

# Health, Mind & Body

January 2017  
A Special Supplement to

**Xenia Daily Gazette • Beavercreek News Current  
Fairborn Daily Herald**

## The Wonders of Water

Exploring the hidden  
benefits of water

### **Working Wide Awake**

How to improve  
alertness during  
the workday

### **Combating Inflammation**

The differences  
between hot and  
cold therapies

# What We Can Learn About Life from the Oldest People on Earth

The Balanced Care Method™ by Home Care Assistance is a holistic approach to home care for older adults, focusing on a healthy mind, body and spirit as part of the company's in-home services for older adults in the Dayton community.

## By Margalit Toucher

There is no single explanation for how and why some people live much longer than others. But there is a place where more people live longer and healthier lives than anywhere else on earth: Okinawa, Japan.

Scientists have been studying this group of seniors to see if we can learn how to live longer and more productive lives. The study, called The Okinawa Centenarian Study, spans over two decades. The findings are remarkable. They imply that, with some basic lifestyle changes, we folks in the West can increase our lifespan and ensure that our extra time here is active and fun. Many gerontologists believe that up to two-thirds of our lifespan is in our control. This means it's not just genetic makeup that controls individual health. For many of us, it's also the choices we make.

By learning about the Okinawan lifestyle, we may be able to positively influence our own lives. Let's look at some of these choices.

### Dietary Factors

A major factor in the extraordinary health enjoyed by Okinawa elders is their distinctive diet. It is plant-based; high in fiber, omega-3 fatty acids and flavanoids; and low in protein. It includes low to moderate alcohol intake, plenty of fruits and vegetables and very little saturated fat and sodium. In addition to eating like the Okinawans, we also can adopt their philosophy of ending the meal once we feel 80 percent full. In other words, eat slowly and stop early. The traditional diet also indicates to eat fish three times a week, add soy, eat seven servings of vegetables and fruits per day, drink plenty of water and switch to green tea. Try a meal of delicious wild salmon, tofu, some vegetables and blueberries, for example.

### Exercise Factors

Okinawan elders have lifelong routines of moderate exercise and physical activity. They walk most places they go, and keep up daily tasks such as housework, gardening and working well past the age of "retirement" in North America. Many also practice the soft martial art of Tai chi and traditional dance.

### Stress and Lifestyle

The remarkable life spans and health in Okinawa can be further explained by the extent to which their lives are low-stress, socially rich, purposeful and spiritual. Most practice a spirituality that combines the nature-revering aspects of Taoism, the communal respect emphasized by Confucianism, and a native belief that celebrates women as connectors between present and past, also revering elders. To apply these principles to your own life, simply slow down, take a breath and become more involved with family, community and religion or spirituality.

### A Westernized Approach

Adopting the Okinawan lifestyle is a way of approaching aging as a rich and meaningful part of life. Each element—eating in a healthful way, maintaining social ties, remaining active—supports and reinforces the others. The best lesson we can learn from the elders of Okinawa is to embrace and celebrate aging and approach it with a sense of balance and reverence.

The Balanced Care Method™, created by Home Care Assistance, is based on the major study of centenarians from Okinawa, Japan. It takes specific lifestyle findings, including the ones you read here, and uses them as the base and inspiration for its training methods and home care philosophy.

First, the Balanced Care Method™ encourages a diet that mimics the best practices of the Okinawan elders: high

fiber, low-fat proteins, plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, calcium-rich ingredients, and omega-3-rich foods along with limited sweets and alcohol and plenty of hydrating water and tea. This high-fiber, plant-based diet is naturally low in calories, so "diets" in the weight-loss sense become unnecessary. There is room in this diet profile for most people's favorite foods, at least in moderation.

Okinawan elders are much more physically active than their Western counterparts. The primary way the Balanced Care Method™ seeks to help its clients stay as active as possible is to encourage them to do as much as they can for themselves. Seniors who can still take walks, with companionship if necessary, should do so on a regular basis. People interested in gardening or doing light housework are encouraged to do so, with help as needed. Hobbies, social visits, and group activities are similarly facilitated.

