

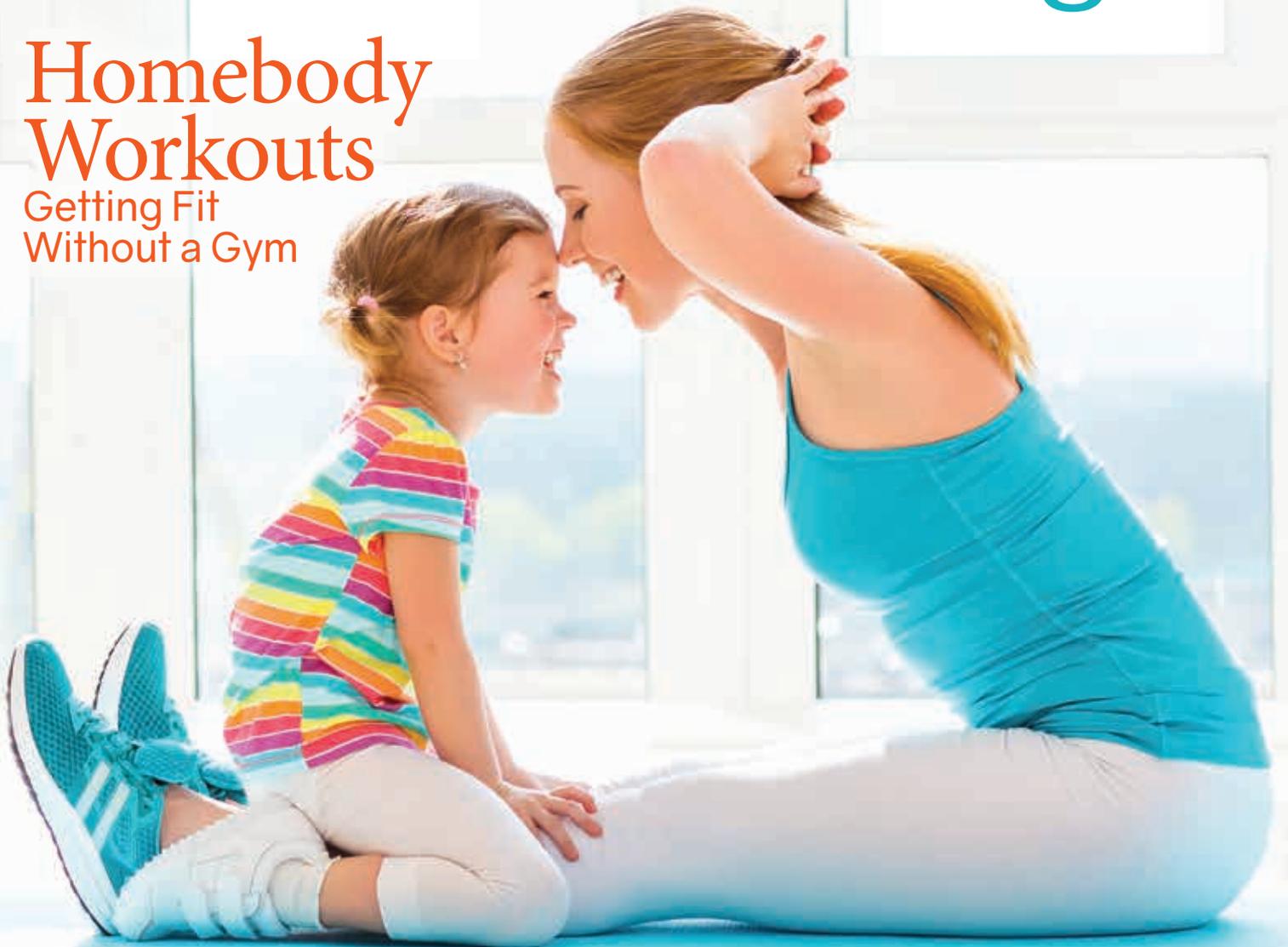
FREE

HEALTHY LIVING HEALTHY PLANET

# natural awakenings

## Homebody Workouts

Getting Fit  
Without a Gym



### EYECARE FOR KIDS

A Clear Path to  
Healthy Vision

### TRAVELING IN PLACE

Finding Adventure  
Close to Home

### BRAIN BOOSTERS

Optimizing Cranial  
Blood Flow

Would you enjoy more peace in your mind and ease in your life?

# Get Your Bars Run!

ACCESS BARS is a body process for dynamic change, which involves touching 32 points on the head to clear all the limitations you have about any area of your life. It can feel like you had a great massage and it can change your whole life.

## Upcoming Classes in Paramus, NJ:

June 14

June 20



Christine DiDomenico, CF  
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Theresa Obsuth, BF  
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Classes & Private Sessions Available, refer to page: 6

ALL OF LIFE COMES TO ME WITH EASE, JOY & GLORY™

## natural awakenings

### Advertising Salesperson Wanted

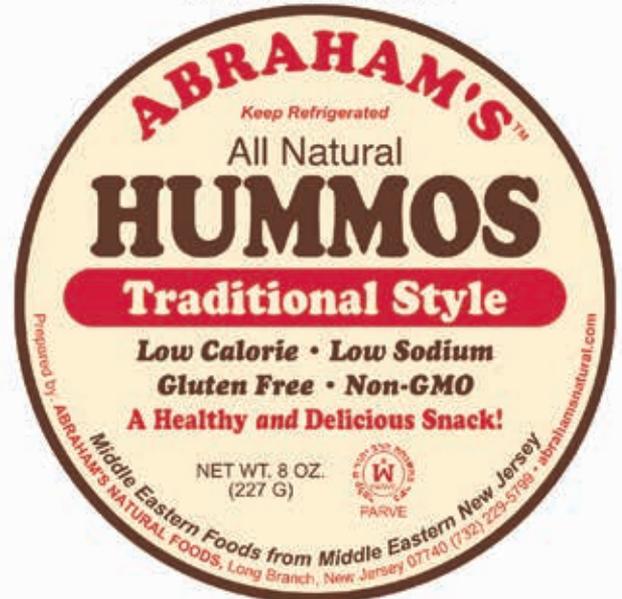
Earn a generous commission selling print/online advertising F/T or P/T for *Natural Awakenings* - a commission only position.

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Email your resume to [publisher@naturalawakeningsnj.com](mailto:publisher@naturalawakeningsnj.com)  
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-Huffington Post

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-Rachel Ray Magazine

*"It was nearly universally liked, praised for its almost-citrusy, bright flavor..."*  
-The Daily Meal

# Meet the Doctor Who Can Change Your Life

Time to build a stronger, more virus-resistant, healthier you.

TALK TO AN EXPERT

**SPECIAL OFFER** For patients worried about inflammatory conditions like cardiovascular and autoimmune disease, please visit our website. Visit [GetWell-Now.com](http://GetWell-Now.com) and enter your information in the Talk To An Expert field for a courtesy interpretation of your records and opportunity for a free Discovery call.

**D**id you know that patients with high blood pressure who admitted to the hospital for COVID-19 were at grave risk because of arterial collapse and a condition called hypoxia.

Even more alarming are the numbers of patients who suffer with HBP, insulin resistance, elevated glucose, and so on, who are told only to reduce sodium (or sugar), take pills and monitor for changes.

At Pucci Wellness Center we are helping to reverse that with our new 90-Day Cardiovascular Reset & Immune Resiliency program. In our full workup we want to look at:

- Adrenal Exhaustion
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- Fatty Acid Metabolism
- Gut Microbiology
- Mitochondrial Function + ATP
- Blood Sugar Metabolism and more

To find out if this plan is right for you, please go to our website and take advantage of our Special Offer for a free 15-minute Discovery call.

COVID-19 is proving to be less predictable than initially thought, manifesting more as a blood vessel disease in older adults.

What is known are the co-morbidity factors. Factors such as:

- Diabetes
- Autoimmunity
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Obesity
- High Blood Pressure

These co-morbidities increase the severity of symptoms and reduce the chances of recovery for patients with coronavirus symptoms.

In the two highest risk age categories, ages 51-70, the results are most dire. That's why we've created an all-new program is designed to produce several of the health baseline markers, including a Success Path forward for combating disease. To learn more, please visit [GetWell-Now.com](http://GetWell-Now.com) and begin the application process to talk to an expert.



Dr. Douglas J. Pucci, DC, FAAIM  
[GetWell-Now.com](http://GetWell-Now.com)  
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**letter from publisher**


Northern New Jersey Natural Awakenings publisher Anil Singh and his wife Vartika

**Finding Our Strength in Trying Times**

I truly hope this message finds you safe and well. I am more grateful than ever for our northern Jersey community in this tumultuous time. Like everyone else, the last three months have been very trying. Until a few days ago, I did not think it was possible for me to forget even for a moment that we are in the midst of an historic pandemic, bringing untold human loss and unimaginable changes to our lives. Due to the COVID-19 crisis,

families and businesses in our community have been struggling with forced closures and an uncertain economic future.

My hope is for a renewed sense of united national purpose to continue the heroic efforts of so many to rebuild the great nation that generations have enjoyed. Even the multitude of challenges posed by mother nature, set against a backdrop of historical prejudices, present an opportunity for local communities and businesses to help each other and rebuild the local economy. Each business owner is a leader, and must think about how they can (at least temporarily) reimagine their services and products in a new, contact-less society. We at *Natural Awakenings* are part of that effort and will play an integral role in supporting local business as always.

There are so many smart and inspiring stories to revitalize your own services and business. The human spirit is indefatigable and hope floats; we will overcome our obstacles and invisible viruses to rebuild the greatest country on Earth anew!

Please let me hear your thoughts at [Anil@NaturalAwakeningsNNJ.com](mailto:Anil@NaturalAwakeningsNNJ.com).

Anil Singh, Publisher

**CORONAVIRUS**  
 LOCAL UPDATES AND RESOURCES


**Be Safe,  
 Stay Well.**

**natural**  
 awakenings

With the ever-evolving COVID-19 situation causing uncertainty for citizens worldwide, *Natural Awakenings* is more committed than ever in supporting your health and well-being.

