic expression. Potluck meal. Love offering. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org

Thursday, August 7

Trail Time Thursday – 2-3pm. Explore Chattahoochee Nature Center trails with a naturalist. Learn about local wildlife and visit the Butterfly Encounter after. Free. 9135 Willeo Rd, Roswell. bit.ly/Trail-Time-Chattahoochee-080725.

Saturday, August 9

Weekly Wellness Walk Club – 9-11am. Join The Self Care Lab for a morning walk along the Beltline to recharge, connect, and celebrate self-care. Free. Meet outside Krog Street Market on the Atlanta Beltline Eastside Trail. bit.ly/Weekly-Wellness-Walk-Club-080925

Grief Talks with Hope – 9-10am. A faith-based support group for mothers grieving the loss of a child to pediatric cancer. Free. The Rest Spot – Women's Only Private Club, 1951 Old Concord Rd, Smyrna. bit.ly/Grief-Talks-With-Hope-080925

Birds of Blue Heron: A Guided Walk – 9-11:30am. Explore woodland trails with two Master Birders and learn to identify birds by sight and sound. Free. Blue Heron Nature Preserve, 4055 Roswell Rd NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Guided-Bird-Watching-Walk-080925

ZUM'FIT... – 9:30-10:30am. High-energy Zumba class blending hip-hop, Latin, and boot camp moves for all ages and fitness levels. \$13.51. Starr Park, 5031 Park Ave, Forest Park. bit.ly/ZUMfit-080925

Free Heartfulness Meditation Sessions – 4-4:30pm. Unwind weekly with free guided meditation at Ambaji USA – Shree Shakti Mandir. No experience needed; chairs provided. Free. 1450 Huie Rd, Lake City. Heartfulness.org. bit.ly/Heartfulness-Meditation-Sessions-080925.

Sunday, August 10

Unity Atlanta Church "12 Powers Workshop" – 12:30-2:00 pm. 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 pow-

er of STRENGTH 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, August 12

Yoga for Health – 6-7pm. Learn simple yogic tools to boost vitality and mental well-being, including Yoga Namaskar, Nadi Shuddhi, and guided meditation. Free and open to all. Sandy Springs Library, 395 Mount Vernon Hwy, Atlanta. 678-390-ISHA. bit.ly/Yoga-For-Health-081225

Thursday, August 14

Mindfulness & Meditation with MilaTheMagician – 6:30-8:30pm. Guided meditation, collective readings, and healing in a supportive outdoor setting. \$27.59. Shoal Creek Park II, 3643 Glenwood Rd, Decatur. bit.ly/Mindfulness-and-Meditation-081425

Friday, August 15

Youth Mental Health in Focus: Healing, Help and Hope – 8:30-10am. Panel discussion on stigma, access, and youth empowerment, plus optional resilience training. Free. Friendship Baptist Church, 80 Walnut St SW, Atlanta. bit.ly/Youth-Mental-Health-Focus-081525

Fit Fridays @ FitSquad Studios – 5pm-12am. A full evening of workouts, wellness talks, podcast sessions, and community vibes. Ages 21+. Free. FitSquad Studios, 1240 Metropolitan Pkwy SW, Atlanta. bit.ly/Fit-Fridays-081525

Saturday, August 16

Red Light Running Society: Run or Walk (and more!) – 9am-12pm. All fitness levels welcome for walking, jogging, or running, plus post-run strength, coffee, and conversation. Free. Red Light Cafe, 553 Amsterdam Ave NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Run-or-Walk-081625

Healing Sounds in Nature – 10-11:30am. Outdoor sound bath with quartz bowls, gongs, and chimes to support relaxation and stress relief. Free. Blue Heron Nature Preserve, 4055 Roswell Rd NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Healing-Sounds-081625

Wellness Retreat – August – 4-7pm. Enjoy meditation, movement, sound healing, and wellness talks in a supportive community space. Childcare provided. \$32.86. Ballethnic Dance Co, 2587 Cheney St, East Point. bit.ly/Wellness-Retreat-081625

Craft Corner @ The Wellness Emporium

Saturday, August 16 • 4:30 – 6:30pm

Jewelry as art? There are so many artsy toggles that can work in a necklace and make it a fabulous focal. Add a large bead, or strands of luxe beads for an eye-catching look. \$40.

