

THE ART OF LIVING WELL

A PATIENT WELLNESS HANDBOOK

*Celebrating 25 Years of Pinkham Medical
Integrative Health*



BY JULIA PINKHAM, LOM

*This book is dedicated to my
parents, Dr. Sandra and Galen
Pinkham, and my children Nico
and Eva Gonzalez.*

Acknowledgments

Thank you to my husband, Scott Mustric. Without having you by my side pushing me to continuously adapt, evolve and improve, we wouldn't be here celebrating our 25th year with this commemorative book!

Thank you to my friend, Janet Kinley, for your willingness to represent our vision and mission to provide Integrative Medicine in our community and to work with me side by side.

Thank you to our patients for allowing us to provide care for you and your family.

Thank you to Carol Daniel and Jeana Borkholder.

Thank you to those who have worked here with us over the many years of service: Connie Bird, Shane Mueller, Melena and Meridith Grilliot and Harriet Perkins.

Thank you to Miguel Gonzalez.

Thank you to my many teachers with gratitude to Silver Sword Academy, Shanti School of Tai Chi, American Institute of Alternative Medicine, Maryland University of Integrative Health, Pacific College of Health and Science.

Disclaimer: Always check with your healthcare provider before starting a new diet or exercise program to see if it is safe for you.

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Pictured on the cover: Master Chen Bing

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Forward	5
Chapter 1: The Holistic Approach: Mind, Body , Spirit	9
Chapter 2: Nourishment for Life	11
Chapter 3: Sleep and Relaxation	14
Chapter 4: Movement for Longevity	17
Chapter 5: The Power of Water: Hydration	20
Chapter 6: Healing Through Touch: Acupuncture and Massage	22
Chapter 7: Emotional Well-Being: Gratitude and Joy	24
Chapter 8: The Power of Meditation	26
Chapter 9: Living a Legacy: Cultivating Virtues and Lifelong Learning	28
Chapter 10: A Lifetime of Wellness: Strategies for Sustained Health	30

FORWARD

From the outset, my life has been immersed in a blend of integrative, natural, alternative, and complementary medicine.

My parents founded Pinkham Medical 25 years ago in 2000, but they were both pioneers in integrative health and spirituality long before that. I grew up learning from them. When I became an adult, I deepened my commitment to the integrative approach by attending massage school and volunteering in community health outreach programs. It was during this time that I met my tai chi teacher, marking the beginning of a practice I have cherished for over 20 years.

Despite my deep roots in holistic practices, it was not until I faced my own personal life challenges that I fully grasped the importance of a daily wellness routine. The journey from illness to health taught me to never take my well-being for granted. I've learned the hard way that simply *knowing* what to do isn't enough. We must *actively care for ourselves* and prioritize our health every single day.

Today, as a practitioner of integrative health, I use the tools and practices that I have studied throughout my life to truly live well. I have my mother, Dr. Sandra Pinkham, and my father, Galen Pinkham, to thank for the wisdom of wellness that guides Pinkham Medical today. Within the pages of this book, I hope to capture some of that wisdom and share it with you.



Pictured: Julia Pinkham

About Our Founders

Born in January 1942, Dr. Sandra Pinkham moved to Columbus when she was fourteen years old. Her intellectual curiosity and dedication to learning quickly set her apart, and she became the valedictorian of her class at Upper Arlington.

Her passion for understanding the human body and its ailments led her to the University of Rochester, where she earned her medical degree.

Dr. Sandy was never content with the status quo. Early in her career, she recognized the limitations of Western medicine and was drawn to the holistic practices of Integrative medicine. She was particularly captivated by the concept that effective medicine should treat the patient as a whole, not just address the symptoms. This philosophy led her to her lifelong research and passion for finding ways of improving patients' lives.

In the 90s, Dr. Sandy's commitment to public health took a new direction as she fought to close a trash-burning plant in Columbus. The plant's emissions were a major source of pollution, and through her research into the toxic effects of cadmium and poor air quality, she helped raise awareness about the environmental factors affecting community health.

Dr. Sandy also saw the important role that family should play in the healing process. Her time working with children and families at the beginning of her career in Pediatrics reinforced her belief in treating whole families to foster overall well-being. She understood that healing one member of a family often means addressing the health of the entire unit.

In 2000, she founded Pinkham Medical, a culmination of her lifelong dedication to integrative health. Although Dr. Sandy passed away March 7th, 2019 at the age of 77, her influence remains palpable throughout this practice.

To this day, hundreds of people have told me how Dr. Sandy saved their lives. Her dedication was evident in her tireless service and deep compassion. Her human-centric approach, which focused more on listening and understanding rather than hastily diagnosing, set her apart in the medical community. She believed that the best care involves the patient actively in their own health journey, a principle that continues to guide Pinkham Medical today.

My parents' paths crossed at a family camp at Camp Akita in the Hocking Hills, part of the First Community Church, where they were married 45 years ago to the sound of a beautiful flute—a fitting beginning for a couple whose lives would blend family, medicine, and spirituality so seamlessly.



Top: Julia holding a portrait of Dr. Pinkham by Paris D. Black; Bottom: Galen Pinkham

My father, Galen, found himself drawn to Buddhism and Japanese psychology in the early 90s. He was catalyzed by an impactful experience at a 1996 Dalai Lama event in D.C. that showcased the healing power of mindfulness meditation. This experience resonated deeply with him, and he dedicated over 30 years to studying and practicing these philosophies.

Eventually, Galen established a Buddhist library and temple in Columbus and served as the treasurer of Shambhala. While Dr. Sandy was the face of our medical practice, Galen was its backbone in many ways. He revolutionized our practice by integrating technology; he set up computers, networks, and software, modernizing the practice and ensuring we could serve our patients with the latest in medical technology.