For the latest updates on local events and information, visit us online at:  
[NANorthNJ.com](http://NANorthNJ.com)

Natural Awakenings is a family of more than 70 healthy living magazines celebrating 26 years of providing the communities we serve with the tools and resources we all need to lead healthier lives on a healthy planet.

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## news briefs

### Maximize Neuroplasticity for More Brain Power

Ramsey Body & Brain Yoga Tai Chi is offering an online 20-minute brain/body assessment for \$10 and a



more comprehensive 45-minute energy checkup for \$30 during the month of June. Body & Brain approaches brain health as the completeness of physical, emotional and spiritual health. When we feel confident physically and emotionally, we naturally live with a sense of peace.

An important gift we have for brain health is its neuroplasticity. A flexible brain means we do not follow the same routines and responses, but see situations from a variety of points of view. Body & Brain uses exercises to increase the mind/body communication for increased coordination and balance, and energy meditation to quiet our thinking. When our mind becomes relaxed, we can activate the right brain and clear past negative emotional memories.

*Location: 495 N. Franklin Tpk., Ramsey, NJ. To schedule a check-up, call 201-962-8383. For more information, visit [bodynbrain.com/ramsey](http://bodynbrain.com/ramsey). See ad, page 9.*

### Learn Access Bars in Paramus



The Access Bars (Bars) class from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., June 14, with Christine DiDomenico and June 20 with Theresa Obsuth, is a one-day training session where participants learn to administer an innova-

tive energy clearing technique that can create greater ease and cultivate more joy in life through greater awareness.

While training, participants learn how to “run the Bars” and will also receive two bars sessions. The Bars are 32 points on the head that when gently touched, effortlessly and easily release thoughts, ideas, decisions, beliefs and attitudes that keep us in limitation. Access Bars can release disharmonious thoughts and behavior patterns, and the release of these old thoughts and patterns can bring greater possibilities into one’s life.

No prerequisites are required and anyone can learn, including children. Class participants receive a certificate of completion and become qualified to provide Access Bars sessions to family, friends or clients.

Providers of other therapies can introduce Access Bars into their practice.

*Location: Advanced Medical Center, Paramus. For more information, or to preregister (required), or to book a private session, call Theresa Obsuth 201-655-3836 or Christine DiDomenico 845-825-2361 or visit [AccessTheBars.com](http://AccessTheBars.com). See ad, page 2.*

### Auriculotherapy Discounted at Saddle Brook Wellness Center

Complete Wellness Within, a full-service beauty and wellness center, is hosting Earseeds Tuesday Wellness Days from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., June 9, 16, 23 and 30, in Saddle Brook. Treatments are \$25 for a limited time. Participants will learn how auriculotherapy (akin to acupuncture or reflexology for the ear) can improve overall health and minimize cravings related to resolving most addictions, as well as other benefits.



There are hundreds of points on the ear that are believed to correspond with organs in the body, as well as specific emotional issues. Auriculotherapy can also help with headaches, poor balance, insomnia, nerve issues, allergies, hormonal imbalances, weight loss, joint pain, knee pain and many other issues.

*Location: 337 Market St., Ste. 5, Saddle Brook. For more information or to register (required), call 973-615-2486, email [Info@CompleteWellnessWithin.com](mailto:Info@CompleteWellnessWithin.com) or visit [CompleteWellnessWithin.com](http://CompleteWellnessWithin.com). See ad, page 14.*

### Salt Cave and Cannabidiol Boost Immune Strength

Salt of the Earth Center for Healing will present a CBD workshop via Zoom at 7:30 p.m., June 10. Co-owners of Salt of the Earth, Dr. Susan Toron and health coach Sheryl Silver, will talk about cannabidiol (CBD) production and how to evaluate and compare products. Toron will explain how CBD works in the body and how to determine the best type of product.



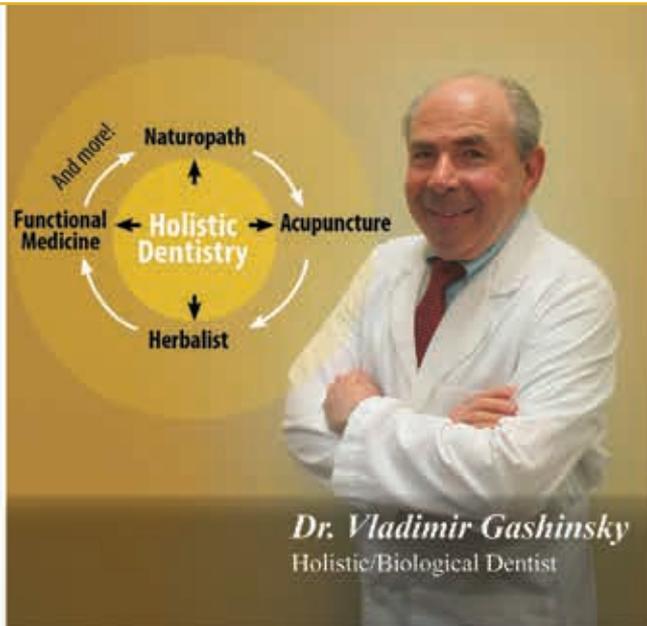
Halotherapy (dry salt therapy) has been shown in many research studies to provide anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. When inhaled, the micron-sized salt particles emitted by the halogenerator a salt cave help to thin mucus, expel impurities and reduce swelling in the respiratory system. It’s imperative to maintain healthy lung function and support the immune system, so consider adding halotherapy to a COVID wellness routine.

Salt of the Earth is taking a number of safety precautions in their facility. Recent studies have proven that solid salt surfaces such as the walls and floor can neutralize the virus in less than 60 seconds. Other non-salt surfaces are disinfected in-between each session.

*Admission is free. To register, call 845-290-0678 or email [SaltOfTheEarthcfh@gmail.com](mailto:SaltOfTheEarthcfh@gmail.com). Location: 811 Chestnut Ridge Rd., Chestnut Ridge, NY. For more information, visit [SaltOfTheEarthcfh.com](http://SaltOfTheEarthcfh.com). See ad, page 13.*

# The Holistic Dental Center

Working Together with Other Holistic Practitioners to Create a True Holistic Approach to Your Health



*Dr. Vladimir Gashinsky*  
Holistic/Biological Dentist

A team approach to your overall health and it starts at the Holistic Dental Center in Millburn, New Jersey, with their highly skilled team of trained professionals in holistic and biological dentistry. From their award winning doctors and their state of the art technology to their use of ozone and self-healing therapies, they are committed to not only treating your dental related symptoms, but also, the root cause thereby eliminating disease and promoting optimal health.

Little did conventional practitioners know so many years ago that it took more than just looking at the mouth. A generation ago there was a disconnect, a thought that our mouth and teeth had no bearing on the health of the rest of our body. Now more and more research has been showing that there is a strong connection between dental disease and systemic health. Dr. Gashinsky, Holistic Dentist, has always known that. A holistic approach to health is multifaceted, so he has built a network of healthcare practitioners to assist his patients in obtaining their desired level of optimal wellness.

Working hand in hand with Naturopaths, Functional Medicine practitioners and many others in the field of holistic medicine has expanded Dr. Gashinsky's ability to help more people. "I find it to be incredibly fulfilling to work synergistically with these practitioners to be able to improve patients' health so dramatically. Some are coming to me so very sick and by working together we're seeing drastic improvements in their quality of life," says Dr. Gashinsky.

Dr. Gashinsky feels strongly in the need to practice in such a manner as to take patients whole health into consideration. So much so, that he traveled to Switzerland this past spring to visit the Paracelsus Clinic and Swiss BioHealth Clinic; two healthcare models that promote the oral-body connection, to study their holistic approach to patient care. Dr. Gashinsky says, "To truly practice holism; the thought that everything is understood in relation to the whole and not just its parts, it's important to remember that when treating a person it's not just what one practitioner does, but how they can work together to improve the final outcome."

"Finding and working with like minded practitioners to help my patients has not only been professionally satisfying, but also on a personal level knowing that my patients are being well taken care of," say Dr. Gashinsky. "Finding and addressing the root cause of disease in all our disciplines is the key to success in our patients' health. What

they don't see, I do, and vice versa, seeing dental infections and how they can affect organ systems through meridians or directly and utilizing the benefits of networking with a holistic practitioner can and does make all the difference in patient care...I wouldn't have it any other way," Dr. Gashinsky says about working with other practitioners.

So if you're looking for an approach that is inclusive of all aspects of holistic care, visit Dr. Gashinsky and his team at The Holistic Dental Center in Millburn, New Jersey. It's their priority to ensure complete holistic care by promoting the benefits of holism. "It's not just your teeth anymore," as he says, "It never was," but now they have the ability to not just treat overall disease but truly prevent and promote whole body wellness.

*Other than being a dentist for 40 years, Dr. Vladimir Gashinsky, is a certified nutritional consultant, Accredited by the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology, SMART certified and a Naturopathic doctor "My passion for learning is never complete, I will continue to research and learn the latest in alternative treatments and team up with the best in the fields of holistic and alternative medicine to bring my patients the best treatments available, this I can assure you."*

*Holistic Dental Center is located at 91 Millburn Avenue, Millburn, New Jersey. For more information, call (973) 457-4688 or visit [HolisticDentalCenterNJ.com](http://HolisticDentalCenterNJ.com).*

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\* In the absence of gum disease

## health briefs

# How to Deal with the Virus Scare

by Susanna Eun

The impact of COVID-19 feels 10 times bigger than that of 9/11; it's akin to nukes detonated everywhere across the globe. As the lockdown appears to be easing up, we know that we must adjust to new parameters of life for our physical, emotional and mental health.



### Boost Immune Function

The key in protecting ourselves against this virus is not so much dependent on new drugs or vaccines. Rather, the key is to boost our natural immune capacities as best as we can. Good nutrition, exercises, positive outlook and sound sleep all help, but it's not easy to put those into practice in the midst of chaos and confusion.