This approach helps seniors receiving the Balanced Care Method™ to avoid many pitfalls of other forms of senior care, which often encourage dependency for the convenience of staff or make it difficult to maintain social ties or beloved hobbies because of transportation or space considerations. The more seniors can keep to their preferred activities and social networks, the more active, healthier, and happier they can be. Continuing to attend places of worship, clubs, and other groups



echoes the social and connecting communal practices of the Okinawan elders.

The individual attention of the Balanced Care Method™ also makes it possible for clients to enjoy the outdoors on a regular basis. Fresh air, time in nature, sitting and enjoying a pretty view are all extraordinarily calming and stress-relieving for people of all ages and can be particularly effective as people lose their physical and mental abilities to relieve stress in other ways.

The Balanced Care Method™ is a way of viewing aging as a rich and meaningful part of life. Each element – fostering independence, encouraging the maintenance of social ties, remaining active – supports and reinforces the others. The best lesson we can learn from the elders of Okinawa is to embrace and celebrate aging and approach it with a sense of balance and reverence. And, of course, to eat our vegetables.

Margalit Tocher is a member of the Home Care Assistance family, whose compassionate caregivers, trained in the Okinawan lifestyle, help seniors remain safely in their homes and enjoy a high quality of life. For more information: Call 937-353-7997 or visit [www.HomeCareAssistanceDayton.com](http://www.HomeCareAssistanceDayton.com).



## Did you know?

Running on a variety of surfaces instead of sticking to just one surface may help runners reduce their risk of injury. Officials with the USA Track and Field's Sports Medicine and Science Committee recommend that runners vary their runs so they run on pavement, trails and tracks. While it helps to run on various surfaces, researchers do not believe one particular surface is better than another. In fact, while running on asphalt has long been assumed to increase injury risk because of the presumption that harder surfaces produce greater impact forces on the body, a 2008 study from researchers at the Hannover Medical School Department of Plastic, Hand and Reconstructive Surgery in Germany found that running on asphalt surfaces decreased mid-portion tendinopathy risk while running on sand surfaces increased that risk tenfold.



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# Therapist brings new approach to Beavercreek

By Danielle Coots

BEAVERCREEK- One South African physical therapist is steering a new path for treatment and has expanded his practice to the Beavercreek area.

Greg Mackenzie, owner and physical therapist at Xcel Sports Medicine, Hands-On Physical Therapy, opened his third location at 3878 Indian Ripple Road. His practice is one of a few qualified facilities in the Dayton area to offer a technique called ASTYM (A-stim). It's a non-invasive process that helps break down the scar tissue and rejuvenate muscles, tendons and ligaments. Also, he has led the way to acceptance of utilizing dry needling procedures that help tissue healing in patients with both acute and chronic pain.

"We're excited to be serving the Beavercreek and surrounding communities and want people to know that we're here now," Xcel Sports Medicine Practice Manager, Erin Barlow said. The location is nestled in the back of a shopping center across the street from the Speedway and Cassano's Pizza King.

Mackenzie was born in South Africa and raised on a farm. He received his Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy at University of Stellenbosh, and earned his Masters of Sports Science at the University of Natal. He owned and operated a Sports Medicine clinic in South Africa for 14 years, as well as being the official physical therapist and trainer for the Natal Sharks Rugby team and the international Springbok Sevens Rugby team. He developed a deep understanding and strong skills in orthopedic, manual and sports physical therapy techniques.

"In the British Commonwealth countries, physical therapy is all about the use of one's hands to aide and assist tissue healing," Mackenzie said. "Our aim is to accelerate the soft tissue recovery and joint flexibility, gradually adding exercise as pain eases. That in essence is the reason that this clinic exists."

Upon arrival in the United States in 2001, Mackenzie worked in various facilities in both Indiana and Ohio and quickly noticed the difference in the training and treatment techniques. At one time, he was working at a physical therapy facility and wanted to use a procedure that was very popular in South Africa, known as dry needling. He was told that he absolutely couldn't perform the procedure. He said, "but it works." After that, his journey began. Now, dry needling is becoming main stream and gaining popularity with patients to assist in tissue healing.