Galen has always said that laughter is the best medicine. Even in retirement in Vermont, he continues to practice, learn, and grow, embodying the idea that our journey of healing and discovery is never truly complete. In our practice, Dr. Sandy healed with medicine and listened with a clinical ear, while Galen healed with spirit and listened with a compassionate heart. Their combined strengths created a sanctuary for holistic healing that continues to thrive today.

Although I don't walk to work as my mother did, I've woven similar rituals into my life that honor her legacy. I walk my dogs for 40 minutes each day and ensure I have time each morning for prayer, meditation, and tai chi. These routines are not just habits; they are my lifeline, and they help me maintain balance and resilience in the face of life's inevitable stressors.

My parents taught me that to care for others effectively, we must first care for ourselves. It's a message I carry forward with every patient I meet and every story of healing I share. This book marks the 25th anniversary of Pinkham Medical, and is a testament to a way of life that champions integrative care. With that, I invite you to share the wisdom of 25 years of Pinkham Medical with me as you turn each page.

Cheers to living well.

-Julia Pinkham



The Holistic Approach: Mind, Body, Spirit

Let's begin by acknowledging a fact we often take for granted: life is a profound gift. The unique circumstances that make each of us who we are, the ones that led to your being here just as you are, is extraordinary. So you must decide—will you nurture your gift of life or let it wither?

To nurture your gift requires intentionality day in and day out. In this chapter, you'll learn the importance of appreciating and nurturing every aspect of yourself, ultimately creating a deeper and more fulfilling connection with the world around you.

A Total Approach

Holistic health is all about the unity of mind, body, and spirit. These elements are deeply interconnected; each one influences the others in profound ways. For instance, **meditation**, or the act of training attention to achieve mental clarity and emotional stability, not only calms the mind, but has also been shown to reduce blood pressure and improve immune function (1).



Mindfulness, or the practice of being fully present and engaged in the moment, aware of one's thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment, also significantly benefits health in measurable ways. It reduces stress hormones like **cortisol** in the body, leading to decreased inflammation and improved heart health (2). The impact of mental health on physical systems illustrates how deeply our mind, body, and spirit are interconnected.

Health Healing Through Quality Practices

Quality of life is enhanced through **holistic practices**. These three holistic practices are the secret ingredients to a healthy lifestyle: time, rest, and love. Research highlights that sufficient rest and downtime can boost immune function and prevent burnout, while love and positive relationships are linked to longer lifespans and reduced risk of heart disease (3).

The Importance of Early and Ongoing Engagement

Initiating holistic health practices early in life can set the foundation for better long-term health outcomes. However, it's important to remember that it's never too late to start. People who begin engaging in holistic health practices at any age can still see significant improvements in their quality of life and overall health. This suggests that the benefits of holistic practices are accessible to everyone, regardless of when they begin.

Practical Applications: Make Space For Mindfulness

Yoga and meditation are powerful mindfulness tools for maintaining health and well-being. Here are some practical steps to integrate these practices into your daily routine:

- 1. Start Small:** Begin with just 5–10 minutes of meditation or yoga daily. Gradually increase the time as you become more comfortable.
- 2. Create a Dedicated Space:** Designate a specific area in your home where you can practice without interruptions.
- 3. Consistency is Key:** Try to practice at the same time every day to establish a routine.
- 4. Use Resources:** There are numerous apps and online videos that can guide you through different yoga poses and meditation techniques.

Lifelong Wellness

Embracing a holistic lifestyle is about making a long-term commitment to your overall health. The benefits of consistent practice include increased mental clarity, improved stress management, enhanced physical health, and deeper personal growth. Dedicating yourself to these practices can sustain you through all phases of life. Remember, holistic health is not just a remedy—it's a lifelong journey.

Nourishment for Life

If your goal is to live well, then a nutritious diet tailored to your body's needs is non-negotiable. Each person's body has unique nutritional requirements based on their health status, activity level, and metabolic conditions, and you must feed your body accordingly. A diverse intake of whole foods—rich in fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins—ensures a broad spectrum of essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

Follow An Anti-Inflammatory Diet

Fail to feed your body well, and you're bound to experience inflammation.

Inflammation is a natural process by which your body's immune system responds to injury or infection. It is designed to be a protective mechanism aimed at removing harmful stimuli, such as pathogens or damaged cells, and initiating the healing process. Eating an unhealthy diet can trigger unwanted inflammation, while eating certain healthy foods can help reduce levels of inflammation in the body. Inflammation can be either acute or chronic. Acute inflammation occurs as a short-term response with noticeable effects like redness, heat, swelling, and pain. Chronic inflammation, on the other hand, is a prolonged inflammatory response that can last for months or years and is associated with various diseases, such as arthritis, heart disease, and some forms of cancer.

The Role of Supplements

While the ideal is to receive all our nutrients from the foods we eat, the reality of modern agriculture often falls short. Due to factors like **soil depletion** (when the earth is drained of nutrients due to excessive cultivation and poor soil management) and environmental pollutants, even the most conscientious diet may not provide all the nutrients our bodies require. This is where supplements play a critical role.

At our practice, we offer around 300 high-potency supplements, ranging from staples we've trusted for over 30 years to innovative solutions backed by the latest research. These supplements are provided at a discount to our patients, emphasizing our commitment to accessible, high-quality health support!

Supplements are not a replacement for food but rather an adjunct to fill nutritional gaps. For example, despite the best plant-based diets, deficiencies in vitamins such as D, and minerals like magnesium, iodine, and zinc are common due to the diminished nutrient content in our food supply. Supplements can thus be a crucial component in preventing deficiencies that contribute to chronic conditions and impact overall vitality.

Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Incorporating these foods into your diet can help manage inflammation and potentially reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases associated with chronic inflammation.