We can raise our vibration frequency. According to quantum biology, when we tap into a higher level of frequency, our brains start producing neurological signals that will promote a faster healing in all aspects of our being, including immunity. Ten to 15 minutes a day of meditation, prayers or chanting mantra and focusing on aligning oneself to "the highest good" will undoubtedly produce a powerful protection shield.

Actively replace negative emotions with positive ones. When we are under stress, our bodies produce high amounts of stress hormones, which in turn suppress our immune functions dramatically. In other words, the more we're stressed-out we are, the more likely we will catch the virus.

Effective, well-proven, low-cost, immune-enhancing tips include:

- Vitamin C: 2,000 mg/day, vitamin D—2,000 IU/day (best source of vitamin D is sunshine)
- Zinc: 10 to 20 mg/day (best sources of the zinc are oysters, red meat, poultry, beans, nuts)
- Elderberry syrup: (1 tsp/day)
- Oregano oil: (dilute with other oils if necessary) or 1-2 tablets of oregano extract
- Raw garlic cloves: 2 to 3/day
- Ginger/lemon/honey tea
- Tons of fresh organic vegetables and fruits
- Avoid sugar, wheat and dairy products

If experiencing high fever, chest pain or difficulty breathing, consult with a physician immediately. If we think we've been exposed to the virus and are concerned about viral attacks despite no active symptoms:

- Drink tonic water; basically quinine water mixed with sugar
- 1/2 tsp baking soda dissolved in warm water daily
- Increase vitamin C to 5,000 mg/day
- Increase vitamin D to 5,000 IU/day
- Increase zinc intake to 50 mg/day

### Homemade Quinine Extract

Wash two or three grapefruits thoroughly and peel. In a pot with a lid, place the peels and pour water about three inches above the peels. Simmer for two hours. Do not take the lid off until it cools down completely. This concoction is bitter, so sweeten with honey. Take 1 tablespoon every two to three hours to bring up the phlegm from the lungs. Discontinue when feeling better.

Susanna Eun, LAc, Ph.D., is the owner of the Allendale Acupuncture/Nutrition Clinic. For more information, call 201-535-4066.

## Take Quercetin to Reduce Blood Pressure

Supplementation with quercetin, a plant pigment found in capers, cilantro, fennel, onions, red leaf lettuce, watercress, elderberries, asparagus, kale, cocoa,



apples and chia seeds, can significantly reduce both diastolic and systolic blood pressure, lowering each by about three milliliters/Hg, reports a new review of research published in the *Oxford Academic Journal*, of 17 clinical studies that tested 896 participants. Quercetin also improved HDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels when consumed for eight weeks or more.

## Consume Date Vinegar to Boost Heart Health and Reduce Inflammation

In a study of 76 people with mildly high total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol, research published in the *Journal of Herbal Medicine* found that consuming 30 milliliters of vinegar made from date pulp and pits daily for four weeks significantly improved total cholesterol, LDL, triglyceride and HDL levels, as well as several biomarkers of inflammation.

## Healing Through the Power of Spirit

The human being is an energy field of the Spirit. Because of this, every person can make use of the absolute and positive power of the Spirit of God in their life – especially with illness or to stay healthy.

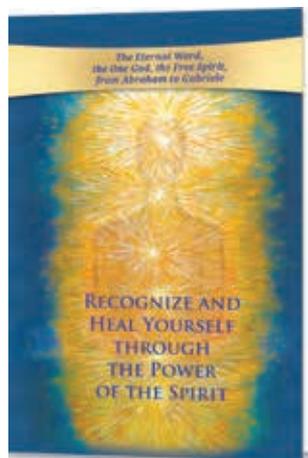
Gabriele writes: “We can imagine every human being as a planet that irradiates its surrounding planets, that is, other people, with potentially high powers. In the morning, the planet ‘human being’ enters its orbit. What is decisive is the orbit he chooses. As soon as he awakens and his senses become active, thousands of rays penetrate him more intensely, because the world of his sensations immediately attracts them. “An unknowing person allows these rays to direct him at will. A knowing person makes use of these cosmic influences by sorting them out immediately upon awakening and by programming certain rays that will then lead and guide him throughout the day, according to his programming.”

The book *Recognize and Heal Yourself with the Power of the Spirit* is an encompassing revelation from the Eternal Kingdom given in the prophetic word, helps us become familiar with the great Inner Physician and Healer who is always ready to help us. We find access to our soul and get to know the seven consciousness centers, the switching points for the spiritual-divine life-force, the link between soul and body. Beyond this, we receive practical hints and recommendations with certain illnesses and learn to deal with medicines and healing herbs in the right way. The healing meditations and exercises in this book help us learn that the Spirit of God is the fuel, the energy for the soul and the physical body.

We experience self-healing via the power of the Spirit, as well as the effect of the various kinds of fragrances, colors and sounds. Topics include: The reaction of the body cells to negative thoughts and medication; Prayer releases energies, and fanaticism causes harm; The healing ether powers in dew; Praise the cells of our body and the life force in them will increase; Negative effects caused by the exploitation of the Earth and technical achievements; Dead food and the heavenly elixir of life; Fear and worry open the door wide for illness; How can I keep my soul and body in harmony?; What is a spiritual vegetarian?; and more.

The book is available for \$18 at [Gabriele-Publishing-House.com](http://Gabriele-Publishing-House.com) or [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

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# Biking During the COVID-19 Crisis

## Regular Tips Apply to Pedaling

During the coronavirus crisis, biking is especially recommended, as it provides exceptional aerobic and cardio exercise, relaxation and because it maintains social distancing. Keeping in mind proper equipment, fitness, safety and other factors can make it even more fulfilling during this difficult period.

**Choose the right bike.** Those designed for roads and pavement are generally lighter and have more gears than mountain bikes, which have more shock-absorbing features, plus more lower gears to help traverse inclined terrain. Urban and commuting bikes feature a slightly more upright riding position that allows better sightlines and improved visibility by motorists.

Use a bike shop with mechanics that test and adjust the bikes they sell, including determining the proper seat height—which facilitates proper alignment of hips and a full rotation—and the ideal distance from the handlebars to the seat tube. Back, knee or hip pain may develop if a cyclist has

to stretch his or her legs to get to the pedals, according to the League of American Bicyclists. A biker doesn't get proper leg extension if the seat is too low. The legs should be almost, but not totally extended at the lowest point in pedaling.

**Safety takes many forms.** Even well-marked bike lanes don't guarantee safety, so use caution. Some motorists are careless about entering bike lanes and don't correctly stop at crosswalks or look behind before opening doors. Keep at least five feet from the sides of cars to avoid being hit. Don't weave in and out of traffic, always don a helmet, signal turns and watch out for runners and walkers. Use the stop signal (left arm extended downward) to alert bikers that may be traveling behind.



**Proper pedaling can help prevent strains.** In addition to ensuring they're employing proper leg extension, it's advised that bikers pedal a little faster in a lower gear; ideally, 75 to 90 revolutions per minute, which is easier on the knees with less muscle fatigue than traveling slower in a higher gear.

**Routine maintenance** includes "cleaning and lubing the chain, replacing brake pads, and changing and fixing a flat tire," according to major bike and outdoor retailer Recreational Equipment, Inc. (rei.com). The website has helpful tips on tools to obtain, along with basic information on bike maintenance, cleaning and fixing a flat tire.

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- And Much More

*As you age, your hormone levels decline, this decline coincides with a decrease in your body functions and quality of life. Nothing reverses aging, however, replacing deficient hormones can slow down the process and help you maintain good health. Restoring hormones to youthful levels is the only strategy to regain what nature has taken away.*

**Dr. Susan Matos-Cloke**  
30-year Board-certified Internist, Certified Sotopelle-trained Natural Hormone Specialist



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- Protects Against Heart Disease
- And Much More

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Light therapy can also beat seasonal affective disorder, reduce inflammation, speed healing, treat eye diseases and even reduce migraines. With over 5,000 research studies, the practical applications of light therapy continue to grow.

Light therapy was first researched by NASA 40 years ago. Over the last 20 years, research treatments and purchasing options have become increasingly widespread. Sports teams such as the Cowboys and Patriots, U.S. Olympic teams, UFC fighters, Navy Seals, along with thousands of hospitals and clinics around the world are taking full advantage of light therapy because it works.

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## Virus Fighters

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In these coronavirus days, an essential oil mixture with legendary origins in the Bubonic Plague offers soothing scents for the homebound and might add some viral protection.

The mixture of five oils: eucalyptus, clove, cinnamon, lemon and rosemary, is known as Thieves. As the story goes, in the 1500s, as the Black

Death decimated Europe, when four unemployed spice merchants that turned to robbing the bodies and homes of the dead were captured and threatened with being burned alive, they confessed to the judge their secret to avoiding infection — the spice blend that they rubbed on their hands, ears, feet and temples.

They were all hanged, but their formula survives as Thieves, and is today one of the most popular essential oil blends in the market, sold under that name and also as Five Guards, Health Shield and Fighting Five. Although shown to sharply reduce three kinds of airborne bacteria in 10 minutes, its antiviral properties have not been extensively studied. Its components, however, have proven antimicrobial, antiseptic and antiviral properties:

■ **Eucalyptus**, long used for respiratory infections, has been proven effective against a number of viruses, particularly the swine flu and herpes type 1 viruses.

■ **Clove** has exhibited strong antiviral activity against



such viruses as the adenovirus type 3 respiratory virus, poliovirus and coxsackievirus.

■ **Cinnamon leaf** shows antiviral activity and can prevent pneumonia due to influenza.

■ **Lemon** oil has antibacterial and antifungal properties, and is often used in cleaning products.

■ **Rosemary** eases stress and has antiviral, antimicrobial and antidepressant qualities.

