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In recent years, there has been a growing recognition in psychology research that creativity is associated with emotional function. The Journal of Positive Psychology has indicated that engaging in creative activity can lead to a more positive state of mind, whereas other leading psychologists have found that creativity can actually decrease anxiety.

Dictionary.com defines creativity as the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination.

But how do we access this inner creativity in order to live happier lives? Leaders in spirituality such as Hari Kaur Khalsa, author of “Art and Yoga: Kundalini Awakening in Daily Life,” have offered an answer to this question: art and yoga. Both art and yoga are experience-based practices that emphasize doing — therefore, offering a different type of experience that traditional therapy cannot offer.

Yoga promotes health and well-being and has been shown to reduce stress and increase happiness. The mindful movement of yoga quiets the mind and draws forth the yearnings of our soul. By doing yoga, a person can access deep emotions. And by creating art, a person can express these emotions on a fundamental level. By practicing art and yoga, we connect to our feelings and begin to experience ourselves as more than just our thoughts.

Art and yoga help us to recognize our truest, deepest selves, sparking clarity, focus and insightfulness. When the body, mind and spirit are in harmony, our creativity runs wild and our self-expression expands, overwhelming our fear of failure, judgment or perfection.

As explained by Khalsa, the practices of art and yoga help us to address what difficulties we face with a quiet and inspired mind and in a creative way.

Art and yoga help us to be fully engaged in our own healing process and give us the opportunity to express ourselves during that process.

Art and yoga is about addressing our needs and developing our strengths through practice. The process cannot be repeated from person to person because it is tailored to the individual spirit. We are creative, limitless and whole even in our imperfection. The world needs our unique wisdom and beautiful soul to heal our communities.

My art and yoga practice strengthens my confidence that I have something valuable to share ... and so do you.
LAKE CLEAR — The Hohmeyer family is celebrating a 130-year history of the Lake Clear Lodge property with the recent release of their first book, “Common Roots Cookbook.”

With the help of Andy Flynn at Hungry Bear Publishing, the Hohmeyers have compiled a book that is much more than recipes.

The cookbook includes the historical roots of the recipes, alternative ways to prepare the dishes, beer and wine pairings, and links to additional information including traditional foods cooking classes and online references.

All of this revolves around stories of generations of an Adirondack family business — now one of the longest running lodges in the Adirondack Park.

“Common Roots” is a unique book full of information.

“Farm-to-fork is so much more than today’s phenomena. In the Adirondacks it is born from generations of traditions,” said Ernest Hohmeyer Jr. “As our ‘Common Roots’ stories picture, in some cases they go back hundreds of years and our own Adirondack food legacy includes the Native Americans, pioneers, and the unique eras of the cure cottages and grand hotels. These are part of today’s local palate and the foundation of what we call traditional foods.”

How food is prepared is another central theme.

“It can be just as important as what you buy or grow,” Hohmeyer said. “As a chef for more than 25 years and from generations of an Adirondack family, Cathy (Hohmeyer, executive chef) must offer the full gamut for today’s discerning palate with an Adirondack flair based on Old World traditional methods. Over time, she came to realize that no matter what perspective on food you have — from the vegetarian to the carnivore — there are ways to prepare them that can enhance their taste and wellness properties. Chef Cathy calls it ‘mindful preparations’ and the cookbook will introduce you to terms such as nutrient density and bone broths — simple ways to make what may be lost, great recipes. This is the heart of the book.”

The recipes are outlined by season, but not the traditional four seasons. There are eight.

“We broke the seasons down into what we think are the real seasons in the Adirondacks!” Cathy Hohmeyer said. “For example, our first season begins with early spring, what we call Ice Out and Maple Syrup, and it concludes with Blossoms, Buds and Berries. The food that is available is different from the beginning to the end of the traditional four seasons. Also, the changes in weather within each season alter our palates. The cold weather in early spring can call for hearty meals, while at the end, lighter fare reigns supreme. “This is also the crux of the stories that are paired with each recipe,” she said. “It was either something that happened when we think of a particular meal, or the food reminded us of a special memory. For us, dinner time was more than just a meal, it was a chance to gather as a family. It created many special, personal times. Our goal here is these stories will encourage you to create a few of your own.

A book-signing as well as a tasting event highlighting some of the recipes from the cookbook will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21 at the Lake Clear Lodge & Retreat.

Restaurant dining, as well as lantern-lit sleigh rides with the Paul Smith’s College Draft Horse Club, are also available for a fun evening. Dining and sleigh reservations needed.

For more information, contact Ernest and Cathy Hohmeyer at 518-891-1489 or visit online at www.lodgeonlakeclear.com.

“Common Roots” cookbooks can also be ordered online at www.nourishing9d.com or by contacting The Lodge.
The daily grind sometimes is exhausting. In fact, a poll from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health found that 49 percent of Americans reported having a major stressful event or experience in the past year, and 26 percent of people said they had a “great deal” of stress.