Under the supervision and training of Mackenzie, his staff has acquired his techniques

and they share the passion of their unique brand of physical therapy. The practice is privately owned and operated by Mackenzie. It's not controlled by any insurance companies, medical groups or doctor's groups. Xcel does not require doctor referrals or prescription, however referrals from physicians are welcome, and the practice enjoys an excellent relationship with many area doctors. Some insurance companies may require a doctor's referral though. Xcel also offers a self-pay option for those who prefer not to use their insurance.

Xcel Sports Medicine executes its mission statement on a daily basis: "We strive to provide the highest level of personal intervention, using innovative exercise and rehabilitative techniques in order to assist our patrons in regaining their health while exceeding their expectations."

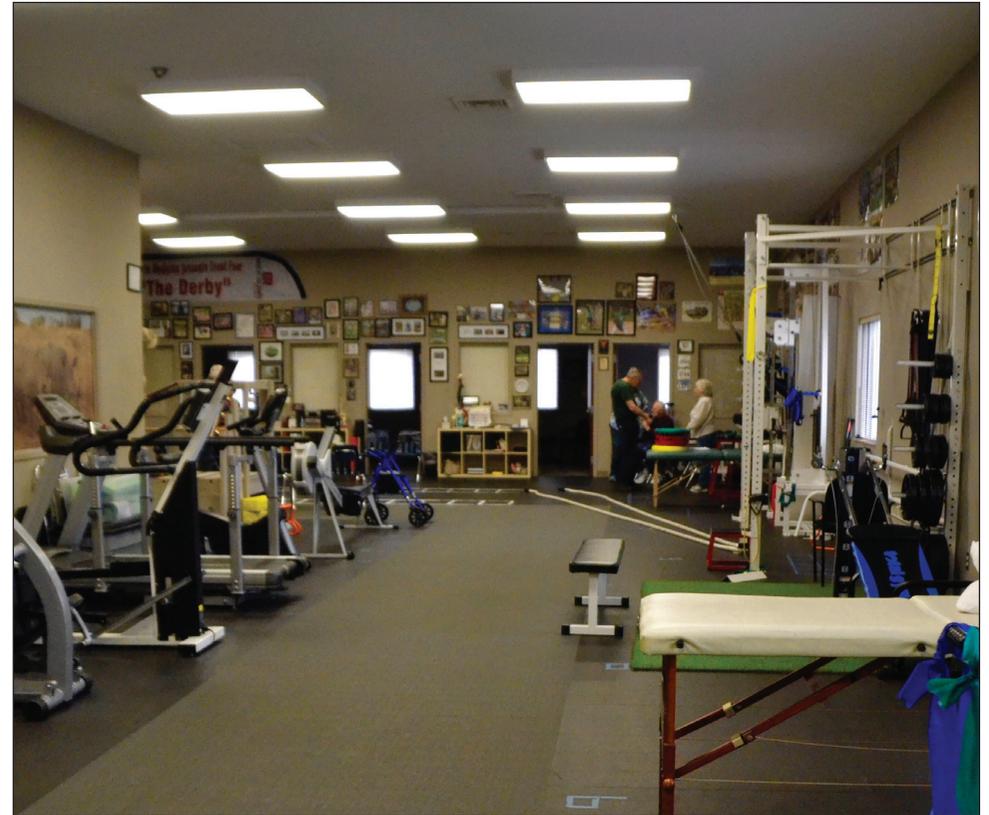
Xcel physical therapists treat patients with sports and accident injuries, post-surgical rehabilitation, neurological, vestibular disorders including loss of balance, dizziness and neurological diseases, orthopedic and many other issues. It also offers fitness and wellness training, including sports performance training, nutrition counseling, Delay the Disease exercise program for people with Parkinson's Disease, senior fitness and other special programs.

In the Beavercreek location, Mackenzie's wife, Celeste offers Pilates through her company, Peak Personal Pilates and will be hosting an Open House and workshop to explain the benefits of Pilates. An introductory Mat class will be taught by Celeste, a second generation Master Pilates Instructor. The Open House is scheduled for Saturday, February 25, 2017 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For questions regarding the Pilates open house, contact Celeste Mackenzie at 937-669-2441 or visit the website at [www.peakpersonalpilates.com](http://www.peakpersonalpilates.com).