- **Berries** – Such as strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries contain antioxidants known as anthocyanins, which have anti-inflammatory effects.
- **Fatty Fish** – Salmon, mackerel, sardines, and trout are high in omega-3 fatty acids, which can reduce inflammation.
- **Broccoli** – Rich in sulforaphane, an antioxidant that fights inflammation by reducing levels of cytokines and NF-κB, which drive inflammation.
- **Avocados** – Packed with potassium, magnesium, fiber, and heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, they also contain carotenoids and tocopherols, which are linked to reduced cancer risk.
- **Green Tea** – Known for its anti-inflammatory properties due to its high content of catechins, antioxidants that can reduce inflammation and help prevent certain chronic diseases.
- **Peppers** – Bell peppers and chili peppers are loaded with vitamin C and antioxidants that have powerful anti-inflammatory effects.
- **Turmeric** – Contains curcumin, a compound with strong anti-inflammatory properties that is often taken as a supplement.
- **Ginger** – Known for its potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, which can help reduce inflammation.
- **Extra Virgin Olive Oil** – Rich in monounsaturated fats and oleocanthal, which has properties similar to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.
- **Dark Chocolate and Cocoa** – Packed with antioxidants that reduce inflammation and can reduce the risk of disease.
- **Tomatoes** – High in vitamin C, potassium, and lycopene, an antioxidant with impressive anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Nuts** – Almonds, walnuts, and other nuts are high in fat, protein, and fiber, and they have anti-inflammatory properties.

Long-Term Use of Supplements

The necessity of long-term supplementation can vary. Some supplements are foundational and beneficial for long-term use, supporting overall well-being continuously (4). Others might be more situational, helpful during periods of illness or recovery. Understanding your body's needs is key—our observations of a patient's symptoms can often guide us in recommending the appropriate supplements to address specific conditions like inflammation or magnesium deficiency, which is known to improve sleep, calmness, and recovery from physical exertion.

Popular Nutritional Supplements

- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Known for their anti-inflammatory properties, omega-3 fatty acids, particularly EPA and DHA found in fish oil, are linked to heart health, brain function, and reducing inflammation.
- **Vitamin D:** Essential for bone health and immune function, many people have insufficient levels, especially in areas with limited sunlight. Supplementation can be beneficial, especially during winter months or for individuals with limited sun exposure.
- **Probiotics:** These are beneficial bacteria that support gut health. Research suggests they may help with digestive issues like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), as well as boost immune function and even improve mental health.
- **Magnesium:** Important for various biochemical reactions in the body, including energy production and muscle function. Magnesium supplementation may help alleviate muscle cramps, improve sleep quality, and reduce anxiety.
- **Vitamin B12:** Essential for nerve function and red blood cell production, vitamin B12 is primarily found in animal products. Supplementation is often recommended for vegetarians and vegans or individuals with absorption issues.
- **Curcumin:** The active compound in turmeric, curcumin has potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. It may help reduce inflammation and alleviate symptoms of conditions like arthritis and digestive disorders.
- **Protein Powders:** Whey protein, in particular, is a popular supplement for athletes and those looking to build muscle. It's easily absorbed and contains all essential amino acids. We may benefit from consuming more protein as we age to defend against muscle loss from aging.
- **Ashwagandha:** An adaptogenic herb used in traditional Ayurvedic medicine, ashwagandha has been studied for its stress-reducing effects, as well as potential benefits for anxiety, depression, and cortisol levels.
- **Melatonin:** A hormone that regulates sleep-wake cycles, melatonin supplementation can be helpful for individuals with insomnia or jet lag, as well as for promoting overall sleep quality.
- **Zinc:** This essential mineral plays a crucial role in various bodily functions, including immune system health, wound healing, and DNA synthesis. It's also involved in supporting healthy cell division and growth.
- **Collagen:** Collagen is depleted as we age and is taken for resiliency. It's a foundational building block of hair, skin, nails, and joints. Taken for improving health, beauty, and longevity.

Sleep and Relaxation

Sleep is the ultimate sanctuary where our spirits find refuge and our bodies renew. Protect this sacred time as you would your greatest treasure. During sleep, your body engages in vital processes, including tissue repair, muscle growth, and memory consolidation. In this chapter, you'll learn about the importance of sleep as well as some relaxation techniques to enhance recovery and health.

Why Getting Your Zzzzs Matters

The quiet hours of the night when we surrender to stillness are priceless. Sleep has the power to transmute exhaustion into vitality. Even ancient humans understood that disruption to the natural rhythm of sleep could disturb the harmony of our internal organs, and modern studies suggest they were right. Working the third shift, for example, has been found to negatively impact cardiovascular, reproductive, and psychological well-being (5).

Scientists have also linked chronic sleep deprivation, or not getting adequate sleep for an extended period of time, to a myriad of other health issues, from impaired cognitive function to weakened immunity and increased risk of diabetes (6). The bottom line is that sleep is foundational to your overall health, and as such, you must prioritize it.

Benefits of Quality Sleep

Sleep fortifies, strengthens, and harmonizes the body in many ways. First, quality sleep promotes cellular repair, strengthens the immune system, and balances hormones, including insulin and cortisol. The brain also clears out cellular waste products and consolidates memories, supporting learning and problem-solving abilities. That's why, after a night of excellent sleep, you frequently awaken with clear intention, creativity, and focus. Finally, restful sleep reduces the risk of irritability, anxiety, and depressive tendencies, as it's a time for your brain to regulate mood-related neurotransmitters, or chemical compounds that allow your neurons to communicate with each other across your body.