In small amounts, stress can push a person to act and grow. But constant stress can become debilitating and has been linked to a compromised immune system and other unhealthy side effects. This is why a number of people resolve to reduce stress.

In addition to taking on fewer responsibilities, engaging in some activities to promote a relaxed mind and body can help alleviate stress and tension. Though the term “pampering” may not appeal to everyone, a day of pampering might be just what you need to relieve stress and unwind.

- **Get a full-body massage.** Licensed massage therapists have the training and knowledge to work the kinks out of your muscles and ease aches and pains. Massage therapy works tension out of the body and can help release feel-good endorphins. A massage can improve circulation and help reduce blood pressure. It’s difficult to walk out of a spa without feeling relaxed.

- **Schedule a manicure and pedicure appointment.** If you do not have time for a full massage, having your hands and feet pampered can be a good substitute. Manicures and pedicures are not just for ladies, either. Men can indulge and opt for no nail polish. Many salons offer different types of manicures and pedicures, depending on personal preference. Spa treatments may include warm paraffin wax or hot stones to further ease pain and enhance the pleasure of the experience.

- **Take a retreat.** Schedule a trip to a resort or even a small hotel that is away from the hustle and bustle of where you live. Such a respite can provide a welcome change. New scenery and a chance to escape the daily grind can effectively relieve stress. Consider low-tech accommodations and turn your phone or tablet off for a few days.

- **Try relaxing aromatherapy.** Aromatherapy is the use of aromatic plant extracts and essential oils to elicit mental and physical responses. Lavender is a relaxing scent that can be used during a massage or in baths to induce a sense of calm. Experiment with other scents and oils to achieve the desired result.

- **Laugh with friends.** Plan a friends’ night where you can go out for drinks and conversation or huddle around the television and watch your favorite comedy. Laughter is often a great medicine for stress, as is the company of other people who can provide some comic relief.

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Winter bonfire at Fish & Game Club

Malone Fish & Game Club members are invited to an evening bonfire at the fire pit in the woods on Saturday, Jan. 21.

Groups will leave the clubhouse on Webster Street Road at approximately 6:30 p.m. for the short walk or ski to the fire pit. Everyone is welcome to bring s'mores makings, hot dogs to roast, and/or beverage of choice.

The clubhouse will be open and a day pass or membership can be purchased at that time.

The many benefits of exercise

Metro

A great workout routine combines strength training and aerobic exercise. But even some ardent exercise enthusiasts may not understand just how valuable aerobic exercise is. Running on the treadmill or using an elliptical machine might not be the most engaging exercises, but the benefits of aerobic exercise, often referred to as “cardio,” are undeniable.

- Aerobic exercise helps people maintain healthy weights. Aerobic exercise can help men and women maintain healthy weights over the long-term. The foods people eat and the fat they store provides energy the body uses as fuel during cardiovascular exercise. The longer and more intense aerobic exercise sessions are, the more calories the body burns during those sessions. Successful weight loss programs should include routine aerobic exercise.

- Aerobic exercise lowers risk for various diseases. Aerobic exercise has been proven to lower people’s risk for various diseases, including diabetes, heart disease and depression. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, high levels of cardiovascular fitness have been linked to a 50 percent reduction in the risk for cardiovascular disease.

- Aerobic exercise can improve muscle tone. Exercise enthusiasts who want their efforts in the gym to show should know that aerobic exercise can improve muscle tone and get men and women closer to the ripped appearance they might be looking for. Interval training, in which cardio routines alternate between high and moderate intensity, is a great way to burn additional fat during aerobic exercise.

- Aerobic exercise can improve mood. Studies have shown that aerobic exercise improves mood. In addition to its impact on body image, aerobic exercise triggers the release of endorphins, a group of hormones that can quickly and effectively improve mood. Studies have also shown that physical activity can help the body combat anxiety and stress.

Seniors and exercise: tips to avoid injuries

Metro

Exercise is an important component of a healthy lifestyle. Daily exercise can improve mood, promote an active lifestyle and reduce a person’s risk for a host of ailments, including diabetes and heart disease.

Despite the importance of exercise, many people live sedentary lifestyles into their golden years. Seniors who want to embrace a healthier way of life and get more physically active should first consult with their physicians before beginning an exercise regimen. Certain medications may limit just how far seniors can push themselves, while preexisting conditions may make specific types of exercise off limits. After discussing their limitations with their physicians and developing a safe exercise routine, seniors can heed the following tips to avoid injury but still get healthy.

- Pick a partner. Whether it’s a spouse or a friend who is physically active or wants to be, try exercising with a partner, at least initially.

- Start slowly. Seniors who have not been physically active for some time should take a gradual approach to exercise. Instead of heading right for the treadmill, exercise bike or elliptical machine, start walking every day.