1501 Regency Way, Suite 203, Woodstock.

Sunday, August 17

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.

Pilates in the Park – 10-11am. Free 50-minute classical mat Pilates class with strength, cardio, and stretching for all levels. 759 Boulevard SE, Atlanta. Livestream on IG: @thehkru. bit.ly/Pilates-in-the-Park-081725

Sunday Wisdom Talks – 12:30-1:30pm. Engage in reflection and merit-making through teachings at Georgia Meditation Center. Part of a full day of spiritual practice. Free. 4522 Tilly Mill Rd, Atlanta. bit.ly/Sunday-Wisdom-081725.

Wednesday, August 20

Just Walk with Carolyn Hartfield – 9-11am. Enjoy a health-focused walk and discussion led by Certified Health Coach Carolyn Hartfield. In person or virtual. Free. 1400 McConnell Dr, Decatur. bit.ly/Walk-with-Carolyn-Hartfield-082025.

Thursday, August 21

Healing Sound Bath with Raye Andrews – 7-8 pm. Join Certified Vibrational Sound Therapist, Raye Andrews, for a beautiful symphony of sound. 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.

Friday, August 22

Body Talk: Understanding Pain, Pleasure, and the Pelvic Floor – 12-1pm. Explore how pelvic and mental health shape pain, intimacy, and connection. Led by therapists. Free. ATL Pelvic Health, 1145 Zonolite Rd NE #8, Atlanta. bit.ly/Body-Talk-082225

Saturday, August 23

Sunrise Hike at Kennesaw Mountain – 5:30-7:30am. Hike, network, and enjoy guided meditation with skyline views. Held last Saturdays monthly. Free. 900 Kennesaw Mountain Dr, Kennesaw. bit.ly/Sunrise-Hike-Kennesaw-082325.

Herbs & Healing Plants: A Guided Walk – 9-11:30am. Explore medicinal plants and taste herbal infusions on a guided walk led by an expert herbalist. Free. Blue Heron Nature Preserve – Emma Wetlands, 0 Emma Ln NE, Atlanta. bit.ly/Herbs-and-Healing-Plants-082325

Reiki Share – 3:30-5:30pm. Group healing session for Reiki practitioners to practice and receive energy work. \$23.91. Healing Hands Reiki, 27 Waddell St, Ste A, Atlanta. bit.ly/Reiki-Share-082325

Sunday, August 24

Worship and Workout Bootcamp – 8:30-9:45am. Full-body workout blended with worship, prayer, and community support. All levels welcome. Free. JTM Fitness Gym, 3365 West Hospital Ave, Ste G, Chamblee. bit.ly/Worship-and-Workout-082425

The Healing Vibe: Sound Bath & Meditation for Emotional Balance – 10-11am. Relax and recharge with sound healing and guided meditation to restore inner peace. Donation-based. 4760 Austell Rd, Ste 5, Austell. bit.ly/SoundBath-Meditation-082425

Flex and Flow: A Mindful Stretching Session – 12-1pm. Gentle stretching and breathwork to restore body and mind in a peaceful setting. Donation-based. 4760 Austell Rd, Ste 5, Austell. bit.ly/Flex-and-Flow-082425.

Wednesday, August 27

Walk & Talk Decatur – 6-7pm. Join Clarity Fitness for a friendly walk around Downtown Decatur Square. Connect, move, and mingle. All ages welcome. Free. 1 West Court Sq, Ste 100, Decatur. bit.ly/Walk-and-Talk-Decatur-082725.

Saturday, August 30

Faithful Flow: Graceful Movements with God's Guidance – 10-11:30am. Gentle movement and guided meditation rooted in scripture, fostering spiritual and physical connection. Free. North Meadow, Piedmont Park, Atlanta. Naquitha Herbert. bit.ly/Faithful-Flow-083025

Sunday, August 31

"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. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

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, Closes 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. "Summer of Wonder" - Message Series to Nurture and Restore Life's Awe and Joy. All are invited to celebrate the divine, radiant child within. 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 – 11am-12:30pm. 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 Pranik Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: AtIPranicHealing.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

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

"Divine Connection" (Conexión Divina) – 8-9pm. Starting back on August 12, the Spanish-language weekly spiritual gathering will study the book, "The Sermon on the Mount," by Emmet Fox. Led by Rev. Xiomara Malagon via Zoom. For more info and to receive the Zoom link, email: xioma735@gmail.com. Unity Atlanta Church, 3597 Parkway Lane, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Wednesdays

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.