"Our brand is about being straight and honest with people. If I really don't think our facility will be able to help you, I'm going to refer you to someone that I know can. If we aren't getting you better, we're going to work really hard to find someone that will." Mackenzie said. "I'm never going to claim that my approach is the best. I'd rather earn the reputation."

"If you have an injury or a problem, this is a different perspective. If you haven't seen positive results with traditional physical therapy, I would suggest that there is nothing to lose by trying our approach. We aren't owned by a hospital, clinic group or a doctor, which is rather unusual. We will do the best we can to assist you." he said.

For more information call 937-702-9735 or visit the website at [www.xcelsportsmedicine.com](http://www.xcelsportsmedicine.com).



# 4 foods that can boost energy levels

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



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



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



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



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



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## Did you know?



Carbohydrates are seen as the enemy by many people looking to lose weight, but that reputation is ill-deserved for certain types of carbs. Carbohydrates referred to as "smart carbs" can boost energy and mood and help people, even dieters, maintain healthy weights. Smart carbs, which can be found in fruits, vegetables, minimally processed whole grain products such as brown rice and quinoa, and whole wheat bread among other foods, contain vital nutrients and fiber. The body takes longer to absorb whole grains than it does processed carbohydrates, stabilizing blood sugar and energy levels as a result. Because the body takes longer to absorb whole grains, feelings of satiety and fullness are extended. That reduces the likelihood of being hungry again shortly after eating, thereby helping people maintain healthy weights. Those who want to avoid carbohydrates should avoid products made with white flour, such as white bread, non-whole grain pastas, potato chips, and breakfast cereals with high amounts of sugar.

## Did you know?

Halitosis, or "bad breath" as it's commonly known, can result from any number of factors. While food can be a culprit, some additional factors may be contributing to mouth odor as well. Poor dental hygiene is a



particular concern. According to Colgate and the American Dental Association, failure to brush and floss teeth regularly leads to the accumulation of food particles in the mouth. This food can collect bacteria and begin to break down, causing a bad aroma. Dry mouth is another

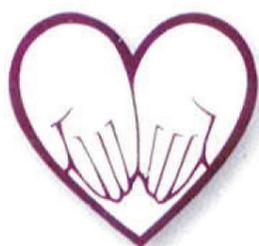
condition that causes bad breath. Without adequate saliva production, particles of food that may cause odor are not swept away regularly. Bad breath also may be an indication of a medical condition elsewhere in the body. Upper respiratory infections and gastrointestinal disturbances may contribute to halitosis.

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# Recognize and avoid youth sports injuries

Children benefit in various ways from their involvement in youth sports. Being part of a team fosters feelings of belonging, inspires collaborative play and strategy and can be an excellent form of exercise. Still, despite the benefits, parents often worry about the injury risk their children face on the playing fields. Those fears are justified. A Safe Kids Worldwide survey of emergency room visits found that a young athlete visits a hospital emergency room for a sports-related injury more than a million times a year, or about every 25 seconds. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says more than 2.6 million children 0 to 19 years old are treated in the emergency department each

year for sports- and recreation-related injuries. Some of the more common injuries young children face have to do with the skeletal and muscular systems of the body. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons stresses that children's bones, muscles, tendons, and ligaments are still growing, making them more susceptible to injury. Fortunately, with some education, many youth-sport injuries can be prevented.

## Sprains and strains

Sprains are injuries to ligaments, or the bands of tough, fibrous tissue that connect two or more bones at a joint. Strains impact a muscle or a tendon, which connects muscles to bones. Clinical research has linked acute strains and sprains to improper warm-up before sports, fatigue and previous injuries. Preparticipation conditioning and stretching can help reduce the risk of injury.

## Periostitis

Periostitis is commonly known as "shin splints." This is an overuse injury that occurs in athletes who are engaged in activities that involve rapid deceleration. Periostitis causes inflammation of the band of tissue that surrounds bones known as the periosteum, and typically affects people who repetitively jump, run or lift heavy weights. To head off potential pain in the shins, young athletes can gradually build up their tolerance for physical activity. Supportive shoes or orthotic inserts may also help. Incorporating cross-training into a regimen also can work.