- Stretch. Bodies that have been inactive for lengthy periods of time are inflexible, and lack of flexibility increases your risk for injury.

Nina Pierpont, MD, PhD

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The tail end of Daylight Saving Time in 2016 occurs on November 6, when millions of people will turn their clocks back one hour. Few people enjoy turning the clocks back in autumn as much as they enjoy turning them forward in spring. Turning the clocks forward affords many people, in particular working professionals who spend much of their weekdays working indoors, a chance to enjoy some sunlight when leaving their offices each day. However, once the clocks are turned back, professionals typically find themselves leaving their offices under a cover of darkness.

Some people easily adjust to less daylight, while others experience a condition known as season affective disorder, or SAD. SAD is a disorder related to changes in seasons. According to the Mayo Clinic, the majority of people with SAD begin to experience symptoms in the fall and continue battling those symptoms throughout the winter. The end of Daylight Saving Time occurs in early November, and the onset of SAD symptoms is no doubt related to the decreased exposure to daylight many people experience once clocks have been turned back. Those who suspect they might be susceptible to SAD can get a better grasp of the condition so they are capable of recognizing and responding to it should any symptoms appear.

**WHAT IS SAD?**

Mental Health America, a leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness, defines SAD as a mood disorder associated with depression and related to seasonal variations of light. Though many people may be saddened when the clocks are turned back and the sun sets earlier than it does in the warmer months, MHA notes that a diagnosis of SAD can only be made after the symptoms of SAD have appeared for three consecutive winters and have gone into remission once spring and summer have arrived.

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF SAD?**

Simply feeling bummed out that winter is on the horizon does not mean a person has SAD. The following are some of the more common symptoms of the disorder:

- Depression marked by feelings of misery, guilt, hopelessness, despair, and apathy. A loss of self-esteem may also occur.
- Feelings of anxiety that include tension and an inability to tolerate stress.
- Mood changes that are sometimes extreme; some SAD sufferers experience feelings of mania in spring and summer.
- Changes in sleeping habits, such as a desire to oversleep and difficulty staying awake. Some people may experience disturbed sleep and find themselves waking up in early morning when they are unaccustomed to doing so.

- Feelings of fatigue and an inability to adhere to one’s normal routine

**WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO SUFFER FROM SAD?**

The Mayo Clinic notes that SAD is diagnosed more often in women than in men, and MHA notes that three out of four SAD sufferers are women. Young people are more likely than older people to get winter SAD, with MHA reporting that the main age of onset of SAD is between 18 and 30. Symptoms of SAD may worsen among people who have already been diagnosed with clinical depression or bipolar disorder.

More information about seasonal affective disorder is available at www.mentalhealthamerica.net.
Reading can benefit long-term brain health

Many people are avid readers, feeling that a good book remains the most entertaining form of escapism. But reading provides more than just an opportunity to leave the daily grind behind.

While many people may read to immerse themselves in something other than a movie or a television show, they may not know about all the additional benefits they are enjoying when cuddling up with a good book.

■ **Reading can improve brain function.** A recent study from researchers at Emory University discovered that reading a novel can improve brain function in various ways. During the study, researchers found that reading fiction improves connectivity in the brain. In addition, reading fiction improved readers’ ability to put themselves in other peoples’ shoes, which might help them relate better to people in both the present and future.

■ **Reading can benefit long-term brain health.** While readers engrossed in a great book might only be worried about what’s coming on the next page, the benefits to reading are much more long-term than the next chapter. Researchers at the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago found that reading is one of a handful of mentally stimulating activities that can benefit brain health in old age. In their Rush Memory and Aging Project, researchers examined nearly 300 elderly men and women, giving them tests of memory and thinking throughout the final years of their lives. When participants, who were surveyed as to how often they engaged in mentally stimulating activities such as reading, passed away, their brains were examined for signs of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. Researchers discovered that the participants who engaged in mentally challenging activities most often had slower rates of memory decline. In addition, some who had symptoms of brain damage that are commonly associated with Alzheimer’s and dementia seemed to benefit from the stimulation that mentally challenging activities produced.

■ **Reading can help reduce stress.** Another big benefit of reading is its relationship to stress. According to a 2009 study from researchers at the University of Sussex in England, reading can reduce stress by up to 68 percent. In addition, reading might help relieve that stress even faster than other forms of stress relief because it allows for a more immediate escape from the stress of daily life.

■ **Reading can help you get a more restful night’s sleep.** According to the National Sleep Foundation, engaging in a calming activity for an hour before going to bed can help your body wind down and ready itself for sleep. Some people may struggle to fall asleep after reading on an electronic device, such as a tablet or e-reader, as the light that emanates from such devices may be activating the brain. If need be, stick to reading traditional print books and magazines before going to bed.

Reading is not only a favorite activity for many people, but it’s also something that can benefit the body in myriad ways.

