



FROM HAITI, TO MEXICO, TO CALIFORNIA

*How Acupuncturists Without Borders
Provides Trauma-Informed, Integrative
Care in Migrating Communities*

By **CARLA CASSLER**

DAOM, LAc, Director of AWB Programs and Community Clinics

Right now, more than 80,000,000 people in the world are displaced from the place they call home. The causes are multiple and deep: the pandemic, climate change, poverty, social injustice, disaster, violence, and systemic oppression are all significant factors. Trauma is the shared experience of millions of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrating people—trauma that may begin in early life or country of origin, trauma that accompanies them on their journeys, trauma that continues for many, even if they manage to find sanctuary and opportunities to rebuild their lives.

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Sex: *The Great Healer*

By **Felice Dunas, PhD, LAc**

Finally, that trip you have long awaited is almost here. In a magnificent spa, hidden away from time and urban life, you and your beloved will rediscover each other. Under the ancient arms of gently swaying trees, you will regenerate yourselves, and while all thought of budgets, children, and employment melt away, you may even have the best sex of your life.

Many couples notice that it takes a vacation away from daily stresses to relax the body, free the mind, and rediscover sexual desire. That's because erotic love and bodily healing naturally blend together. When you recover from an illness or climb out from under that mountain of papers, your sex drive returns. It is overwork, worry, and physical strain that consume the juice needed to run your sexual batteries, but in case you had forgotten: sex, like health, is worthy of rediscovery.

Everything in life is easier if you are having great sex on a regular basis. Mountains turn into molehills and stresses become less irritating. You feel happier and more appreciative

of the goodness life brings you. Your outlook brightens and your body feels more vital. If you think these statements aren't true, you have never had great sex on a regular basis.

So why must it take a bungalow, a Jacuzzi, and your parents babysitting for weeks on end to revive the passion buried by the daily grind? It should be possible to maintain that healthy hunger for life and each other without depending upon that elusive weekend off. It is important to have a clear idea of how great sex, great health and optimal performance in life complement and create each other. You can intentionally use one to access the others and can create lifestyle habits that enhance achievement in all areas.

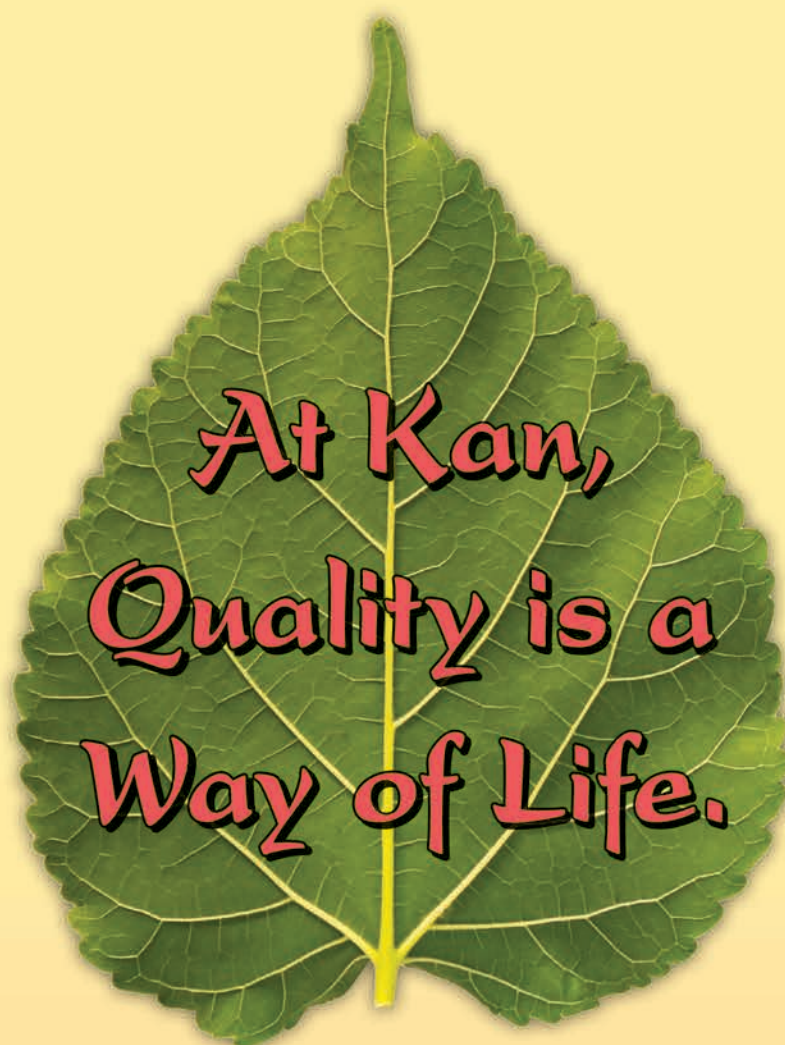
SEX MAKES US HEALTHY

We know that every part of the body must be used to remain vital. Medical literature has shown us that to keep the heart healthy it needs stimulation with aerobic exercise. Bones require weight-bearing exercise

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From Boundaries to Boundless: *Strategies For Going Beyond and Living a Life You Truly Love*

By EAST PHILLIPS, DAOM, LAc

In the last issue of AIM I discussed the importance of boundaries. In this article I'd like to go to the other end of an entirely different spectrum and discuss the type of boundaries we place on ourselves that are dangerous. These self-created boundaries often hold us back from reaching our highest potentials and experiencing all that life has to offer.