Nurturing Sleep Hygiene

Do you tend to fall asleep in front of the television? Do you stay up late scrolling? Maybe your bedroom faces a busy street with tons of light pollution? Then it's time to work on your sleep hygiene. Just like you have a ritual for brushing your teeth, you need a similar routine for practicing sleep hygiene. Sleep hygiene refers to the set of practices and habits that are necessary to have good quality nighttime sleep and full daytime alertness. It involves creating an optimal environment and developing a consistent routine to ensure that your sleep is restorative and uninterrupted.

Tips for Improving Sleep Hygiene

1. **Limit Screen Time:** As the sun sets, let your screens rest. The blue light from tablets, phones, and TVs disturbs the pineal gland and suppresses melatonin production.
2. **Use Blue Light Blockers:** If screens are unavoidable, consider blue light-blocking glasses or filters to preserve your natural rhythms.
3. **Create a Sacred Space:** Use blackout curtains to cloak your room in darkness and consider a white noise machine to create a sound sanctuary.
4. **Cultivate Rituals:** Sip calming tea infused with chamomile or lavender, take a bath, read a book, or set a timer for quiet meditation before bed.
5. **Seek Knowledge:** "Why We Sleep" by Matthew Walker offers a treasure trove of insights into the mysteries and importance of sleep.

Supplemental Support

For many, achieving restful sleep requires more than good habits and a peaceful environment. Supplemental support can play a crucial role in harmonizing the body's natural rhythms and inviting deep, restorative sleep. These natural remedies offer a gentle yet effective way to support your nightly journey into slumber.

- **Lavender:** This fragrant herb calms the mind and invites restful slumber. Try lavender aromatherapy, and lavender teas, or take oral lavender supplements.
- **Magnesium:** An Earth element that grounds us, eases tense muscles, and soothes the nerves. You can take it as a supplement or steep a hot cup of magnesium-infused tea.
- **Melatonin:** The "sleep hormone," harmonizes the body's natural rhythms, particularly for those who struggle to align with irregular sleep patterns. Melatonin is available as a classic supplement or dissolvable lozenge that melts into your mouth before you drift into bed.

One way to assess your need for these supplements is to stop taking them and see how you feel. If discontinuing them results in poor sleep quality, consider continuing them on an ongoing basis.

Relaxation Techniques to Improve Sleep

- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Starting at your toes and moving up to your head, tense each muscle group before releasing, feeling the tension melt away like ice in warm water.
- **Guided Imagery:** Visualize serene landscapes, perhaps a forest or a tranquil stream. Imagine all of your senses being engaged in your surroundings, allowing the imagery to carry you to peace.
- **Deep Breathing:** Breathe deeply and slowly through your nose, filling up your belly, and inviting positive energy to flow freely and dissolve tension. Hold your breath for a few seconds once your lungs are full, then exhale slowly through your mouth.
- **Meditation and Mindfulness:** Sit in quiet meditation, focus on your breath, and let the thoughts drift like clouds across the sky.

Movement for Longevity

Movement is a fundamental pillar of good health. If you're new to adding intentional movement into your life, then gentle exercises like walking, swimming, dancing, yoga, and tai chi will provide safe and effective starting points. Let's explore how these low-impact activities can encourage health and recovery, no matter where you are in your health journey.



Move Gently, Respect Limitations

Gentle exercise serves as medicine for the body and soul. When done with gentleness and respect for our bodies, movement is a key ingredient for a long, healthy, and balanced life. If it's been a while since you moved intentionally, then it's important that you approach exercise with gentleness and encouragement while honoring your body's needs and limitations. Regular, gentle exercise has proven benefits for longevity, and research shows that it can:

- Improve cardiovascular health
- Enhance balance and coordination
- Reduce stress and promote relaxation
- Strengthen bones and muscles
- Boost mood and overall well-being

Movement as simple as walking can be game-changing for your health, plus it's an opportunity to connect with nature (8). **Tai chi** also offers a unique combination of movement and mindfulness. Its slow, flowing movements enhance balance, coordination, and flexibility while calming the mind and easing tension.

What Is Tai Chi?

Tai Chi (or T'ai Chi Ch'uan) is a traditional Chinese martial art known for its slow, flowing movements and emphasis on balance, relaxation, and internal energy. Often described as "meditation in motion," it involves a series of gentle postures and movements connected by smooth transitions. It's rooted in ancient Chinese philosophy, particularly Taoism and Confucianism, and was initially developed as a form of self-defense.

There are multiple styles, such as Chen, Yang, Wu, Sun, and Hao, and each style varies in movement speed, posture, and emphasis. Today, many people choose to practice tai chi for the health benefits it provides, including improved balance, flexibility, coordination, and muscle strength, and decreased stress and anxiety. Tai chi incorporates principles of Yin and Yang, focusing on harmony and balance. Practitioners aim to cultivate "Qi" (life energy) for overall well-being. Overall, Tai Chi is widely recognized as a gentle form of exercise suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels, emphasizing the unity of mind, body, and spirit.

Walking Meditation and Tai Chi: A Powerful Pair

Walking meditation blends the mindfulness of meditation with the gentle flow of tai chi. It's about slowing down, focusing on each step, and finding a sense of peace in motion. **Tai chi walking**, with its slow and deliberate movements, teaches balance and relaxation while gently strengthening muscles and improving coordination.

Adaptive Exercise for Every Stage of Life

Starting a gentle exercise practice early in life helps lay a strong foundation for health. But remember, it's never too late to start. The beauty of these practices is that they can be adapted to any age or fitness level.

Adaptive Exercise Tips

- **Start Slowly:** If you're new to exercise, start with 5-10 minutes of gentle movement a day, and gradually increase your time.
- **Listen to Your Body:** Listen to your body, and don't push beyond what feels comfortable. Easy does it!
- **Incorporate into Daily Life:** Whether it's dancing, tai chi, or a simple walk, find what brings you joy and stick with it. Find creative ways to add movement throughout your day.