Thieves can be purchased in natural health stores or online. For a homemade blend, Jennifer Lane, an aromatherapist, registered nurse and founder of *LovingEssentialOils.com*, recommends combining these essential oils:

- ✓ 35 drops lemon
- ✓ 20 drops cinnamon leaf
- ✓ 15 drops clove bud
- ✓ 15 drops eucalyptus
- ✓ 10 drops rosemary

Adding five drops of the blend, along with water in a diffuser, can waft the scent throughout a room and diminish airborne odors and germs. For respiratory support, put a few drops into a cup of steaming, but not boiling, water, drape a towel around the cup and face, and breathe in the fumes. Add it to a carrier oil like jojoba oil or coconut oil at a 1:30 ratio (such as one-half ounce Thieves to 15 ounces jojoba) and rub it on pulse points in the wrist and neck. But do not ingest the blend. If a child under 10 is in the house, don't diffuse it or use it topically on them, because rosemary and eucalyptus can be unsafe for a child, advises Christina Anthis, author of *The Beginner's Guide to Essential Oils: Everything You Need to Know to Get Started*.

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# Eye Care for Kids

## A Clear Path to Healthy Vision

by Ronica A. O'Hara

**T**he blurry distant vision of myopia is a worldwide epidemic. Near-sightedness has doubled in the U.S. since 1971 to 42 percent, and in some Asian countries it affects 90 percent of teens and adults, reports the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Eye doctors say the key time to pay attention is during childhood, because myopia and other eye and vision problems can be reversed or stabilized if addressed at an early age.

“Parents tend to assume that vision

problems aren't a concern for the young and healthy, but it's never too early to promote healthful habits or to be on the lookout for potential vision issues,” advises ophthalmologist Sandy T. Feldman, M.D., medical director of the Clearview Eye & Laser Medical Center, in San Diego.

Ophthalmologists and optometrists recommend having a child's eyes tested at 6 months, 3 years and 5 or 6 years to detect nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, “lazy eye” (amblyopia), crossed or

misaligned eyes (strabismus) and other potential problems. “For signs of trouble, I ask parents if they have seen their child have an eye that wanders or if the child covers an eye regularly, they are rubbing their eyes or playing with their toys close to their face,” says optometrist Nathan Langemo, of the Hopkins Eye Clinic, in Hopkins, Minnesota.

If myopia becomes severe, it can lead to retinal detachment, premature cataracts and glaucoma in adulthood, but early detection is possible. An Ohio State University study of 4,500 children found that myopia in eighth-graders could be predicted in the first grade by their eyeglass prescription. Children at age 6 are naturally slightly farsighted, and those with normal vision are more likely to become myopic later.

A common medical treatment to slow myopia in kids is daily use of 0.01 percent atropine eye drops, the medication used to dilate an eye before an exam. It slowed down nearsightedness by roughly 50 percent in Singapore children. A new, two-year study shows that combining the eye drops with nightly contact lens-wearing is 28 to 38 percent more effective. For preschoolers with amblyopia, an iPad game called Dig Rush was shown to be helpful in a University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center study. Hong Kong researchers report that 15 weeks of acupuncture beat out eye patches for treating children with lazy eyes, resolving the condition in 41 percent of cases, compared to 16 percent.

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The simplest preventive strategy for myopia may be simply to shoo children outdoors every day, including involving them in outdoor sports. Researchers aren't sure whether it's the vitamin D effect or the fact that when they are outdoors kids focus more on distant objects like trees and balls than when reading a book or screen, but recent studies in Taiwan and Denmark have verified that more time outdoors is linked to less myopia. Even sitting in sunlight inside while reading or using full-spectrum light bulbs is protective, say researchers. When outdoors, "Make sure the child has 100 percent UVA and UVB sun protection for the eyes," advises Langemo, including using UV contact lenses.

Evidence is mixed on whether close-up reading brings on childhood myopia, but a study of 500 college students that heavily used computers found 53 percent reporting headaches, 55 percent with burning sensations in the eyes and 48 percent with tired eyes. When kids focus on a computer, their eye-refreshing blinking rate slows from 10 to 12 times a minute to three or four times a minute, says optometrist Marc Grossman, of New Paltz, New York, author of *Natural Eye Care: Your Guide To Healthy Vision and Healing*.

He recommends taking breaks at least 10 minutes every hour, using homeopathic eye drops and gently massaging the eyes by moving fingers from the inner corner, around the upper socket and underneath, stopping about six times to massage each point for five to 10 seconds.

It's also important to remove household hazards. Medical emergency rooms increasingly report eye injuries in kids from popular toy weapons like Nerf, BB guns and paintball guns, as well as colorful detergent pods that preschoolers love to squeeze or bite, plus aerosol spray from paint, hair-spray, cleaning products and bug repellants.

Feeding children the right foods, including lots of vegetables, fruits and grains, also benefits their eyes. The omega-3s in fish oil, nuts and seeds help minimize dry eye, and leafy greens and eggs have the eye-protective antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin.

Ronica A. O'Hara is a Denver-based health writer. Connect at [OHaraRonica@gmail.com](mailto:OHaraRonica@gmail.com).

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# Healing the Immune System

## Autoimmune Breakthroughs Offer New Hope

by April Thompson

Some 23 million Americans suffer from one or more autoimmune diseases—a category comprised of more than 80 conditions, including fibromyalgia, Hashimoto’s disease, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis and Type 1 diabetes. These pernicious disorders are notoriously difficult to diagnose, even harder to treat and can be debilitating, diminishing the quality of life for sufferers.

Another commonality is the increased prevalence of autoimmune disease in women versus men; in the case of lupus, for example, a nine-fold difference. Some early indicators are that this may be related to a “gene dosage effect”, as men with XXY chromosomes have the same risk of developing lupus as other women, and women with XXX chromosomes (known in medical parlance as “super-women”) have an even higher risk of autoimmune disease, according to Judith James,

chair of the Arthritis & Clinical Immunology Program at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, in Oklahoma City.

Yet there is hope on the horizon, as scientific discoveries unlock important insights about the manifestation and progression of autoimmune diseases leading to new treatments and prevention tips. Evidence is also mounting around the role of diet and lifestyle in autoimmune conditions, giving patients new avenues for taking charge of their health instead of simply waiting for a cure.

Autoimmune diseases are chronic and can affect almost any part of the body, including the heart, brain, muscles, skin, eyes, joints, lungs, kidneys, glands, digestive tract and blood vessels. Each disease carries its own set of symptoms, but inflammation is nearly always present, and are all connected by how the immune system attacks

the body’s healthy tissues. “Those shared characteristics hold the potential for shared treatments, and ultimately potentially common cures,” says Jane Buckner, president of the Benaroya Research Institute (BRI), at Virginia Mason, in Seattle, which works to advance the prediction, prevention, reversal and cure of immune system diseases.

“I’m excited about our progress toward prevention. We are working to understand those tipping points in transitioning into disease that help us understand who is at highest risk, and helps give very directed therapies,” says James.

### Self-Healing from Autoimmunity

By her early 20s, Mickey Trescott, of Willamette Valley, Oregon, was bedridden and had lost her job to autoimmune

disease. At one point, doctors thought it was multiple sclerosis (MS); she was dizzy, numb, falling over and slurring her speech. Eventually, she was diagnosed with both Hashimoto's and celiac diseases, affecting the thyroid and small intestine, respectively. Trescott, a nutritionist, chef and author of *The Autoimmune Paleo Cookbook*, had been vegan for 10 years, but had a feeling that her body needed something different.

She found an early version of what would become known as the autoimmune protocol (AIP), and in following its guidelines, began to find relief. Trescott connected with other women and started a private Facebook group to share information on what was improving their condition from which the AIP community sprung. AIP, an elimination diet that seeks to reset the immune system by cutting out inflammation-causing foods and treating leaky gut, has much in common with the paleo diet and promotes vitamin- and nutrient-rich foods. However, every individual comes out of the AIP process with a customized diet.

For Trescott, "Gluten is a forever-no, and I am also allergic to dairy and sensitive to a lot of nightshade vegetables, like tomatoes and peppers." It took three years to recover most of her functioning, and although she had been a personal chef, it was still challenging to determine a new approach to eating that didn't include the grains and legumes that had been staples of her diet.

Trescott is still on medications, including the same thyroid support she's relied on from the start. "There is a misconception that the AIP is an alternative to conventional medicine. We really pride ourselves on using all the tools in our toolbox, including surgery, medication and lifestyle changes," she says.

Anecdotal successes like Trescott's have led researchers to pursue funding to test the AIP's efficacy. In a pilot study of 18 individuals with an average sick time of 19 years that didn't respond to traditional medication, 73 percent were in clinical remission at the end of the trial, having followed the AIP. "It was a small sample size, but the results are promising," says Trescott.



## Physician, Healed Thymself

Like many physicians, Terry Wahls focused on treating her patients with drugs or surgical procedures—until the Iowa City doctor was diagnosed with MS in 2000. Within three years, despite conventional medical treatments, her back and stomach muscles had weakened to the point where she needed a tilt-recline wheelchair, and by the summer of 2007, she could no longer sit up.

Though Wahls had been a vegetarian on a low-fat diet for 20 years, she went back to eating meat and gave up all dairy, wheat and grains, but still wasn't improving. Delving back into the science of her condition, Wahls realized that mitochondrial support was key, and the speed of her decline slowed while taking a cocktail of vitamins to support its functioning.

It wasn't until she took a comprehensive approach to optimize everything she could take in through her food rather than relying on supplements that she saw radical results: Her brain fog, fatigue and pain went away and she biked around the block for the first time in six years. "Taking in nutrients in the form of food rather than supplements, you get related compounds and thousands of others in biologically anticipated ratios," explains Wahls. "I still do take some supplements, but the magic is the food."

Those key ingredients, says Wahls, include magnesium, zinc, selenium, sulfur, amino acids, cholesterol, omega-6 and omega-3s, fats, carnitine and creatine. Her rule of thumb for daily intake is three cups of leafy green vegetables; three cups of

sulfuric vegetables like cabbage, mushrooms and onions; and three cups of deeply pigmented vegetables, plus sources of protein for meat eaters and vegetarians.

While her work was initially not accepted, today she has funding from the National MS Society and her research has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals. "Basic science is now showing that the microbiome has a huge impact on the immune system activity and the brain; the food we eat can turn gene expression on and off," says Wahls, who hasn't taken any drugs for her autoimmune condition since 2008.