Wavelength Wednesdays with Pachamamayogi

Wednesdays • 6:30-8pm

Reset your system with gentle, intentional yoga and conscious breathwork all within an energy vortex with the frequencies of a virgin rainforest created by The Energy Enhancement System. This unique environment amplifies the healing and renewing effects of your practice. 500 Bishop St NW. \$55.

Meditation & Modern Buddhism – 7-8:30pm. 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.

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.

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

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Free Reiki-Infused Yoga & Meditation

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Reiki Share Group

– 3:30-5:30pm. Last Sat. A gathering of like-minded reiki practitioners who participate in group healing treatments on each other. \$21. Healing Hands Reiki & Spiritual Development, Inc, 27 Waddell St, Ste A, Atlanta. Tinyurl.com/2rykarft.

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From Corporate Trauma to Living On Purpose

by Trish Ahjel Roberts

In 2018, I was driving my VW Beetle down I-75 to my company's headquarters in downtown Atlanta when I got hit by an 18-wheeler. I could hear the crunch of the metal and the screech of the tires as my car got pushed along the highway. As I crashed headfirst into the concrete median, time slowed down. The car was totaled. When it was all over, I touched my body; Miraculously, I was okay.

Then a thought entered my mind. "I could have died today, and I don't even like my life that much." At the time, the thought shocked me; only later did I recognize the wisdom in it. I didn't like my life because it wasn't truly my own. I was constantly running at a pace that left me depleted and toward a goal that left me feeling unseen. My employer convinced me that unachievable goals and lack of support were normal. So, I thought I was the problem.

That belief created endless stress and financial turmoil for me. It was a gut punch to my confidence. I was living in a chronic state of Corporate Trauma, and I didn't even know it. The accident was my wake-up call.

Even though I didn't know where to start, I went into a flurry of action. I trusted that I would find direction through movement. I signed up for a French class, applied for a yoga teacher training program and registered for both coaching and teaching certifications. I was scared, but I knew I wanted my life to be different. Three words came to mind. I wanted *freedom, alignment, and effortless abundance.*

One night at 3 a.m., not too long after my accident, I woke up from a deep sleep with an epiphany. I wrote down ten life lessons in my journal and went back to sleep, and over the next few days, I added two more. The lessons were so powerful; I knew I was being called to teach them.



By 2019, I gathered my new credentials, corporate experience and early morning wisdom—and launched my business. I figured if entrepreneurship didn't work out after two years, I would pivot to a career change. Working as a financial advisor was no longer working for me, but I knew I had plenty of transferable skills that could benefit the right organization. In those early days, I stumbled. Then the pandemic hit.

When everyone was locked in their houses, I wrote two books sharing the lessons that had crystallized during those 3 a.m. downloads, lessons I'd learned from more than a decade studying Buddhist and yogic philosophies, and lessons from my lived experiences. I couldn't imagine why anyone would listen to me, so I crafted a self-help memoir and published it. I was surprised and delighted by the feedback I got. People loved the book, and it got amazing reviews.

Beyond that, it helped me understand the power of vulnerability—I saw that when I shared my struggles, it helped others realize they were not alone. Redesigning my life showed it was possible for others to take a fresh look at theirs.

In 2021, I relaunched my second book and renamed my company to align with the book title. Mind-Blowing Happiness became my brand and my rallying call. If I could find the path to freedom, joy and fulfillment, others could too, no matter their background. My goal was to help other people reach their full potential, whatever that looked like.

After my car accident in 2018, two of the companies I worked for paid millions of dollars as part of legal settlements for the mistreatment of their employees. While that felt validating, the process of detailing my experiences and meeting with attorneys and mediators unearthed trauma that I would rather have left buried. Again, I had to walk through the fire. The journey to living my life with the purpose I dreamed of hasn't been easy, but it's been worth every trip to the auto body shop, every early morning awakening and every stumble along the way. 🌱



Trish Ahjel Roberts is a transformational leadership coach, corporate wellbeing strategist, founder of *Mind-Blowing Happiness*, and author of four books, including her latest, *The Anger Myth: Understanding and Overcoming the Mental Habits That Steal Your Joy*. Learn more at TrishAhjelRoberts.com.

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