Exploring holistic nursing as an alternative

Nurses wear many hats. In addition to tending to patients and helping families of patients, nurses incorporate the latest technologies into patients’ treatments. Some even work outside of hospitals and doctor’s offices to train the next generation of nurses.

Nursing has also branched out to include holistic nursing, which employs alternative medicine to care for patients. Alternative medicine is sometimes combined with traditional western medicine, requiring holistic nurses, who are sometimes referred to as “complementary health nurses,” understand both holistic and traditional nursing methods.

Holistic nursing is a growing field, and it’s entirely possible that the role of holistic nurses will expand in the years to come. Some of the things today’s holistic nurses do include:

- Acupuncture
- Assisting patients with managing stress
- Aromatherapy
- Massage
- Hypnosis, hydrotherapy and balneotherapy
- Chinese and Eastern healing practices
- Wellness coaching

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Some strategies to get back into a good mood

Adults know that life has its ups and downs. While it’s important not to get too down when things don’t go as planned, no one is immune to bad moods. But just because bad moods are a fact of life, that does not mean they cannot be combatted.

While bad moods are nothing to get too worried about, if such moods overstay their welcome, speak with a physician. According to the World Health Organization, depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the world, affecting an estimated 350 million people across the globe. There are various types of depression, and no two people are affected in the same way. That’s an important distinction, as those who know someone with a history of depression may not recognize signs of depression in themselves if those symptoms don’t mimic the signs they’re familiar with.

But bad moods are not always indicative of depression. In those instances when a bad mood is simply a bad mood, you can try a handful of strategies to get back in a good mood.

**Exercise.** Numerous studies have shown that exercise enhances mood. Anxiety about a life event or stress at work are two common contributors to bad moods. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, studies have shown that exercise can elevate mood and do so quickly, with some researchers suggesting that a 10-minute walk can be just as effective at relieving anxiety as a 45-minute workout. Studies have also shown that exercise can help combat stress by reducing fatigue, improving alertness and concentration and enhancing overall cognitive function.

**Ignore alcohol or limit your consumption.** Many people feel an alcoholic beverage relaxes them, and feeling relaxed can help improve mood. That initial feeling of relaxation is the result of alcohol affecting the chemical balance of the brain by depressing the part of the brain that governs inhibition. That’s why alcohol is categorized as a depressant. While that initial drink may feel like you’re on the way to a better mood, as alcohol begins circulating in the body, your stress levels may actually increase and your bad mood may even intensify. If you find yourself in a bad mood, resist turning to alcohol to improve mood, and limit your alcohol intake to a single drink during those times when you’re in a bad mood.

**Volunteer to help others.** While more research is necessary before a definitive connection between volunteering and improved mental health can be established, researchers in England analyzed data from 40 published papers and found a link between volunteering and lower levels of depression. The review also found that volunteers reported increased life satisfaction and enhanced well-being.

Periodic bad moods are a part of life, but there are ways to limit their lifespan and get back to feeling good as quickly as possible.

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**Exploring depression**

Nearly everyone has dealt with a life-changing event that brings about feelings of sadness. But some people struggle to enjoy normally happy situations. When these feelings do not go away on their own, they may indicate the presence of depression.

Major depression is one of the world’s most common mental disorders. The World Health Organization offers that major depression also carries the heaviest burden of disability among mental and behavioral disorders. People often do not realize they’re suffering from a depressive episode, and as a result, many never seek or receive the care they need.

According to “The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,” major depression is characterized by depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure and at least four other symptoms. These may include problems with self-image, sleep, energy, ability to function, and changes in appetite.

The National Institute of Mental Health says that, as of 2013, an estimated 15.7 million adults aged 18 or older in the United States had at least one major depressive episode in the past year. Depression is far-reaching and more common than one may imagine. Oftentimes, however, people delay seeking treatment because of embarrassment or the stigma that surrounds a mental illness diagnosis.

The NIMH indicates that women are 70 percent more likely than men to experience depression during the course of their lifetimes, largely due to hormones. Elevated rates of depression among women also may be due to the fact that they tend to be more vocal and proactive in seeking help.

According to Gail Lovallo, LCSW, owner of Peaceful Living Counseling Services, LLC, depression can be linked to any number of factors.

Depression can be a devastating illness that seemingly comes out of the blue. However, it’s important for people to realize that depression is common and treatment methods are quite effective. Consult with a primary care doctor or a mental health professional if you believe you are experiencing depression.
Develop healthy habits to combat stress

Metro

Stress has an immediate and potentially long-term effect on the human body. Though it’s a natural response to both good and bad experiences, stress, when chronic, can produce a host of negative consequences that greatly diminish one’s quality of life.

Combatting stress can sometimes be difficult, as the causes of stress are never too far away for many adults. In its 2015 “Stress in America: Paying With Our Health” survey, the American Psychological Association found that money is the top cause of stress for Americans. The survey was conducted on behalf of the APA by Harris Poll, which asked more than 3,000 participants about their issues with stress. Sixty-four percent said money was a somewhat or very significant source of stress, and that number was even higher for parents (77 percent). Survey respondents also noted that work is a significant source of stress.