Buckner cautions against patients trying to manage disease with lifestyle changes alone, without giving available allopathic treatments a fair try. "People do better if they are treated early and aggressively. They are reliant on fewer medications down the road and don't have permanent damage if they seek treatment early."

However, even researchers focused on pharmaceutical approaches acknowledge the importance of diet and lifestyle. Meggan Mackay, professor of Molecular Medicine at the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research, at Northwell Health, in Manhasset, New York, believes this can play a critical role in disease management. She cites numerous studies showing exercise as a stress-buster positively influencing disease outcomes, as well as a more specific study looking at the benefits of adding fish oil and vitamin D to the diets of lupus patients. "The rise in obesity, which is linked to increased inflammation in the U.S., may be one of reasons we are seeing more autoimmune disease than ever," says Mackay.

At-risk individuals should be aware of factors under their control, adds James. "If someone is worried about autoimmune disease running in their family, monitoring and maintaining adequate vitamin D levels and avoiding smoking and other high-risk behaviors can help improve their chances." Even sleep patterns can play a role in disease manifestation, says the researcher. In one study, individuals at high risk for autoimmune disease that slept less than seven hours per day were more likely to develop an autoimmune condition, according to James.

## Common Links Serve as Research Clues

There are some clear links between autoimmune diseases, such as the genetic predisposition that runs in families. “Someone with rheumatoid arthritis may have a sister with celiac disease, for example, and one individual may suffer from multiple autoimmune conditions. We can learn from these common genetic links,” says Buckner. These common links can serve as important clues. For example, Buckner says they are able to demonstrate changes in T cells in diabetes and MS that are the same, which might lead to common treatments for the two conditions.

While the process from basic scientific discovery to development of effective treatment can be slow, there are some concrete breakthroughs autoimmune researchers are excited about, having demonstrated ability to both prevent and delay disease. Citing a recent clinical trial published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, “They have demonstrated in kids at high risk for developing Type 1



diabetes the ability to delay onset for at least two years. It’s an incredibly exciting finding,” says Buckner.

Mackay is hopeful about advances in basic science addressing specific immune system abnormalities linked to inflammatory problems. “Lupus is very challenging to diagnose and treat because it can affect every system in the body,” says Mackay, whose research team has focused on lupus

for decades. “The only forms of treatment have been very immune-suppressive medications that shut down the immune response. None of these medications are specific, so in shutting down the immune response to treat lupus, they in turn interfere with the body’s ability to fight off infection and cancer.” Researchers are now honing in on single cells from biopsies that indicate which proteins are abnormal, thereby helping develop more selective therapies, she says.

Seeing progress in the lab is one thing; seeing it in the waiting room is another, and that’s where autoimmune scientists and clinicians are really beginning to note a difference. “I’ve seen patients for 25 years, and when we started, we had very few options in my clinic, which was full of wheelchairs,” says Buckner. “In the last 20 years, we have seen an explosion in research and available treatments. I don’t have wheelchairs in my office anymore.”

*Connect with Washington, D.C. freelance writer April Thompson at [AprilWrites.com](http://AprilWrites.com).*

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# Seven Strategies for Coping with COVID-19

by Doug Pucci

**M**uch of the news surrounding COVID-19 can make us feel powerless against the virus, but the fact is that we can make certain lifestyle changes that help us take back control of our health. These seven strategies can help empower our immune system, enabling it to ward off or fight back against disease so that even if we do contract COVID, the chances are it will not be a severe case and we can recover.

**Anti-inflammatory diet:** An anti-inflammatory diet is an important component in achieving and maintaining a strong immune system and healthy gut microbiome. While there's no one diet that's right for every person, the Mediterranean diet is a good place to start, and can be used as a basis for establishing healthy eating patterns. It has many of the elements that help fight inflammation: it's plant-based, high in fiber and includes healthy fats like olive oil, fruits, legumes, vegetables and fish. Cutting out processed foods and added sugars also goes a long way toward reducing chronic inflammation.

**Moderate exercise:** Exercise boosts nitric oxide levels, which improve blood flow and brain function and lower blood pressure. To put the importance of good nitric oxide levels in perspective, less than optimal levels are associated with diabetes and heart disease. However, during the pandemic, moderate exercise is preferable to intense exercise, because intense exercise causes cortisol and endorphins to surge, which stimulate the immune system. An overactive immune system can create a cytokine storm, which is thought to be at the root of COVID-19 deaths. In fact, many of the medications that are being considered work to calm the

cytokine storm. Keeping the immune system calm, but strong is the goal.

**Sleep:** Getting seven to nine hours of sleep regularly helps the body defend itself against infection through increased immune system functionality. Good sleep boosts T-cells (specialized immune system cells), which essentially attach to and attack harmful foreign bodies in the system. Sleep has been shown to enhance T-cell response efficiency.

**Stress management:** Stress creates cortisol, which becomes a problem when stress goes on for extended periods of time. Chronic stress creates inflammation and lowers our white blood cell count, both of which reduce the immune system's ability to fight off infection and makes us more prone to viruses.

**Sunshine:** Getting outside into the fresh air and sunshine is vital for a healthy immune system—not only does the sun drench us with all-important vitamin D, it also activates key immune cells. Sunlight also increases the production of serotonin in the brain, which helps lower stress and anxiety.

**Laughter:** Laughter has a positive effect on the immune system; it increases antibody production and activates protective cells, including T cells, proving the old saying, "Laughter is the best medicine." By decreasing stress hormones and increasing immune cells, as well as infection-fighting antibodies, the body becomes more resistant to viruses and diseases in general. In addition, laughter triggers the release of endorphins that make us feel good and has been known to temporarily relieve pain.

**Get a pet:** There's been a surge of pet adoptions during this pandemic, and that's a good thing for both these lucky animals and their new owners. Studies have shown that pet ownership can lower blood pressure, triglycerides and cholesterol, alleviate loneliness and encourage exercise, not to mention bring laughter and happiness into the home, which lowers stress levels.

*Dr. Doug Pucci is an expert in functional medicine and was recently awarded for his work by the 2020 Best of Awards for Oradell. In practice for 30-plus years, he provides advanced biomarker testing for brain/body health. For more information, call 201-261-5430 or visit [GetWell-Now.com](http://GetWell-Now.com). See ad, page 3.*



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# Homebody Workouts

## Getting Fit Without a Gym

by Marlaina Donato

**W**hen getting to the gym is not possible, there are plenty of options to explore for at-home workouts. From finding fun ways to stay fit to getting loved ones involved, figuring out what works and committing to a few simple goals is a good start.

Although it may be hard to pull ourselves up from the couch during periods of adversity, sticking to an exercise program can help boost immunity and emotional resilience. “Not feeling like exercising is common during stressful times, but try to remember how good you feel afterward and the sense of accomplishment. Remember the why,” says life coach Suzanne King, in Marlton, New Jersey.

### Begin With the Basics

Trainers agree it’s important to see working out and taking care of our health as an investment, and having a plan goes a long way. “You would never just brush off a business appointment if it was in your calendar and you knew you had to attend,” says personal trainer Chris Wong, in Oakville, Ontario. “The simple act of put-

ting it in your schedule makes it real. Now you have a responsibility. Now you have structure.”

Stephanie Mansour, host of the PBS fitness and health show *Step it up with Steph*, concurs: “Once I started viewing workouts as my own personal confidence-boosting time, a lightbulb went off in my head and I became addicted to this time with myself.” The Chicago-based personal trainer recommends lightening up. “Find something fun. Do something goofy like dancing around. Schedule this in and instead of ‘workout,’ call it ‘pump-up time for me.’”

Getting outside and hitting the trails or walking every evening after dinner is a great way to get oxygen-infused aerobic time. “Use outdoor space to your advantage,” says Wong. “I’ve taught boot camps at parks, and one game I like doing is Touch 20 Things. Run around and touch 20 things at least 15 to 20 feet apart, but don’t touch the same thing twice. He also suggests doing sprints or bear crawls for distance exercise and step-ups on park benches or large rocks. “If a park is not

available, similar things can be done in your backyard. Just have fun with it.”

### Exercising Outside the Box

Working out with a different rule set offers an invitation to add a new twist to a usual favorite. “I personally practice martial arts every day, but that can be done in a variety of ways,” says Wong, pointing to gentle qigong, shadow boxing, breathing exercises, footwork drills and heavy bag training.

He recommends exercising every day, but limiting more intense workouts to three or four times a week. Cardio exercises such as walking and bicycling are a good daily choice, while high-intensity interval training workouts can be accomplished with minimal or no equipment. There are a variety of methods with timing elements that can be used to get a good workout. For example, with the As Many Rounds As Possible regimen, three exercises are done back-to-back for as many rounds as possible in a 10-to-12-minute period.

Exploring free online classes on YouTube and other platforms opens up even more options, including yoga, Pilates and dance classes. Many trainers offer virtual workouts over Zoom or Skype live in real time. There are also mobile apps with workouts available for download.

### The Support Factor

Partners or family members can help each other to stay on a workout schedule. “You can set up a chart for you and your family members to put a star or checkmark once you’ve finished a workout. Turn it into a competition, and whoever has the most stars at the end of a few weeks gets to pick the workout for the whole family to do,” suggests Mansour. Partners can also make a pact to take care of the kids when it is the other’s turn to grab some fitness time.

Being motivated is easier with some self-love, King reminds us: “You can begin something new by fully appreciating yourself with daily gratitude.”

*Marlaina Donato is an author and composer. Connect at [AutumnEmbersMusic.com](http://AutumnEmbersMusic.com).*



## Strings of Serenity

### Sound Healing Promotes Harmonious Health

by Martin Miron

Violinist, sound healer and certified reiki master Elana Lehrer, owner of Strings of Serenity, has been healing people with sound for more than 25 years. Trained as a musician, she observed that playing and teaching violin helped with her own health challenges. Now passionate about helping others on their journey towards wellness, her sessions are tailored to individual goals, focusing on deep relaxation and well-being.



Elana Lehrer

Lehrer explains, “Sound healing has existed since ancient times; it is gentle, yet powerful.” The premise is simple—everything vibrates at a certain pitch. “If you tap a glass, that glass will vibrate at a specific pitch. If we have a singer stand next to the glass and sing at that precise pitch, it creates a resonance within the glass and sets it into vibration.”