The Power of Water

Water is the elixir of life and plays a fundamental role in nearly every bodily function. From regulating body temperature to aiding digestion and nutrient absorption, hydration is essential for every cell.

Water is more than just a thirst quencher; it's a vital component that supports numerous physiological processes essential for life. Here are just a few of the ways water helps your body function:

- **Cellular Function:** Water serves as the primary medium for transporting nutrients and oxygen to cells while removing waste products and toxins.
- **Temperature Regulation:** Water regulates body temperature through sweat production. When the body overheats, sweat glands release water onto the skin's surface, where it evaporates, dissipating heat.
- **Digestion and Nutrient Absorption:** Water helps break down food in the digestive tract, which starts the enzymatic processes that extract nutrients from food and transport them into the bloodstream.
- **Joint Lubrication:** Water cushions and lubricates joints, reducing friction and supporting smooth movement. Proper hydration helps maintain the integrity of cartilage and connective tissues.
- **Cognitive Function:** Even mild dehydration can impair cognitive function, affecting concentration, memory, and mood. Water supports brain health by ensuring optimal blood flow and oxygen delivery to brain cells.
- **Heart and Circulatory Health:** Water helps regulate blood pressure by enabling efficient nutrient and oxygen delivery to tissues, supporting healthy circulation and cardiovascular function.
- **Kidney Function:** Proper hydration supports kidney function by ensuring an adequate flow of urine, preventing the accumulation of toxins and promoting urinary tract health.
- **Electrolyte Balance:** Water facilitates the distribution of electrolytes throughout the body, ensuring proper hydration and electrolyte balance.

What to Watch Out For: Signs of Dehydration and Overheating

Being mindful of signs of dehydration or overheating is crucial for maintaining hydration balance. Factors like excessive heat exposure, alcohol consumption, and caffeinated beverages can contribute to dehydration.

Symptoms such as dry mouth, dark urine, fatigue, and dizziness signal a need for increased fluid intake.

To maximize hydration, consider incorporating hydrating aids such as lemon or vitamin C powder into your water. These additions can help the body absorb water more effectively, ensuring optimal hydration levels. Herbal teas, mineral broth, vegetable broth, and fluid-rich produce are also excellent sources of hydration, providing additional nutrients and electrolytes to support overall health.

Practical Hydration Tips: Tailoring Hydration to Your Needs

Proper hydration is not one-size-fits-all and varies depending on individual health needs and lifestyle factors. Athletes, for example, may require increased fluid intake to compensate for sweat loss during exercise, while individuals in hot climates or those with certain medical conditions may also need to adjust their hydration levels accordingly.

By staying attuned to your body's signals and incorporating hydrating practices into your daily routine, you can maintain optimal hydration levels and support overall health and well-being.



Janet Kinley and Julia Pinkham

Healing Through Touch

Acupuncture and Massage

Health through touch is where ancient wisdom meets modern science. With a deft needle or a skilled hand, the body's innate healing potential awakens. Blending age-old practices with cutting-edge research, acupuncture and massage therapy offer a holistic approach to wellness.

Acupuncture: Treating Pain The Ancient Way

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese healing practice that involves inserting thin needles into specific points on the body to stimulate energy flow, known as Qi (pronounced "chee"). This centuries-old technique is based on the principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which views health as the harmonious balance of Yin and Yang energies within the body.

The benefits of acupuncture extend beyond pain management to encompass a wide range of health conditions, including anxiety, insomnia, digestive disorders, and more. Research suggests that acupuncture may help regulate neurotransmitters, reduce inflammation, and promote the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain-relieving chemicals (8).

Trying Acupuncture for the First Time?

Before your session, communicate openly with your practitioner about your health concerns, goals, and any specific areas of discomfort or sensitivity.

This will help them tailor the treatment to address your individual needs effectively.

Massage Therapy 101: 3 Types of Therapy

Massage therapy encompasses a variety of techniques aimed at manipulating the body's soft tissues to relieve tension, improve circulation, and promote relaxation. From Swedish massage to deep tissue massage and aromatherapy, each modality offers unique benefits for health and well-being.

Swedish massage, characterized by long, flowing strokes, is renowned for its ability to induce relaxation and reduce stress.

Deep tissue massage targets deeper layers of muscle and connective tissue to alleviate chronic pain and improve mobility.

Aromatherapy massage combines the therapeutic benefits of essential oils with massage techniques to enhance relaxation and promote emotional balance.

The Science Behind Healing Touch

Both acupuncture and massage therapy have been the subject of numerous scientific studies exploring their effectiveness in treating various health conditions. While the mechanisms of action may differ, both modalities share a common goal of restoring balance and promoting healing within the body.

Research on acupuncture has demonstrated its efficacy in relieving pain, reducing nausea and vomiting, and improving symptoms of conditions such as osteoarthritis and migraines ([10](#)).

Similarly, studies on massage therapy have shown its ability to reduce muscle tension, improve range of motion, and alleviate symptoms of anxiety, depression, and chronic pain.



Emotional Well-Being

GRATITUDE AND JOY

Emotions play a pivotal role in shaping our physical health, mental well-being, and overall quality of life. Research has shown that cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude, laughter, and love can have profound effects on our physiology, boosting immune function, reducing stress, and promoting longevity (11).

Gratitude is a potent antidote to negativity, shifting our focus from what we lack to what we have. By acknowledging and appreciating the blessings in our lives, we cultivate a mindset of abundance and contentment. Practicing gratitude not only enhances our emotional well-being but also fosters resilience in the face of adversity.

Laughter: Lightening the Load with Joy

Laughter truly is the best medicine, offering a natural remedy for stress, tension, and anxiety. When we laugh, our bodies release endorphins, the feel-good hormones that promote relaxation and reduce pain. Embracing humor and finding moments of levity in our daily lives can help us navigate challenges with grace and perspective.