Few adults can imagine a life that does not include financial- or work-related stress. But there are ways to combat stress that can benefit people’s long-term health and improve their present-day quality of life.

■ Develop a support network. Speaking about problems with trusted friends and family members can be an effective way to combat stress. The APA study found that participants who reported having an emotional support network reported lower stress levels than those who had no such networks to rely on. Try to overcome any reticence you might have about speaking about your stress to a close friend or trusted relative on those days when stress seems overwhelming.

■ Get more exercise. Routine exercise is another healthy way to combat stress. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, studies have shown that exercise can reduce fatigue, improve alertness and concentration and enhance overall cognitive function. Those are considerable benefits to people dealing with elevated levels of stress, which can contribute to both physical and mental fatigue and negatively impact one’s ability to concentrate. Studies also have shown that regular exercise can decrease tension, which tends to increase as stress levels rise, and elevate and help to stabilize mood, which often decreases as stress levels increase.

■ Don’t lean on alcohol after stressful days. Many people respond to stressful days by consuming alcohol. While alcohol helps some people forget a stressful day, it also produces psychological and physiological side effects that can compound the effects of the very stress drinkers are looking to relieve. People who drink to alleviate stress may only be doing more harm with each drink, so find a way to cope with stress that has a more positive impact on both your body and mind than that produced by alcohol.

■ Breathe deeply. The American Institute of Stress notes that focused breathing is a relaxation response that stimulates the nervous system and promotes a sense of calmness. Deep breathing can combat stress, lower blood pressure and draw your attention away from those things that are causing your stress. Visit www.stress.org to learn about deep breathing exercises.

Stress if a fact of life for many people. But while stress may be inevitable, it can be overcome.

Several simple ways to maintain your mental acuity

Metro

Many people know that a combination of a healthy diet and routine exercise is the best way to maintain their physical health. But what about mental well-being? Memory lapses are often assumed to be an accepted side effect of aging, but such an assumption is incorrect, as there are many steps men and women can take to maintain their mental acuity well into their golden years.

■ Find time for cardiovascular exercise. Cardiovascular exercise can help men and women maintain healthy weights and reduce their risk for potentially deadly ailments like diabetes and heart disease. But cardiovascular exercise also can boost brain power. Cardiovascular exercise pumps oxygen-rich blood to the brain, and that blood contains glucose that can fuel brain cells. Cardiovascular exercise also strengthens blood vessels, which can help prevent potentially devastating diseases, such as stroke, that can have a lasting and negative impact on cognitive function.

■ Find time for friends and family. Many people need no reason to socialize, but those that do can now cite boosting brain function as a great reason to get together with family and friends. Routine socialization can keep a brain sharp by reducing its levels of cortisol, a potentially destructive hormone brought on by stress. Researchers also believe that routine interaction with other people stimulates structures in the brain’s frontal lobe that are likely responsible for planning, decision making and response control.

■ Squeeze in a nap every so often. Naps can have a rejuvenating effect on men and women, but a study from German researchers also found that naps also can improve memory.

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Smoking may lead to cognitive decline

Smokers have scores of reasons to give up the habit. In addition to contributing to cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and other lung ailments, cancers elsewhere in the body, wrinkled skin, and diseases of the eyes, nose and mouth, smoking may also contribute to cognitive decline.

There’s growing evidence suggesting that using cigarettes can affect the brain in negative ways, including causing cognitive decline as early as age 45. According to the study “Impact of Smoking on Cognitive Decline in Early Old Age,” led by Severine Sabia, as published in the journal Archives of General Psychiatry, smoking is a possible risk factor for dementia, although the impact smoking has on the brain may have been underestimated in elderly populations because of the general shorter life span of smokers.

Study participants were given a battery of tests in memory, vocabulary and executive function that included reasoning and fluency, and a global cognitive score. Both men and women participated (5,099 men and 2,137 women, with an mean age of 56), and smoking history was recorded over the 10-year assessment period. An analysis revealed that a cognitive decline occurred in all tests except vocabulary among all participants, but mostly in men. However, faster cognitive decline was observed among current smokers compared with those who had never smoked. The size of the effect associated with smoking was similar to that of 10 years of aging.

Findings are similar to other research being done on the topic of smoking and its impact on the brain. The Alzheimer’s Society states that smoking is bad for the heart, lungs, and vascular system — including the blood vessels that feed oxygen and nutrients to the brain. Recent research has shown that smoking is a significant risk factor for vascular dementia and Alzheimer’s disease, with smokers twice as likely to develop the disease as nonsmokers.

The Mayo Clinic defines vascular dementia as problems with reasoning, planning, judgement, memory and other thought processes caused by brain damage from impaired blood flow to the brain. Factors that increase the risk for vascular dementia are high cholesterol and smoking.