She says that tuning forks apply the same principle, using precise frequencies designed to resonate within the body. The belief is that when the body is in state of illness or stress, its vibrational frequencies are thrown out of sync. Then, healthy vibrational frequencies create a renewed resonance and bring it back into a state of balance and harmony.

Research also suggests that tuning forks can help increase natural nitric oxide production in cells, which helps the nervous system, immune system and vascular system, as well as pain and stress relief.

Different frequencies of tuning forks can produce very different effects. One fork may help promote a deep sense of meditation and stillness, while another one could bring revitalizing energy and joy. Others are designed to positively influence the heart, brainwave state and chakras (via reiki). Multiple tuning forks may be sounded together to create different effects. Lehrer notes, “Tuning fork sessions are very relaxing, and offered in the office, as well as distance sessions.”

Many string players tune their instruments to the most crucial healing interval of all—the perfect fifth—notes that are five letter names apart, (such as an A to an E). “The length of bones and limbs are mathematically connected to this tuning ratio. Tuning fork healers associate the fifth with joint mobility, heart balancing, immune enhancement, nervous system balancing and lifting depression, among other benefits,” advises Lehrer.

There are sound healing methods designed specifically for the brain. A binaural beat occurs when two different pitches are sounded, one in each ear. The two hemispheres of the brain then work together to make sense of what it is hearing. In doing so, it hears the difference in tone between two different pitches. In the case of tuning forks designed to resonate with our brain waves, two different forks are held apart, one near each ear, so our brain hears the binaural beats as a pulse between the two forks. This pulse matches the frequency of different brain waves, depending on which forks are used.

“There is a belief that our brain will resonate with the pulse it is hearing. This is called entrainment. The binaural beats can then encourage us to shift into awareness of each different brain wave. The idea is that over time, as we learn the feeling of each brain wave, we can shift into these feelings seamlessly, even without using tuning forks,” says Lehrer. Proponents of this method say it helps them to relax and sleep more soundly.

*Strings of Serenity is located at 337 Market St., in Saddlebrook, NJ. For more information, call 551-206-6085, email [Info@StringsOfSerenity.com](mailto:Info@StringsOfSerenity.com) or visit [StringsOfSerenity.com](http://StringsOfSerenity.com). See ad, page 14.*



# Transformative Staycations

## Finding Respite and Adventure Close to Home

by April Thompson

Staycations—sticking close to home for new travel experiences—was a growing trend even before the COVID-19 pandemic turned it into a practical necessity for many of us. Staycations reduce costs, minimize travel time and also lower our carbon footprint by eliminating international travel. Happily, they don't reduce the pure pleasure of finding new adventures, exploring untrammelled nature, seeing the familiar with fresh eyes and meeting people from all walks of life. All of that is close at hand, and especially when compared to foreign jaunts, the price is right.

A good place to start is by checking out state and regional parks, often overlooked gems offering scenic miles of trails for hiking, biking, birding, fishing, picnicking and other activities. “Whether mountains, prairies, rivers, forests in the country or heart of the city, there is always a state park waiting to welcome you, no matter what kind of recreation you enjoy,” says Jason Clay, spokesperson with Colorado Parks and Wildlife. In Colorado parks, people can, for example, river raft in the Arkansas Headwaters Recre-

ation Area; boat, fish and hammock camp in Jackson Lake State Park; and rock climb in Eldorado Canyon.

Parks can be discovered and trail maps downloaded by visiting [TrailLink.com](https://www.traillink.com), run by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. It provides searches for nearby trails using parameters such as distance, types of activity and wheelchair accessibility. Its smartphone TrailLink app is free to download and \$30 per year for unlimited customized use.

State, local and regional parks across the country offer rich educational opportunities for kids and adults alike, including naturalist-guided activities, bird and botany walks, lessons in local history, ecology and geography, and more. Several states offer free admission to all state-run parks, including Hawaii, Tennessee and Illinois. State-by-state listings of fees and policies can be found at [Tinyurl.com/StateParkPasses](https://www.tinyurl.com/StateParkPasses).

### Making a Quick Getaway

Weekend forays into natural and rustic settings can be ideal escape valves for people needing a simple, quick change of venue.

Camping, of course, is always an option, but for those that want to be in nature in a more comfy fashion, using “cabin” as a search word works well in websites like [Airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) and [TripAdvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com). The option of glamping—or glamorous camping—offers surprisingly luxurious stays outdoors in tents, pods and domes; check out [Glamping.com](https://www.glamping.com).

[Getaway.House](https://www.getawayhouse.com) offers woodsy outposts in 10 locations equipped with “tiny house” cabins around the country designed for quick escapes from cities. “If you were at your desk in need of an escape, you could cut out early and be there by 6 p.m.,” says Vice President of Marketing Rachel Mansfield. The private experience, with no check-in desk or communal areas, enables it to continue operating safely during the pandemic. The cabins, designed to blend in with their natural surroundings, are equipped with food for purchase, stove, books, radio, firewood, fire pit and Adirondack chairs, as well as a map for local hikes and adventures.

“I did a getaway at a point in my life where I wanted some time alone, away





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from commitments, to figure out what my next chapter in life was going to be,” says Paige Conner Totaro, of Alexandria, Virginia, the founder of Unquote Travel, a web-based tour agency focusing on small group, off-the-beaten-track adventures. “You can change your environment without going very far, and that in turn can change the way you think about things. Little things like sleeping on the other side of the bed can help you shake up your brain.”

### Local Attraction

Local-led excursions are another way to see our home turf through a new lens. Airbnb Experiences, offered virtually everywhere that Airbnb lists lodging, are one-of-a-kind tours and classes designed and hosted by locals with unique expertise. Experiences run the gamut from neighborhood tours on foot or bikes with athletes to museum tours led by local artists or art historians. Many include a hands-on learning component, like how to make mosaics in a community art space or cook a local delicacy from a family recipe. Similar tours and experiences can be found on TripAdvisor’s Things To Do listings. *WithLocals.com*, whose mission is “to break down the barriers between travelers and locals worldwide,” also offers foodie fun and off-beat adventures.

Kelly Kniewel stumbled onto tour guiding after experiencing burnout in her previous career in the beverage industry. An Airbnb Experiences host, Kniewel now leads small group tours of Chicago, introducing locals and visitors alike to many of its little-known facets. “I’ve fallen in love with my city all over again

Iakov Filimonov/Shutterstock.com

Iakov Filimonov/Shutterstock.com

doing these tours,” says Kniewel, a self-proclaimed history geek.

She loves to take guests inside Art Deco and Beaux Arts buildings they may have passed before without realizing the gorgeous art and architecture that exists inside, such as the library-turned-cultural center, Chicago Cultural Center, boasting two impressive glass domes, one designed by Tiffany Glass. Another favorite excursion is taking guests on a water taxi tour. “It’s a cheap and unique way to see Chicago. The water, both the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, is so much a part of who we are as a city.”

During the limitations imposed during the COVID-19 period, Airbnb and other websites began offering experiences online, allowing people from all over the world to connect and make pastries with a Swedish baker, draw with a Mexican cartoonist, learn about apartheid from a South African or experience a day in the life of an American Olympic bobsledder.

### Traveling the World Without Leaving Home

Hosting travelers can bring new meaning to a staycation, offering a rich opportunity for cross-cultural exchange without any exchange of currency. The popular *CouchSurfing.com* connects travelers with locals offering free use of a couch, air mattress or spare bedroom. Available in more than 200,000 cities worldwide, it has 14 million members and sponsors local language exchanges, dance classes, hikes and dinners, so there are opportunities to make new friends and have new experiences even without offering a place to sleep. (During COVID-19 restrictions, these activities were moved online.)

Similar organizations that offer opportunities for local hosting (including low- or no-cost lodging) include *Servas.org*, established in 1949, which stresses world peace and cultural exchange, and pre-interviews potential guests and hosts to ensure safety; *GlobalFreeloaders.com*, a free registry for hosts and guests that do their own online screening and matching; and *EvergreenClub.com*, in which hosts provide a bed-and-breakfast homestay for travelers over age 50 for \$20 a night. An exciting option for homeowners is *HomeExchange.com*, a \$150-a-year service that allows people in far-flung places to switch homes, either directly or through a staggered point system so they can truly live like locals.

John Fackenthal, of Rockville, Maryland, has hosted more than 100 couchsurfers from 29 countries, and loved every experience. “I had a big apartment in the heart of Washington, D.C., when



I first started hosting, but lived alone and felt a little isolated. I wanted to bring back the youth hostel feel from travels in my younger days, where you’d hang out with fellow travelers and go hiking, share



a meal or play cards,” he says.

A web developer, he recalls such memorable guests as a carpenter in his 60s from the Pacific Northwest that helped him with fixer-upper projects, a pair of pro volleyball players from the Czech Republic and two young women from China that prepared him a massive traditional Chinese

feast “with all four burners going,” he says. “It’s restored my faith in humanity. I’ve encountered nothing but wonderful

people, all with such different personalities and backgrounds.”