## Repetitive use activities

Swimmers, tennis players, pitchers, and quarterbacks may experience something called a repetitive use injury. This is pain in an area of the body that is used over and over again. Inflammation of muscles and tendons may appear, but repetitive use injuries also may



result in stress fractures, which the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases defines as hairline fractures in bones that are subjected to repeated stress. Rest between exercises can help alleviate these types of injuries. Ice, compression, elevation and immobilization may be used if pain is persistent.

## Growth plate injuries

Kids Health says growth plates are the areas of growing tissue near the ends of the long bones in the legs and arms in children and adolescents. A growth plate produces new bone tissue. If

the growth plate is injured, it cannot do its job properly. That may contribute to deformed bones, shorter limbs or arthritis. Growth plate injuries most often result from falling or twisting.

While there's no surefire way to prevent growth plate injuries, getting proper and immediate care after an injury can help prevent future problems. An orthopedic surgeon has the expertise to diagnose and treat these injuries.

Youth sports injuries are common but preventable. Warming up, being in good physical shape and not overtaxing a growing body can help kids avoid pain and impairment.

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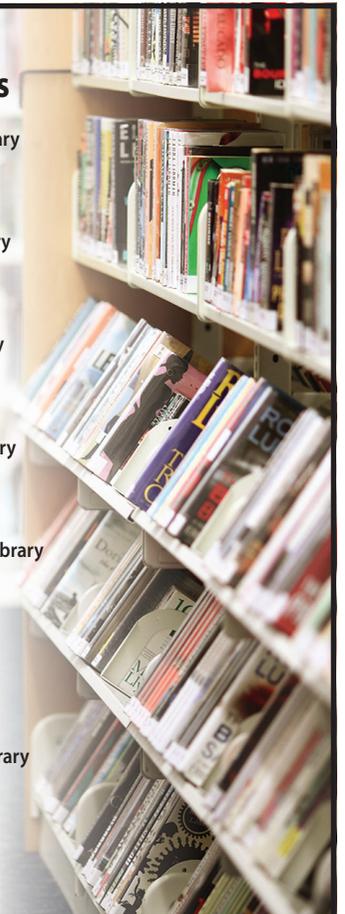
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# The differences between hot and cold therapies

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

While inflammation is protective by nature, sometimes an inflammatory response is triggered by mistake. When that happens, the body's immune system, which is designed to protect the body, begins to damage its own tissues. The resulting symptoms of this faulty immune system response may include joint pain, joint stiffness, loss of function in the joints, and swelling of the joints. None of those symptoms are comfortable, and people suffering from them may be on the lookout for ways to alleviate their pain and suffering.

While anyone battling persistent inflammation should speak with their physicians to explore their treatment options, a preliminary search of how to best treat inflammation will no doubt

turn up information about heat therapy and cold therapy. The following breakdown should not replace a physician's advice, but it can help patients battling inflammation better understand both treatment options.

## Heat therapy

According to the *Merck Manual*, a reference book for physicians and patients alike, heat works against inflammation by increasing blood flow and making connective tissues more flexible. Heat also can be used to combat edema, a condition characterized by an excess of fluid in the tissues of the body. Upon application, heat can temporarily reduce pain and alleviate stiffness in the joints. Heat also may temporarily relieve muscles spasms. The Cleveland Clinic notes that heat can be effective at relieving pain associated with worn-away cartilage in the joints because it eases chronically stiff joints and relaxes tight muscles. In addition, moist heat can relax painful neck spasms linked to nerves or blood vessels in the head or pain emanating from muscles in the neck. Heat can be applied via



hot packs, infrared heat, paraffin baths, and hydrotherapy.

## Cold therapy

Cold therapy, sometimes referred to as "cryotherapy," can relieve pain associated with inflammation that has developed recently. Cold can help numb tissues and relieve muscle spasms and can also be used to alleviate pain associated with injuries. The *Merck Manual* notes that ice bags or cold packs can be used to apply cold. In addition, fluids that cool by evaporation, including ethyl chloride, may be applied topically. Some medicines may interact with ethyl chloride

spray, so inflammation sufferers should consult their physicians before applying such sprays. According to the Cleveland Clinic, ice can be used to calm flare-ups and numb pain associated with chronic, inflammatory arthritis. Ice also can ease inflammation and numb pain linked to pulled muscles or injured tendons. Pain and inflammation resulting from the stretching or tearing of ligaments in the joints may also be eased by applying ice to the affected area. Heat and cold therapies can effectively combat symptoms associated with inflammation, but such treatments should always be discussed with a physician before being instituted.