Dementia can be brought on by stroke, whether it’s a large stroke or a series of mini-strokes. WebMD says vascular dementia can occur over time as “silent” strokes build up — something that seems to occur more readily in smokers and those with cardiovascular disease.

Symptoms of cognitive decline that may result from smoking and vascular dementia can include:

• Problems with short-term memory
• Wandering or getting lost
• Trouble managing money
• Difficulty planning or following through on activities
• Loss of bladder or bowel control
• Delusions or hallucinations
• Inappropriate emotions
• Impaired coordination or balance

More research is needed with regard to the association between smoking and cognitive decline related to dementia.

Healthy cooking techniques

A large part of healthy eating involves choosing the right foods. In addition to choosing the right foods, health-conscious individuals must choose the right methods to prepare those foods in order to maximize their nutritional value.

Cooking methods such as frying can make for delicious meals, but such meals may not be so healthy. For example, each tablespoon of oil used when frying can add more than 100 calories to a meal. When counting calories, men and women should recognize that the way they prepare foods can affect the overall calorie count of a meal. In addition to choosing healthy cooking methods, health-conscious men and women can employ the following strategies to make meals as healthy as possible.

• Invest in new cookware. Choose nonstick cookware that will reduce the amount of oil, spray and butter needed to keep foods from sticking. Manufacturers are now using ceramic cookware, which is free of trace metals or dangerous chemicals that can leach into food from the cooking surface.

• Stock up on healthy recipes. Purchase cookbooks that showcase healthy recipes or peruse the Internet for healthy recipes.

• Choose smart fats. All oils are loaded in calories, but healthy oils can still be used without sacrificing flavor. Olive oil is an unsaturated fat that is a much healthier choice than butter or saturated fats. When cooking with oil, do so in moderation.

• Think about baking foods. Baking is handy for more than breads and desserts. Baking is one method of cooking that may not require the addition of fat. Meats that are baked can be placed on top of a rack, so that excess fat drips off and is contained in the bottom of the pan.

• Explore poaching, broiling and grilling. Poaching, broiling and grilling are three healthy alternatives to frying.

• Season foods yourself. Rather than relying on prepackaged seasonings, mix your own blends. Packaged seasonings generally contain a lot of salt. Use fresh herbs whenever possible for the freshest of flavor.

• Add heat for flavor. Spicy pepper, dry mustard and other zesty flavor enhancers can make foods taste delicious without added calories.

• Try low-fat or fat-free dairy. Substitute low-fat alternatives for full-fat dairy items.
4 foods to boost energy levels

Diet can go a long way toward increasing or lowering energy levels. No one wants to consume foods that will make it harder for them to get through the day, so the following are a handful of foods that pack an energetic punch.

CASHEWS

Cashews, which are high in magnesium, help to convert sugar into energy. Magnesium deficiency can lead to low energy levels, so nuts that are high in magnesium, including cashews, can provide that mid-afternoon jolt that some people are seeking. Cashews are high in calories, so it’s best for those looking to lose weight or maintain healthy weights to adhere to serving suggestion guidelines.

SKINLESS CHICKEN

A study from researcher Judith Wurtman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Clinical Research Center found that alertness tends to increase when the brain produces the neurotransmitter dopamine and the hormone norepinephrine. Skinless chicken contains an amino acid known as tyrosine that helps in the production of both dopamine and norepinephrine. If skinless chicken is not available, other foods that may provide this same effect include fish, lean beef, and eggs. In addition, lean meats like skinless chicken contain enough vitamin B to help ease insomnia.

SALMON

Omega-3 fatty acids can help the body fight inflammation, which has been linked to a host of ailments, including chronic fatigue. Salmon is also high in protein, which can eliminate the mid- to late-afternoon hunger pangs that can derail healthy diets and contribute to weight gain.

BEANS

Beans are loaded with fiber, and that’s a good thing for energy levels. Like magnesium, which can also be found in beans, fiber takes awhile to digest, extending the energy-boosting properties of foods loaded with fiber. In spite of the growing movement to eat and live healthier, many adults still do not include enough fiber in their diets. Men and women can consult with their physicians to determine how to make that happen, but eating more beans is a good start.

Singing is good for your health

If you sing along to songs in the car or belt out a few tunes in the shower, you may be doing yourself quite a bit of good. Various formal and informal studies point to singing as a great way to boost both mental and physical health. Though the people around you may prefer you not belt out a few tunes, there are numerous reasons to sing and sing often.

Evidence points to singing as having psychological benefits, and singing also increases oxygenation in the bloodstream. Professor Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, has studied the developmental and medical aspects of singing for more than 30 years. Welch consistently advocates for singing, saying it can serve as an aerobic activity that promotes a healthy heart.

Singing can help to alleviate stress by releasing oxytocin, a natural stress reliever, into the blood. Stress has a number of adverse effects, and any steps taken to help relieve stress can lighten one’s mood and release tension.