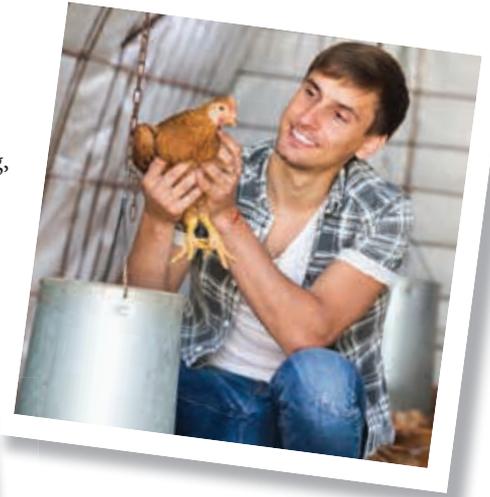
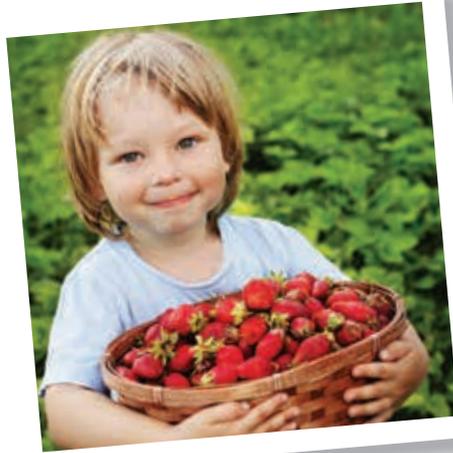
## Be a Weekend Farmer

Agrotourism, in which working farms open the barn doors to visitors for day or overnight trips, has the added advantage of supporting local agriculture. *AgritourismWorld.com* and *FarmStayUS.com* provide listings for farm stays worldwide searchable by type, such as Christmas tree farm, vineyard, orchard, dude ranch or alpaca farm.

The 40-acre Taos Goji Farm and Eco-Lodge Retreat, in Taos, New Mexico, is one such venue. “My husband and I returned to the land nine years ago after many years working as professionals in stuffy offices. The farm has been developed for our family and others who wish to be close to nature and to live off of the land,” says co-owner Elizabeth vom Dorp.

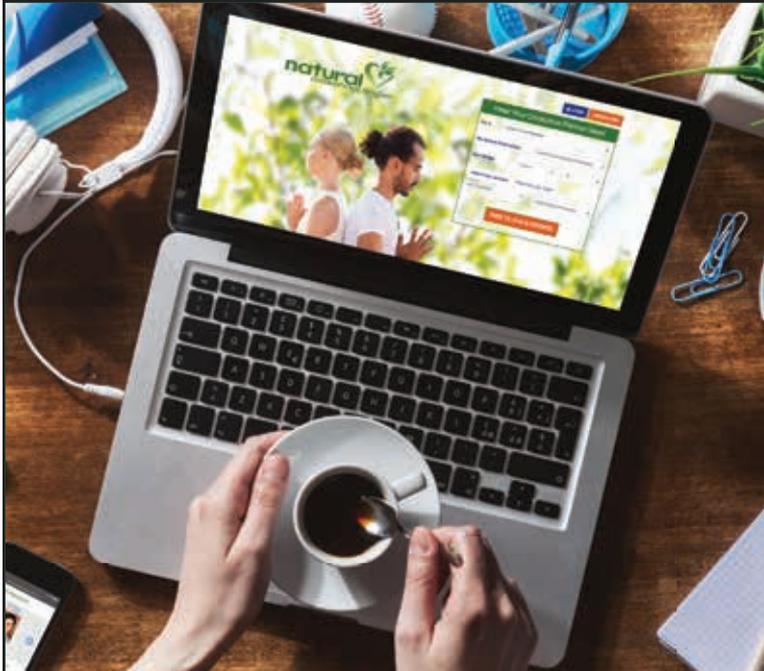
The farm is open for paid guests, as well as to the volunteers known as “Wwoofers” that come through Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms to help raise goji berries, fruits, vegetables

and free-range chickens. All cabins date from the early 1900s, including an old dairy barn converted into a duplex and five sheep herder cabins. The farm is surrounded by a national forest, so many guests visit to enjoy hiking, biking, fishing, rafting and ballooning. “Families with children love to come and pick berries, collect eggs and pet the animals. We have rescue alpacas, sheep, goats, chickens and turkeys,” says vom Dorp.



While the world may still be at the mercy of unfortunate circumstances this summer, travel is ultimately a state of mind. By staying open, curious and present, there are always new encounters and discoveries underfoot very close to home.

Connect with Washington, D.C., freelance writer April Thompson at [AprilWrites.com](http://AprilWrites.com).



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# POWER UP YOUR BRAIN

## Six Ways to Boost Blood Flow

by Ronica O'Hara



**O**ur brain has many well-known structures like the amygdala that detects danger and the prefrontal cortex that enables planning, but we often take for granted the 400 miles of blood vessels that push through a liter of blood per minute, carrying in oxygen and nutrients, and porting out wastes. “Our brains are highly metabolic organs, so they require lots of nutrients and oxygen to function properly, and those can only get to our brain when we have good blood flow,” says naturopathic physician Emilie Wilson, of the Synergy Wellness Center, in Prescott, Arizona.

When that blood flow is optimal, we feel energized and clear-headed; when it's low, we feel foggy and listless. Low levels of cranial blood flow have been linked in brain imaging studies to strokes and dementia, as well as bipolar disorder, depression and suicidal tendencies. The first imperative for healthy cranial blood flow is to make sure our blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol numbers are in a healthy range. Health practitioners can help us address that, as well as the conditions linked to reduced blood flow—heart disease, hypothyroidism, diabetes, anemia, depression and smoking. To boost brain blood flow, specific lifestyle strategies have proven to be highly effective:

### 1 Eat strategically, especially beets and chocolate.

Nitric oxide (NO) is made in the endothelium, the thin layer of cells that line blood vessels; it relaxes the inner muscles of those vessels, maximizing blood flow. “The continuous formation of NO in the brain is essential to life,” says prominent pharmacologist Louis Ignarro, Ph.D., who received the Nobel Prize in Science in 1998 for discovering that humans produce NO and that it lowers blood pressure and improves blood flow. He advocates passing up

meat for soy and fish protein, eating antioxidant-rich produce such as pomegranate, blueberries, spinach and kale, and consuming lots of nitrate-rich food like celery and leafy greens which are converted to NO in the body. He especially recommends beets—one study reported that in juice form, it increases nitric oxide levels by 21 percent in 45 minutes—as well as dark chocolate. In a Harvard study, older people that drank two cups of hot chocolate a day for 30 days had improved blood flow to the brain and better memory.

**2 Take amino acid supplements.** “Consuming supplements containing both L-arginine and L-citrulline are well-documented to boost the production of endothelium-derived NO,” says Ignarro. “Adding antioxidants to the amino acid mix provides added benefit by increasing NO levels.” He recommends pomegranate extract, cocoa flavonols and omega-3 supplements.

**3 Move the body.** Fast walking, running, cycling, swimming, ball playing, weight lifting and yoga all help improve cranial blood flow, says Ignarro: “Physical activity stimulates the production of NO in all arteries, including those in the brain.” In one study, women over 60 that walked for 30 to 50 minutes three or four times a week increased ongoing cranial blood flow up to 15 percent. Yoga exercises like downward dog and shoulder stands also raise blood flow in the head.

**4 Play music.** Research using functional magnetic resonance imaging published in *Scientific Reports* found that blood flow in the brain increases when people listen to music they love, whether it's Mozart or Eminem. In a recent study, *Weightless*, a song written by the British group Macaroni Union along with sound therapists, reduced participants' anxiety levels by 65 percent and physiological resting rates by 35 percent.

**5 Do a chanting meditation.** Kirtan Kriya, a 12-minute daily meditation that includes chanting, finger movements and visualization, “has been researched for over 18 years and has documented benefits in increasing blood flow to the brain,” says Krystal Culler, senior Atlantic fellow with the Global Brain Health Institute, in San Francisco and Ireland. YouTube offers several versions, as does the Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation ([Tinyurl.com/12MinuteYogaMeditation](https://www.tinyurl.com/12MinuteYogaMeditation)).

### 6 Consider acupuncture and craniosacral therapy.

“Acupuncture has been used for thousands of years to boost blood flow, and it can also relax tense muscles in the neck and head, which can impair blood flow more than we realize,” says Wilson. She also recommends the gentle, hands-on-head approach of craniosacral therapy: “It can directly improve blood flow by removing restrictions, and it can also rebalance sympathetic and parasympathetic functions, which has beneficial effects on our nervous system and on blood flow.”

Ronica O'Hara is a Denver-based health writer. Connect at [OHaraRonica@gmail.com](mailto:OHaraRonica@gmail.com).



# Soul Nourishment

## The Kitchen As Sacred Space

by Marlaina Donato

In our busy lives, grabbing food on the run or eating while standing at the kitchen counter is often the norm. Designating the kitchen as a practical sanctuary and seeing the sacredness of food not only makes it more conducive to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, but also gives our spirits much-needed satiety.

“If we don’t touch the transcendent—emotionally and spiritually—physical nourishment won’t fill us up,” says Ronna Kabatznick, Ph.D., former psychological consultant to Weight Watchers International and the author of *The Zen of Eating: Ancient Answers to Modern Weight Problems*. “Seeing the kitchen as sacred is something that represents gratitude, beauty and blessings.”

Delia Baron, co-author of *Better Together Kitchen: Beautiful Recipes to Share With People You Love* and the host of seasonal food workshops with partner Ronnit Hoppe in Melbourne, Australia, concurs, “The kitchen is often the heart-beat of the home and the best place to gather, feast, chat and create beautiful memories and rituals. The kitchen is also a place to connect to our food source.”

### Fun and Felicity

Preparing meals the old-fashioned way can slow us down and foster mindfulness, but Kabatznick emphasizes that cooking is irrelevant. “Look at the kitchen in terms of possibilities: ‘What can I create in this space?’ You don’t have to turn into Julia Child,” she says, adding, “You could be eating Chinese takeout or a prune; it’s all about mindset and simple rituals like saying a blessing, appreciating what we eat as a great gift.” Kabatznick encourages everyone to eat with dignity, and this includes using the good dishes, putting fresh flowers on the table and eating with awareness.

Seeing the kitchen as the inspired nucleus of the home, it’s natural to add favorite items like art prints, colorful jars, sentimental treasures, dried flowers and other seasonal delights to nourish daily contentment. Conjuring an element of joy adorns the mundane. “Put on some music to put you in either a peaceful or joyful mood,” says Molly Larkin, author, healing practitioner and blogger at *Ancient Wisdom for Balanced Living* ([MollyLarkin.com](http://MollyLarkin.com)), in Corrales, New Mexico. “Turn off the TV and give everyone in the family a job.

Laugh throughout the meal preparation. Dance as you cook. Do the same thing if you live alone.”