The Healing Power of Love: Connecting Heart to Heart

Love is a fundamental human need, essential for our emotional, psychological, and physical well-being. Whether through romantic partnerships, friendships, or familial bonds, nurturing loving connections enriches our lives and enhances our resilience in the face of adversity. Love has the power to heal wounds and mend broken hearts.

Cultivating a Positive Mindset: Strategies for Growth and Resilience

Developing a growth mindset is essential for cultivating resilience and embracing life's challenges as opportunities for growth. By reframing setbacks as learning experiences, practicing self-compassion, and focusing on our strengths, we can foster a positive outlook that empowers us to overcome obstacles and thrive.

Therapeutic Benefits of Laughter and Love: Nurturing Emotional Well-Being

Emotional well-being is not just about the absence of negative emotions but also the presence of positive ones. By prioritizing gratitude, laughter, and love in our lives, we can enhance our emotional resilience, strengthen social connections, and experience greater fulfillment and joy.

Try These Gratitude and Joy Exercises

- **Keep a Gratitude Journal:** Set aside a few minutes each day to write down three things you're grateful for. Reflecting on the positive aspects of your life can shift your focus away from negativity and cultivate a sense of appreciation.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Incorporate mindfulness practices into your daily routine to stay present and attentive to the small moments of joy and beauty around you.
- **Practice Random Acts of Kindness:** Spread love and positivity by performing random acts of kindness for others. Whether it's offering a helping hand, complimenting a stranger, or volunteering your time, small gestures of kindness can have a ripple effect of positivity.
- **Engage in Self-Love and Self-Care:** Treat yourself with the same love and kindness you extend to others. Prioritize self-care activities that nourish your body, mind, and soul, whether it's taking a bubble bath, practicing yoga, or indulging in a favorite hobby.
- **Create Rituals of Connection:** Establish rituals that promote connection and togetherness with your loved ones. Whether it's a weekly family dinner, a monthly game night, or a daily bedtime routine with your partner, carving out dedicated time for bonding strengthens relationships.

The Power of Meditation

The simple act of stillness can unlock profound levels of peace, clarity, and well-being. In this chapter, we'll explore the practice of meditation, including mindfulness meditation and other techniques, and how they can positively impact your mental and physical health.

Mindfulness meditation is a practice rooted in ancient wisdom that invites us to bring our attention to the present moment with openness and curiosity. By observing our thoughts, emotions, and sensations without judgment, we cultivate a deeper awareness of our inner landscape and the world around us. This practice has been scientifically proven to reduce stress, improve focus, and enhance overall well-being.

The Many Benefits of Meditation

Meditation offers a wealth of benefits for modern living. By reducing stress, improving focus, and fostering emotional resilience, it provides a powerful antidote to the demands of our fast-paced world. Meditation also has tangible effects on physical health, from lowering blood pressure to managing chronic pain (12). Meditation offers a pathway to inner peace and holistic well-being in an increasingly hectic world.



Daily Practices: Integrating Meditation into Your Routine

Check out these three types of meditation to add to your practice.

Simple Meditation

Find a quiet space where you can sit comfortably without distractions. Close your eyes and bring your attention to your breath, noticing the sensations of each inhale and exhale. Whenever your mind wanders, gently guide your focus back to your breath. Start with just a few minutes and gradually increase the duration as you become more comfortable with the practice.

Smiling Meditation

Sit in a comfortable position and gently close your eyes. Begin by bringing a slight smile to your lips, allowing the corners of your mouth to turn upward naturally. As you breathe in and out, visualize a warm, radiant light emanating from your heart center and spreading throughout your body. With each breath, feel the light filling you with joy, gratitude, and love.

Walking Meditation

Take a leisurely stroll in nature, paying attention to each step and the sensations of movement in your body. Notice the sights, sounds, and smells around you, allowing yourself to fully immerse in the present moment. With each step, feel a sense of grounding and connection to the earth beneath your feet.

5 Quick Meditation Tips

1. **Start Small:** Begin with just a few minutes of meditation each day and gradually increase the duration as you become more comfortable with the practice.
2. **Find a Quiet Space:** Choose a quiet, comfortable space where you can meditate without distractions. This could be a corner of your home, a park, or any place where you feel relaxed and at ease.
3. **Get Comfortable:** Sit or lie down in a comfortable position that allows you to relax fully. You can sit cross-legged on the floor, in a chair with your feet flat on the ground, or even lie down if that's more comfortable for you.
4. **Focus on Your Breath:** Bring your attention to your breath, noticing the sensation of each inhale and exhale. You can count your breaths or simply observe the rise and fall of your chest or abdomen.
5. **Be Gentle with Yourself:** Don't worry if your mind wanders during meditation—it's perfectly normal. Whenever you notice your mind drifting, gently guide your focus back to your breath without judgment.

Living A Legacy

Living a meaningful life involves more than just achieving personal goals; it's also about cultivating virtues and committing to continuous self-improvement. This chapter explores how virtues like honor, respect, and curiosity are not only foundational for personal growth but are essential for leaving a positive legacy.

Honor, Respect, & Curiosity

Honor and respect are cornerstones of a virtuous life. These values deepen relationships, build trust, and create a respectful environment in both personal and professional settings. By living with honor, we set a standard for ourselves and for those we interact with, which in turn fosters a legacy of integrity.

On the other hand, curiosity drives us to explore, learn, and grow. It is the essence of lifelong learning and is crucial for personal development. Embracing curiosity means staying open to new experiences and ideas, and this openness can lead to innovation and improved problem-solving skills in everyday life.

Commitment to Growth

A true commitment to growth involves an ongoing effort to improve oneself and to learn new skills. This might include formal education, self-study, or experiential learning. Continuous improvement is not just about personal fulfillment but also about enhancing our ability to contribute to the community and make a lasting impact.