Singing, particularly group singing, can lessen feelings of depression and loneliness. In their paper “Psychological and physiological effects of singing in a choir,” researchers at the Abant Izzet Baysal University in Turkey noted that singing relieves anxiety and contributes to quality of life. Group singing may sync the heart rates of participants and could actually serve as a type of guided group meditation.

Yet another study, this one from researchers in the Department of Music at the University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom, indicated that you don’t even have to be a good singer to reap the benefits of singing. The study found that singing can produce satisfying and therapeutic sensations even when the sound produced by the vocal instrument is of mediocre quality. That means no one need be afraid of singing their favorite songs, even if they fall out of tune. The benefits can be worth the few awkward glances that come your way.

Singing is more than just a social activity or a popular pastime. It’s a way for people to improve their health in an easy and enjoyable way. Those who start singing may see their stress subside and their overall well-being improve.
Resources available for special-needs families

The term “special needs” is a broad classification of individuals who may be diagnosed with physical, mental or developmental deficits in various areas. Not at all incapable, special needs children and adults simply may need some modifications, whether in school, at work or at home, to help them through their daily lives.

Millions of people across the globe may have a condition that qualifies them for some assistance. Statistics vary depending on the learning disability or health condition. People dealing with anything from attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder to autism to hearing impairments to mobility issues should know there are resources available to them.

Families might be overwhelmed when a child is diagnosed with a disability. Changes in perceptions of illness or health condition. People may need to be implemented over time, or there may be immediate concerns that must be addressed right away.

Navigating the waters of assistance can be emotionally and financially taxing, and many parents do not know where to begin.

Information regarding special needs assistance and support is more readily available and accessible than it was in the past thanks to the global climate of online communities. Today, information and connections to others in similar situations is available at a keystroke. There also are many other resources available.

Speak with your doctor. A diagnosing doctor is a reliable resource for special needs families. He or she can point a family in the right direction and will likely have literature in his or her office. The doctor also can refer families to organizations or groups that specialize in certain conditions or disabilities.

Learn more at school. Teachers or education specialists are often the first people to recognize signs of a learning disability.

Many school districts have plans in place and assessment teams that can work with families to develop individualized education programs. The school may be able to refer families to various therapists or additional educational programs to assist with learning.

Conduct an online search. Simply searching for a condition or an issue online can bring up a host of available resources and information. In turn, there may be groups that you can contact.

Knowing you are not alone can be the extra push you need to wade through the sometimes confusing literature.

Investigate financial support. Some resource centers may know of affordable financial professionals who can guide you through setting up budgets and learning about the resources available to you. Families may even qualify for financial aid. Speak with a financial consultant to learn more.

Talk therapy can help cancer patients

Receiving a cancer diagnosis can be a profound experience that often changes the course of people’s lives. Individuals react to cancer diagnoses in various ways, with some retreating into themselves and others sharing their stories to garner as much strength as they can muster.

A strong support system can help men and women navigate the ups and downs of a cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatments. While many people lean on friends and family members for support, therapists also can help patients as they battle cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society, some additional reasons to seek professional support can include:

* Trouble communicating
* In addition to addressing these issues, which are commonly referred to as psychosocial problems, therapists can work with individuals and families in other areas. Therapists can help their patients find community resources where they can connect with others experiencing similar situations. And therapists can help patients learn about the various ways they can educate themselves about their disease.

Metro

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Healthy habits that can have a lasting impact

A long and healthy life is the ultimate goal for many people. While a host of factors beyond a person’s control, such as genetics, impact how long that person lives and how susceptible to certain medical conditions he or she may be, there are many things men and women can do to improve their chances of living long, healthy lives.

- **Keep working.** While many working men and women dream of the day when they can leave the daily grind behind once and for all, they might want to think more about a second career than a long, carefree retirement.

  A study from British researchers published in the International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry found that each extra year that men and women work was associated with a six-week delay in the onset of dementia. While men and women may want to retire from their professions, finding second careers or volunteering close to full-time hours may improve their long-term health and quality of life.

- **Stay on your toes.** A healthy diet is a key component of a healthy lifestyle, but diet alone is not enough to promote a long and healthy life.

  According to the Johns Hopkins Medicine Health Library, the risks associated with a physically inactive lifestyle are considerable. Such risks include a greater risk of developing high blood pressure and coronary heart disease and even a greater risk for certain cancers.

In addition, physical inactivity can add to feelings of anxiety and depression. Inactivity tends to increase with age, so men and women aiming for long and healthy lives should make physical activity a vital part of their daily lives.

- **Get your whole grains.** Whole grains may be another key ingredient to a long and healthy life. Numerous studies have shown that increasing whole grain consumption can help prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes.