Preparing food, whether a healthy smoothie or a gourmet weekend dinner for two, is a way to express love for ourselves and others. Baron loves the presence of plants, lovely ceramics and interesting platters and dishes, and notes, “Families can definitely shop, chop, cook and meal-plan together to make the kitchen a fun place to be. Doing these things together is very bonding and sends the message that looking after yourself is important.”

### Practical Magic

Meal prep can be enjoyable and even relaxing in a calm environment. For Baron, organization is key. She advises, “Having all the ingredients you need and working in a clean space also helps make the experience rewarding.”

The smallest of kitchens can be abundant and organized with the help of a little innovation. A simple bookcase can offer additional shelf space for dry goods, bowls of produce or favorite cups. A small end table can hold a favorite tea pot and a jar of gourmet dark chocolate. A beautiful basket can hold go-to spice jars, and a pretty pitcher near the stove can accommodate a multitude of cooking utensils. “If you can’t fit it all out of sight in a cabinet, get some glass jars, fill them with grains, flours and legumes and line them up on the countertop. It will be neat, and you can see what you have,” suggests Larkin.

In the end, a well-nourished body and spirit fosters a beautiful life and inspires the same in others. An advocate for supporting the hungry in all communities, Kabatznick underscores local efforts and seeing the big picture of our relationship with food: “Taking out the garbage and cleaning up is also a sacred act if we bring that attitude into it. Food connects us to the Earth, the moon and the stars. From the seed to the truck driver—everything and everyone involved—the process of food is miraculous.”

*Marlaina Donato is the author of several books and a composer. Connect at [AutumnEmbersMusic.com](http://AutumnEmbersMusic.com).*

# SACRED SERVINGS



## Moroccan-Spiced Red Lentil Soup

Yields: 4 servings

4 cups water  
1½ cup red lentils  
1 tsp sea salt  
1 medium-size organic carrot, chopped in bite-size pieces  
2 soft, dried apricots, chopped, or 1 Tbsp golden raisins or 2 dates, chopped  
¼ tsp ground cloves  
¼ tsp ground turmeric  
¼ tsp ground coriander seeds or ½ tsp crushed coriander seeds  
½ tsp cinnamon  
½ tsp coarsely ground black pepper  
1 tsp smoked paprika  
1 tsp crushed or ground cumin seeds  
2 tsp extra-virgin, cold-pressed olive oil

Bring water, carrots, apricots and all spices and seasonings to boil. Add red lentils, stir once and set heat to low. Cover pot with lid. Cook for 20 to 25 minutes, remove from heat. Add olive oil and allow to sit for five minutes before serving.

Optional toppings for each bowl: finely chopped red onion, red pepper flakes, fresh cilantro and/or a sprinkle of turmeric.

## Spring Fever Salad with Flowers and Fruit

Yields: 4 servings

1 head romaine or green leaf lettuce  
8 medium-large organic strawberries, thinly sliced, or 2 small packages of fresh organic raspberries  
Handful of fresh, chemical-free flowers from the garden or store's produce section: nasturtium, pansies and/or calendulas; gathered wild: spring violets and dandelion blooms

### In-the-Bowl Dressing:

Juice from one fresh tangerine  
1 part organic apple cider vinegar  
to 2 parts avocado oil  
Dash of sea salt

Add avocado oil, apple cider vinegar and salt into a large bowl, swirl around twice. Tear (don't chop) lettuce and add to the preliminary dressing. Squeeze tangerine juice over lettuce and toss lightly until well-dressed. Place strawberry slices over salad. Sprinkle (don't toss) flowers on top or artfully place where desired. Serve immediately.

Recipes by Marlaina Donato, author of several books and a composer. Connect at [AutumnEmbersMusic.com](http://AutumnEmbersMusic.com).



## calendar of events

NOTE: All calendar events must be received by the 12th of the month prior to publication and adhere to our guidelines. Advertisers are entitled to up to five event listings, all others are \$35-40 each and must be prepaid, unless the event is free. Email [Publisher@NaturalAwakeningsNJ.com](mailto:Publisher@NaturalAwakeningsNJ.com) for guidelines and to submit entries.

### SUNDAY, JUNE 14

**Access Bars Class** – 9:30am-5:30pm. A class that has the potential to change anything! Learn to give and receive Access Bars, a light touch energy process for dynamic change. By gently touching 32 points on the head, one can release the energetic charge of thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs and attitudes that create limitations in your life. Create the change you are longing for, opening you up to more peace, possibilities, ease and awareness. No prerequisites required. NCBTMB approved CEU's for massage therapists. Registration required. Christine DiDomenico, Washington Twp. 845-825-2361.

### THURSDAY, JUNE 18

**Clear Your Stress: Guided Meditation Online** – 7-8pm. Ready to release stress? Tired of COVID news and talk. Learn the tools to instantly increase your awareness moving from victim to victor. Explore the triggers and the influences of the environment and people in our lives. Through breathing, visualization, anchoring and guidance, even the most active minds find ease by clearing the self. The moment you begin changing your patterns through choice, you begin living present consciously. No meditation experience required. \$20. Info: [Lois@LoisKramerPerez.com](mailto:Lois@LoisKramerPerez.com). [LoisKramerPerez.com/My-Events/](http://LoisKramerPerez.com/My-Events/)

### FRIDAY, JUNE 19

**Pathways Connect Moms' Live in Clifton, NJ** – 12-2pm. Join family chiropractor Dr Michael Magwood, owner of the Pure Balance Center, who has helped bring special guests like Bloom Baby, a local birth and postpartum doula resource, for a mother's gathering group. Participants can expect to be empowered with valuable insights for the subjects of pregnancy, childbirth, holistic parenting and healthcare. Free. Pure Balance Center, 1425 N Broad St, Ste 4, Clifton. RSVP: 973-773-8244.

### SATURDAY, JUNE 20

**Access Bars Class** – 9am-5pm. A class that has the potential to change anything! Learn to give and receive Access Bars, a light touch energy process for dynamic change. By gently touching 32 points on the head, one can release the energetic charge of thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs and attitudes that create limitations in your life. Create the change you are longing for, opening you up to more peace, possibilities, ease and awareness. No prerequisites required. NCBTMB approved CEU's for massage therapists. Registration required. Terry Obsuth, 22 Madison Ave. Paramus. 201-655-3836. [Advanced-MedicalCareCenter.com](http://Advanced-MedicalCareCenter.com)

Natural Awakenings recommends using organic, non-GMO (genetically modified) and non-bromated ingredients whenever possible.

## community resource guide

Connecting you to the leaders in natural healthcare and green living in our community. To find out how you can be included in the Community Resource Guide, email [Publisher@NaturalAwakeningsNJ.com](mailto:Publisher@NaturalAwakeningsNJ.com) to request our media kit.

### EMPOWERMENT COACH

#### CHRISTINE DIDOMENICO

Access Consciousness® Certified Facilitator, Bars Facilitator, Energetic Facelift Facilitator & Body Process Facilitator  
845-825-2361  
[ChristineDiDomenico.com](http://ChristineDiDomenico.com)



Everything in your life that is not working can be changed by greater awareness. When you are willing to look at the energy of limitation that creates the pain, disease and suffering in life, then all of it can change. The tools of Access Consciousness

are designed to bypass the logical mind and go to the energy that creates the problem. It's like hitting the delete button on the hard drive of your mind that holds all the thoughts, feelings, beliefs and emotions that keep you stuck. *See ad, page 2.*

### ENERGY HEALING

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Theresa Obsuth, Access BARS Facilitator  
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What if you are far greater than anyone has ever acknowledged? Where have you not acknowledged this for yourself? What keeps you in frustration of limitation, judgment of yourself and the lack of peace and joy in your life? What if this could all

change easily and create a new way of life for you. Let me introduce you to the process of Access Bars and a way to live life where you function from your own awareness having more happiness and ease. Offering Access Bars and Access Energetic Facelift sessions and classes. *See ad, page 2.*

#### STRINGS OF SERENITY

Elana Lehrer  
337 Market St, Saddlebrook, NJ 07663  
551-206-6085  
[info@StringsOfSerenity.com](mailto:info@StringsOfSerenity.com)  
[StringsOfSerenity.com](http://StringsOfSerenity.com)



Elana is a violinist, sound healer and a certified reiki master. She has been healing people through sound for more than 25 years. Originally trained as a musician, her interest in healing was sparked by the observation that playing and teaching violin

helped with her own health challenges. She is passionate about helping others on their journey towards wellness. Sessions are tailored to each person's goals and focused on deep relaxation and well-being. *See ad, page 14.*



### FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE

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#### LOIS KRAMER-PEREZ

Intuitive Practitioner, Meditative Clearing & Feng Shui  
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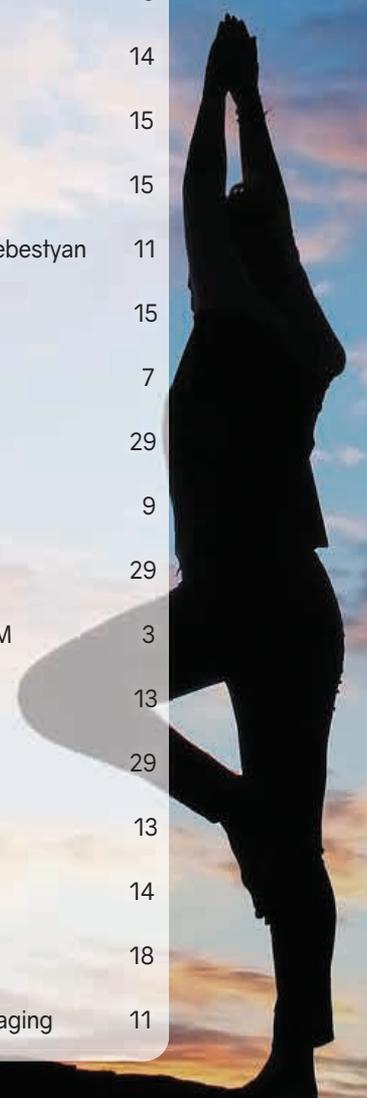
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