Virtues In Everyday Life

Integrating virtues into daily life can enrich both personal and professional experiences. Virtues like empathy, discipline, and gratitude not only enhance our character but also improve our interactions and relationships with others. They help us lead by example and influence those around us in positive ways.

Building a legacy through virtues requires dedication. It's about the small choices we make every day and how they contribute to a larger narrative of our lives. Every act of kindness, every pursuit of knowledge, and every moment of self-reflection adds up to a meaningful legacy.

Exercise: Discovering Your Core Virtues

This exercise is designed to help you identify and reflect on your core virtues, which shape your actions and decisions.

Step 1: Explore This List of Virtues

Circle the virtues that resonate with you most.

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Courage
- Compassion
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Humility
- Perseverance
- Gratitude
- Empathy
- Self-discipline
- Wisdom
- Fairness
- Creativity
- Fortitude
- Curiosity
- Tolerance
- Optimism
- Faith
- Prudence
- Justice
- Loyalty
- Patience
- Kindness
- Generosity
- Forgiveness
- Love
- Joyfulness
- Trustworthiness
- Reliability

Step 2: Reflective Questions

For each virtue you circled, ask yourself these questions:

1. When have I demonstrated this virtue in my life?
2. How did embodying this virtue make me feel?
3. Why do I value this virtue?

Step 3: Situations and Reactions

- Think of a recent situation where you felt proud of how you reacted. What virtue were you demonstrating?
- Conversely, consider a situation where you wished you had reacted differently. What virtue could you have better embodied?

Step 4: Prioritization

- From your reflections, choose the top three virtues that feel most essential to who you are. These are your core virtues.

Step 5: Commitment

- Write a short statement for each core virtue about how you plan to embody these virtues in your daily life.
- Keep your list of core virtues and statements somewhere you can see them daily to guide your actions and decisions.

A Lifetime of Wellness

STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINED HEALTH

Achieving lifelong wellness requires more than just knowledge; it demands action, discipline, and a commitment to continuously adapt and learn. This chapter provides practical tips and resources to help you maintain wellness through thoughtful lifestyle choices.

Proactive Wellness Strategies

Maintaining long-term health is a proactive endeavor. Here are some key strategies:

- Ensure you visit healthcare professionals regularly to catch and address potential issues early.
- Incorporate a balanced diet, regular physical activity, and sufficient rest into your daily routine.
- Prioritize mental health by practicing stress-reduction techniques like meditation or by seeking professional help when needed.

Treatment Modalities and Professional Help

Exploring various treatment modalities can significantly enhance health outcomes. Integrating functional medicine with traditional medicine offers a comprehensive approach. Functional medicine focuses on identifying and addressing the root causes of diseases through a systems-oriented approach and engaging both patient and practitioner in a therapeutic partnership. It is particularly effective in dealing with chronic health issues where traditional medicine may focus more on managing symptoms.

Incorporating alternative therapies such as acupuncture can complement these treatments by addressing physical and energetic imbalances, offering pain relief and improved bodily functions. Consulting with dietitians and fitness experts also plays a critical role in creating personalized health plans that optimize nutritional intake and physical well-being.

Cleveland Clinic Health Essentials features a wide range of health articles written and reviewed by medical professionals, offering practical advice on various medical conditions and wellness topics.

An Investment Strategy for Health

Thinking of your health as a long-term investment is a profound shift in perspective that encourages prioritizing well-being just as you would financial security. This approach means dedicating resources—your time, energy, and finances—toward activities that yield significant health benefits.

Here's how to implement this strategy:

1. Time

Allocate regular periods each day or week for physical activity, meal preparation using healthy ingredients, and mental health practices like meditation or reading.

2. Energy

Focus your efforts on activities that boost your energy in the long run, such as getting enough sleep, managing stress, and staying active.

3. Finances

Invest in quality healthcare, nutritious foods, fitness memberships, or wellness programs that provide lasting benefits rather than short-term fixes.



Evelyn Pappas, Harriet Perkins, Julia Pinkham, Sandra Pinkham and Connie Bird

Resources for Further Learning

To support your journey to sustained health, here's a curated reading list and some recommendations:

Books

How Not to Die by Michael Greger – explores the role of diet in preventing diseases.

The Sleep Revolution by Arianna Huffington – emphasizes the importance of sleep in health and wellness.

Mind Over Medicine by Lissa Rankin – discusses the impact of mental states on physical health.

The Blue Zones Solution by Dan Buettner – Explores the lifestyle habits of communities around the world where people live the longest, healthiest lives. It offers practical diet and lifestyle advice based on these findings.

Gut: The Inside Story of Our Body's Most Underrated Organ by Giulia Enders – Provides a fascinating look into the digestive system, explaining how gut health impacts overall health and well-being.

Atomic Habits by James Clear – While not exclusively a health book, it offers powerful advice on how small changes can lead to remarkable results, including developing healthier habits.

Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity by Bill Gifford and Peter Attia – A comprehensive guide to extending life and health span through scientific insights and practical advice.

What Happened to You: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing by Bruce D. Perry and Oprah Winfrey – An enlightening dialogue exploring the impact of trauma and the path to healing and resilience.

Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life With the Heart of a Buddha by Tara Brach – A transformative guide to accepting and embracing all aspects of oneself through mindfulness and compassion.

The Longevity Kitchen: Satisfying, Big-Flavor Recipes Featuring the Top 16 Age-Busting Power Foods by Mat Edelson, Rebecca Katz, Andrew Weil – A collection of delicious recipes that incorporate powerful ingredients to promote long-term health and vitality.

Atlas of the Heart by Brené Brown – A profound exploration of human emotions and experiences, offering a map to understanding and connection.