  Researchers who conducted a systematic review of studies examining the link between whole grains and type 2 diabetes prevention in 2007 found that eating an extra two servings of whole grains per day decreased a person’s risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 21 percent. That’s an important finding, as additional research has found that people with diabetes have an increased risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease, a neurodegenerative condition that can dramatically reduce quality of life.

- **Visit your physician annually if not more frequently.** While many people, especially those who feel healthy, are hesitant to visit their physicians, doing so may just save your life. Several diseases, including cancer and heart disease, are more effectively treated when detected early. Annual physicals and discussions with your physician may uncover a disease in its early stages when it is most treatable.

  Waiting until symptoms appear may not be too late to treat a condition or disease, but taking a proactive approach increases the likelihood of early detection, which increases your chances of living a long and healthy life.

  Healthy habits improve people’s quality of life while also increasing the likelihood that men and women live long, healthy and productive lives.

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**Did you know?**

Running on a variety of surfaces instead of sticking to just one surface may help runners reduce their risk of injury. Officials with the USA Track and Field’s Sports Medicine and Science Committee recommend that runners vary their runs so they run on pavement, trails and tracks. While it helps to run on various surfaces, researchers do not believe one particular surface is better than another.

In fact, while running on asphalt has long been assumed to increase injury risk because of the presumption that harder surfaces produce greater impact forces on the body, a 2008 study from researchers at the Hannover Medical School Department of Plastic, Hand and Reconstructive Surgery in Germany found that running on asphalt surfaces decreased mid-posterior tendinopathy risk while running on sand surfaces increased that risk tenfold.

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Body dysmorphic disorder a reality for many people

Body dysmorphic disorder, or BDD, is a psychological condition that causes delusions about one’s outward appearance. While people with BDD may have delusions about any part of their bodies, many people with BDD have problems with parts of their face, their ears or the shape of their head. Preoccupation with these features can be so intense that it’s difficult for sufferers to see beyond their delusions.

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, BDD may be triggered by a slight physical imperfection. But to those with the condition, the flaw is perceived to be prominent and causing severe emotional distress and difficulties in daily functioning.

BDD is not exclusive to women, as it affects nearly as many men as women. Research conducted by Butler Hospital in Providence, RI, found that, among 188 subjects, BDD diagnosis was relatively equal among women and men (49 and 51 percent, respectively). Women with BDD were found to be more preoccupied with skin, weight and their hip size, while the men studied were concerned about thinning hair, body build and genital appearance.

The following are some of the more common symptoms of BDD, according to ADAA:

- Camouflaging (with body position, clothing, makeup, hair, hats, etc.)
- Comparing body parts to others’ appearance
- Seeking surgery
- Checking in a mirror
- Avoiding mirrors
- Skin picking
- Grooming excessively
- Exercising excessively
- Changing clothes excessively

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“I think connection and communication are two of the most important things I offer my patients.”
The differences between hot and cold therapies

Inflammation can affect anyone, and those who have battled it likely have nothing positive to say. But while few people may associate inflammation with something good, inflammation is actually a process by which the body’s white blood cells and the substances those cells produce protect the body from infection at the hands of bacteria, viruses and other foreign organisms.

While inflammation is protective by nature, sometimes an inflammatory response is triggered by mistake. When that happens, the body’s immune system, which is designed to protect the body, begins to damage its own tissues. The resulting symptoms of this faulty immune system response may include joint pain, joint stiffness, loss of function in the joints, and swelling of the joints.

The following breakdown should not replace a physician’s advice, but it can help patients battling inflammation better understand both treatment options.

**HEAT THERAPY**

According to the Merck Manual, a reference book for physicians and patients alike, heat works against inflammation by increasing blood flow and making connective tissues more flexible. Heat also can be used to combat edema, a condition characterized by an excess of fluid in the tissues of the body. Upon application, heat can temporarily reduce pain and alleviate stiffness in the joints. Heat also may temporarily relieve muscle spasms.

The Cleveland Clinic notes that heat can be effective at relieving pain associated with worn-away cartilage in the joints because it eases chronically stiff joints and relaxes tight muscles. In addition, moist heat can relax painful neck spasms linked to nerves or blood vessels in the head or pain emanating from muscles in the neck. Heat can be applied via hot packs, infrared heat, paraffin baths, and hydrotherapy.

**COLD THERAPY**

Cold therapy — sometimes referred to as “cryotherapy” — can relieve pain associated with inflammation that has developed recently. Cold can help numb tissues and relieve muscle spasms and can also be used to alleviate pain associated with injuries. The Merck Manual notes that ice bags or cold packs can be used to apply cold. In addition, fluids that cool by evaporation, including ethyl chloride, may be applied topically. Some medicines may interact with ethyl chloride spray, so inflammation sufferers should consult their physicians before applying such sprays.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, ice can be used to calm flare-ups and numb pain associated with chronic, inflammatory arthritis. Ice also can ease inflammation and numb pain linked to pulled muscles or injured tendons.

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