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# How to improve alertness during the workday

**A** long workday can be both mentally and physically draining. As a result, office workers and professionals whose jobs are more physically demanding than office work may find themselves less alert at the end of the workday than at the beginning.

A loss of alertness as the workday draws to a close might be unavoidable. But professionals whose sense of alertness begins to dwindle in the thick of the workday might need to take steps to improve their alertness to protect themselves from injury and to ensure the quality of their work does not suffer.

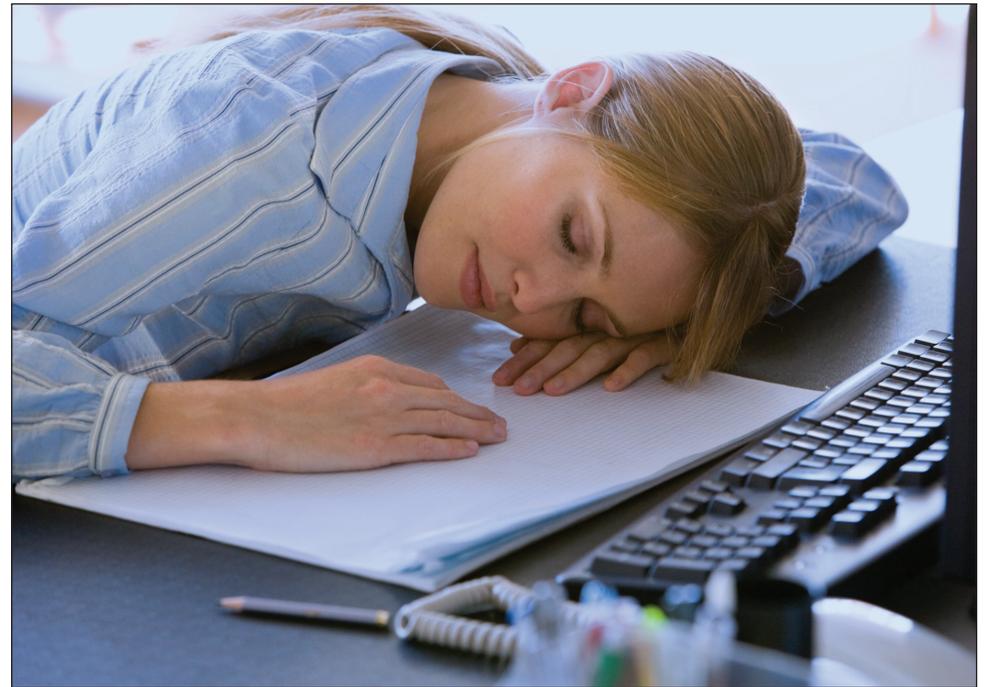
**Avoid caffeine in the late afternoon.** Some professionals rely on caffeinated beverages such as coffee or energy drinks to combat afternoon drowsiness. While that afternoon caffeine fix might provide an immediate, if temporary, jolt of energy, it might also affect a person's energy levels the following day. A 2013 study published in the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine* found that caffeine consumed as early as six hours before bedtime can significantly disrupt sleep. Professionals who reach for a cup of coffee in the late afternoon might get a sudden boost of energy, but their energy levels the following day

might be lower due to a poor night's sleep.

**Avoid high-fat foods at lunchtime.** Foods that are high in fat should always be avoided thanks to their connection to a host of health problems. Such foods also negatively affect energy levels when consumed in the middle of the day. The University of Rochester Medical Center notes that the body digests and absorbs high-fat foods very slowly. That means workers who eat high-fat foods for lunch won't get the afternoon energy boost that low-fat, healthy lunches will provide.

**Snack healthy.** Professionals who find themselves needing a snack in the mid- to late-afternoon can sate their hunger and give themselves an energy boost by snacking healthy. Avoid snacks like potato chips that tend to be high in fat and low in nutrition. Foods that are high in fiber and/or protein can provide a longer energy boost and quell the afternoon hunger pangs at the same time. Fresh fruit and Greek yogurt fit the bill.