The Tao of Trauma: A Practitioner's Guide for Integrating Five Element Theory and Trauma Treatment by Alaine D. Duncan and Kathy L. Kain – A detailed practitioner's manual blending traditional Chinese medicine with modern trauma treatment techniques.

Grace and Grit: Spirituality and Healing in the Life and Death of Treya Killam Wilber by Ken Wilber – A moving account of love, spirituality, and the journey through illness and healing.

Young Forever: The Secrets to Living Your Longest, Healthiest Life by Dr. Mark Hyman MD – A practical guide to achieving longevity and optimal health through integrative medicine.

*Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier by Arthur C. Brooks, Oprah Winfrey** – An insightful exploration of the principles and practices that lead to a happier, more fulfilling life. This Too Shall Pass by Julia Samuel – A compassionate look at navigating life's inevitable changes and challenges with resilience and grace.*

The Body Cooperative: Essential Elements of Human Health—And How to Make Them Work for You by Dr. Sam Slattery – A holistic approach to understanding and optimizing the essential components of human health.

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead by Brené Brown – A powerful exploration of how embracing vulnerability can lead to a more courageous and fulfilling life.

Websites

– **Mayo Clinic** offers comprehensive health articles.

– **WebMD** provides a wide range of health topics and advice.

– **Healthline** is known for its medically reviewed health and wellness content, offering practical, actionable tips and insights.

– **The Nutrition Source** by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health provides evidence-based information on nutrition and its impact on health, aiming to help individuals make healthier choices.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Health Terms

Acupuncture: A traditional Chinese medical practice that involves inserting thin needles into specific points on the body to alleviate pain and treat various physical, mental, and emotional conditions.

Ashwagandha: An herb used in Ayurvedic medicine to help reduce stress and anxiety, enhance stamina, and improve overall health.

Collagen: A protein found in the body that supports skin, bone, and joint health. It is often taken as a supplement to help improve skin elasticity and reduce joint pain.

Cortisol: A steroid hormone produced by the adrenal glands, often referred to as the "stress hormone" because it helps the body respond to stress.

Curcumin: The active compound in turmeric, known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Deep Breathing: A relaxation technique that involves focusing on slow, deep, and consistent breaths to reduce stress and promote relaxation.

Electrolytes: Minerals in the body, such as sodium, potassium, and magnesium, that have an electric charge. They are vital for many bodily functions, including nerve signaling and muscle contraction.

Gratitude Journal: A personal record where individuals write down things for which they are grateful. This practice is often recommended to enhance well-being and positive mood.

Guided Imagery: A relaxation technique that involves visualizing calming and peaceful images to reduce stress and anxiety.

Holistic Practices: Approaches to health care that consider the whole person, including physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects, rather than focusing only on symptoms.

Inflammation: The body's immune response to infection, irritation, or injury, characterized by redness, swelling, pain, and sometimes loss of function.

Lavender: An herb known for its calming and relaxing properties, often used in aromatherapy to reduce stress, anxiety, and promote sleep.

Magnesium: A mineral important for bone structure and the proper function of nerves, muscles, and many other parts of the body. Often taken as a supplement to support cardiovascular health and treat magnesium deficiency.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Massage therapy: A practice in which the muscles and soft tissues of the body are manipulated to promote relaxation and improve circulation.

Melatonin: A hormone that regulates the sleep-wake cycle. Often used as a dietary supplement to aid sleep.

Meditation: A practice where an individual uses a technique, such as mindfulness, or focusing the mind on a particular object, thought, or activity, to train attention and awareness, and achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state.

Mindfulness: A form of meditation that involves focusing fully on the present moment, often used as a technique to reduce stress and improve emotional regulation.

Mindfulness meditation: A meditation practice that emphasizes paying attention to thoughts, sounds, the sensations of breathing or parts of the body, and bringing the focus back whenever the mind starts to wander.

Meditative walk: A form of meditation in which walking is used as the primary focus of practice, helping to cultivate awareness of the body and the surroundings.

Neurotransmitters: Chemicals that transmit signals across a synapse from one neuron to another in the brain. They play a key role in shaping everyday life and functions.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids: Essential fats that you must obtain through your diet. They are important for the health of the heart, brain, and other parts of the body.

Probiotics: Live bacteria and yeasts that are beneficial for digestive health. They are often referred to as "good" or "helpful" bacteria because they help keep the gut healthy.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: A relaxation technique that involves tensing and then relaxing each muscle group in the body to reduce stress and anxiety.

Protein Powders: Supplements used primarily by athletes and bodybuilders to help in muscle repair and growth.

Sleep Hygiene: Practices that are conducive to sleeping well on a regular basis, such as maintaining a regular sleep schedule, making a comfortable sleep environment, and avoiding caffeine before bed.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Soil Depletion: The loss of soil's nutrient-rich quality due to overuse, pollution, and unsustainable farming practices, which can lead to decreased crop yields and lower nutritional content of food crops.

Supplements: Products taken orally that contain dietary ingredients intended to supplement the diet, such as vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, and enzymes.

Tai chi: A Chinese martial art practiced for both its defense training and its health benefits. It promotes balance, flexibility, and cardiovascular health.

Tai chi walking: A form of walking that incorporates the principles and movements of tai chi, promoting balance and relaxation.

Vitamin B12: A crucial nutrient that helps keep the body's nerve and blood cells healthy and helps make DNA, the genetic material in all cells. B12 also helps prevent a type of anemia that makes people tired and weak.

Vitamin D: A fat-soluble vitamin that is essential for maintaining the health of bones and teeth, supporting the health of the immune system, brain, and nervous system.

Virtues: Moral excellence and righteousness; qualities considered good or desirable in a person.

Zinc: A mineral that is important for a healthy immune system, properly synthesizing DNA, promoting healthy growth during childhood, and healing wounds.



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