**Change your workout schedule.** Regular exercise improves short- and long-term health while also increasing daily energy levels. Professionals who include exercise in their daily routines yet still suffer from a lack of alertness in the afternoon may need to alter their workout



schedules. A 2011 study published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* found that participants who were assigned afternoon exercise programs during work hours reported increased productivity versus those who were not assigned afternoon workouts. If working out in the afternoon is not feasible, avoid working out too late at night, as the National Institutes of

Health note that exercising within two to three hours of bedtime can disrupt sleep, ultimately having a negative impact on energy levels the following day.

Professionals who find their alertness levels waning in the afternoons can combat such drowsiness in various ways.

## Understanding seasonal affective disorder



**T**he tail end of Daylight Saving Time in 2016 occurred on November 6, when millions of people turned their clocks back one hour. Few people enjoy turning the clocks back in autumn as much as they enjoy turning them forward in spring. Turning the clocks forward affords many people, in particular working professionals who spend much of their weekdays working indoors, a chance to enjoy some sunlight when leaving their offices each day. However, once the clocks are turned back, professionals typically find themselves leaving their offices under a cover of darkness. Some people easily adjust to less daylight, while others experience a condition known as seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. SAD is a disorder related to changes in seasons. According to the Mayo Clinic, the majority of people with SAD begin to experience symptoms in the fall and continue battling those symptoms throughout the winter. The end of Daylight Saving Time occurs in early November, and the onset of SAD symptoms is no doubt related to the decreased exposure to daylight many people experience once clocks have been turned back. Those who suspect they might be susceptible to SAD can get a better grasp of the condition so they are capable of recognizing and responding to it should any symptoms appear.

### What is SAD?

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

and summer have arrived.

### What are the symptoms of SAD?

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

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

### Who is most likely to suffer from SAD?

The Mayo Clinic notes that SAD is diagnosed more often in women than in men, and MHA notes that three out of four SAD sufferers are women. Young people are more likely than older people to get winter SAD, with MHA reporting that the main age of onset of SAD is between 18 and 30. Symptoms of SAD may worsen among people who have already been diagnosed with clinical depression or bipolar disorder. More information about seasonal affective disorder is available at [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net).

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## Kids and sleep

School-aged children are busier than ever before, and some may be sacrificing sleep to accommodate their lifestyles. The National Sleep Foundation says school-aged children need between nine and 11 hours of sleep each night to function at a healthy level. Sleep deprivation can be linked to a host of health ailments, including issues affecting the development of the brain. Growing evidence suggests that lack of sleep can cause disturbances in metabolic rates that could affect the risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity. A recent study from Johns Hopkins University found that, for each additional hour of sleep a child gets, the risk of that child becoming overweight or obese

decreases by 9 percent. Children who slept the least, according to the research, had a 92 percent higher risk of being overweight or obese compared to children with longer sleep duration. The NSF adds that poor or inadequate sleep can lead to mood swings, behavioral problems and cognitive problems that impact kids' ability to learn in school. To promote good sleep habits in children, parents and other caregivers can establish consistent sleep/wake routines; ensure children avoid excess caffeine, particularly late in the day; create a cool, dark sleep environment; keep televisions and other media devices out of bedrooms; and help children work through stressors that may impact sleep.



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# Are there good and bad proteins?

**D**etermining the nutritional value of certain foods can be a tricky business. Many foods can be enjoyed in moderation, and labeling them as “good” or “bad” might lead to negative connotations. In addition, food labels change from time to time as nutritionists and doctors learn more about nutrition and revise their opinions on certain items. One food type that has remained off the bad foods radar for quite some time is protein. Protein sources are largely touted as the be-all and end-all in nutrition. But even seemingly infallible protein should be eaten in moderation, and even then only if the right sources of protein are selected. Protein is an essential building block of good nutrition that is found throughout the body and makes up the enzymes that power many chemical reactions. Protein helps fuel the hemoglobin in the blood that carries oxygen throughout the body. The Institute of Medicine recommends that adults get a minimum of 0.8

grams of protein for every kilogram of body weight per day (or 8 grams of protein for every 20 pounds of body weight). Physicians in the United States recommend a daily protein allowance of 46 grams for women over the age of 19 and 56 grams for men. Too often, however, people are overloading on protein because they think it’s a better option than carbohydrates and other food sources. But not all protein is the same.

Protein that comes from animal sources offer all of the amino acids a body needs. Unfortunately, some animal sources are less healthy than others. That’s because animal-based protein sources also contain saturated fat. Consuming too much saturated fat may contribute to elevated levels of LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol in the blood. LDL may lead to the formation of plaque in arteries that limits blood flow and may be a risk factor for heart disease. Fatty red meats and whole-milk products tend to contain

more saturated fat than other protein sources.

The key when consuming protein is to find the right balance in protein sources. Fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, and seeds may offer many of the required essential amino acids. The rest can be obtained by choosing smarter animal-based protein sources. Salmon and other fatty fish are good sources of protein and omega-3 fatty acids (heart-healthy fats) and are generally low in sodium. Lentils offer 18 grams of protein and ample fiber. Plus, these legumes have virtually no saturated fat. When looking for healthy protein sources, consumers can opt for the following selections.

**Salmon:** Wild salmon may have greater nutritional value than farmed salmon thanks to the more diversified diet consumed by wild salmon.

**Chicken:** Chicken is generally lower in saturated fat than other animal protein sources. Opt for pasture-raised chicken



for the greatest nutritional punch.

**Greek yogurt:** Greek yogurt provides ample protein and can contribute to feelings of fullness, making it a more worthy snack than less healthy snacking alternatives.

**Shellfish:** Shellfish includes clams,

oysters, mussels, and snails. Shellfish are sources of animal protein that also happen to be full of iron, zinc, omega-3 fatty acids, and other nutrients. Variety is the spice of life when it comes to protein sources. Eat different foods to ensure the body gets all of the nutrients it requires.

# The hidden benefits of water

**D**ehydration is a dangerous condition that can cause a host of complications and even prove fatal in severe cases. But as dangerous as dehydration can be, many cases are entirely preventable.

The best way to prevent dehydration is to drink enough water. When the body does not take in as much water as it puts out, it can become dehydrated. People who live in warm climates or in elevated altitudes may lose more water than those who do not. In addition, water loss is accelerated during strenuous exercise, highlighting the emphasis men and women must place on drinking enough water during their workouts.

But water does more for the body than prevent dehydration. The following are a handful of lesser known ways that water benefits the body.

**Water can help people maintain**



**healthy weights.** Dieting fads come and go, but water is a mainstay for people who want to control their caloric intake in an effort to maintain healthy weights.

Water has zero calories, so reaching for a bottle or glass of water instead of a soda, lemonade or another caloric beverage can help people keep the pounds off. A study from researchers at the University of Texas Health Science Center found that even diet soda enhances weight gain by as much as 41 percent. In addition, soda has been linked to conditions such as obesity, diabetes and tooth decay. No such association exists with water.

**Water helps to fight fatigue.**

The fatigue-fighting properties of water are another of its lesser known benefits. When the body is not adequately hydrated, it can experience muscle soreness. And fitness enthusiasts who do not drink enough water may notice their bodies require extensive recovery time after working out. Each of those consequences can be prevented by drinking

enough water, and doing so can even improve performance, as studies have shown that just a 3 percent loss of body weight due to dehydration can cause as much as a 10 percent drop in performance level.

**Water can improve the appearance of the skin.** Skin that does not get enough water can turn dry and flaky and feel tight. In addition, dry skin is more likely to wrinkle than adequately hydrated skin. Getting water to the skin can be tricky, as the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health notes that water will reach all the other organs of the body before it reaches the skin. But the school recommends applying a hydrating moisturizer within two minutes of leaving the bath or shower and drinking at least eight glasses of water a day to ensure the skin is getting enough water.

**Water helps the gastrointestinal tract.**

Water can help maintain normal bowel function. When the body lacks sufficient fluid, the colon will pull water from stools in an effort to stay hydrated. That can lead to constipation, a condition in which people experience difficulty emptying their bowels. By drinking enough water, people can ensure their colon will not have to pull water from stools to stay hydrated, thereby helping them stay regular. Water helps the body in myriad ways, many of which might surprise people unaware of just how valuable water can be to the body.





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