Come with me as I share some real-life stories, offer some strategies for going beyond limiting beliefs (which we all have) and tell you why I believe it's even more important that we, as healthcare professionals, learn how to effectively master this.

Years ago, my best friend was inspired when she attended a Leukemia Society charity event. She went home with a strong desire to run a marathon. She called me the next day and asked if I would run a marathon with her since I had already completed a few.

I was a bit skeptical, to say the least, because at the time of this conversation she was living in New York, smoking almost a pack of cigarettes a day, didn't really exercise and hadn't ever really run for distance.

Fast forward three years from that conversation and through a series of unlikely events, my best friend found herself living four doors down from me in San Diego. She quit smoking and started exercising, and we began running three to five days per week.

We started off slowly by running/walking a couple of miles, and gradually increased over time. I still remember when we crossed the finish line at the Rock n Roll Marathon in San Diego. As she cried tears of joy and amazement at what she had just accomplished, I remember feeling honored to bear witness to her transformation and dedication to getting out of her comfort zone and pushing beyond any self-limiting beliefs that came up. Consequently, my best friend has run over five marathons to date and has since experienced a physical body and health potential she didn't know existed.

There's a bit of back story that makes this story even more potent. Her father was a cancer survivor. When she was inspired to run a marathon by attending the Leukemia Society charity event, her *"why"* for running the marathon was very strong. While she wanted to become healthier, not ever get cancer, and feel better about herself, she also wanted to run the marathon to raise money

for cancer. She had extremely strong *"what"* and *"why's"*. By focusing on those and not the details like how this will happen and when, the Universe conspired to manifest it for her by giving her even more than she asked. Originally, she just wanted me to meet her at a marathon and run it with her. Instead, the Universe presented her a job opportunity on the West coast, she moved out, met the love of her life, got married, and had me and several other running partners.

Remember, the *how* will always get in the way of a good *what*.

Therefore, it's your job to stay focused on the *what* and the *why's* while allowing the Universe to take care of the *how* and *when*. If your *what* and *why's* are tied to service to others, I believe it amplifies your ability to manifest your dreams and desires.

While my best friend may have had doubts, she never once said "I can't do this". Sadly, this wasn't the mindset of another friend of ours.

She repeatedly told us she couldn't run because "I have bad ankles. In fact," she would say "I've always had bad ankles. I've tried everything to fix them, and nothing will work." So, we ran without her.

After some time, this friend with the "bad ankles" had so much *FOMO* (Fear Of Missing Out) that she came to me privately and asked if I could do acupuncture on her ankles. After one 30-minute treatment her ankles were miraculously cured. In fact, she has gone on to complete three marathons and three half Ironman races! By the way, my acupuncture was not the miracle. Rather, removing her limited beliefs and negative self-talk is where the miracle, ability to run distances and achieve such things was hidden all along.

"Argue for your limitations and they are yours." --Richard Bach from the book *Illusions*.

I'd like to share one more story before offering you steps you can take to burst through any lingering limiting beliefs and deliver you to a life beyond your wildest imagination. This story is more aligned with the limitations we place on ourselves around our careers and private practice.

A practitioner came to me saying that she wanted more patients. Shortly after beginning our coaching session, we realized she didn't want more patients—she was already seeing 50 patients per week. She wanted more money. As we explored further, she admitted that she secretly wanted to



leave the field of Chinese medicine all together—that she was burned out after nearly 20 years of private practice and seeing an average of 50 patients per week for over 10 years.

When I asked her what she loved to do in her spare time, she shared with me that she enjoyed doing interior design for a friend of hers that rents out Airbnb's. She also shared with me that she and her husband had a nest egg of money and that a far-fetched dream of hers was to open her very own Airbnb and decorate it Zen-style, with a healing atmosphere. I asked why she didn't do just that.

"I can't leave private practice," she said.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Well, um, I don't know. Who will take care of my patients? They will never let me leave."

That's when I invited her to write her own permission slip to follow her dreams and open her own Airbnb. I explained that we often wait for someone else to give us permission. However, in reality, that awaited permission will never come from our patients, our partners, our parents or our (fill in the blank). We must give ourselves permission.

So, how does the story end? She emailed me about a year later telling me that she referred out her patients to a local practitioner, closed her practice, and is now working on her third Zen healing retreat-style Airbnb.

"I love my life! I am so over-the-top excited every day. Why didn't I do this earlier?" She asked.

"It's never too late and I'm thrilled to hear you so excited about your life again," I said.

Maybe what you really want to do is slightly or completely outside of private practice. Please know that you can take the knowledge and experience you gained from schooling and practice with you to a new endeavor. There are so many opportunities for

us, and they don't all include private practice.

Teaching, product development, authoring, speaking, sharing your gifts on podcasts, become a wellness or well-being influencer, creating peaceful atmospheres, art, physical movement, creating wellness programs, starting a business that caters to healthcare professionals since you know their needs so well, and seriously, the list goes on and on.

What excuses to you hear yourself say? Do any of these sound familiar?

1. It's a pandemic, I can't do anything
2. I have kids, I'm too busy
3. I'm too fat/skinny/tall/short/old/young/fill in the blank
4. I'm not strong enough
5. I can't go 2 hours without eating
6. I've tried everything
7. My husband/wife/mom/dad/partner/kids won't let me
8. I don't have enough time
9. I'm too tired
10. I could never give up dairy/sugar/wine, etc.
11. I've got to do (fill in the blank)

By the way, if you hear yourself say or think "I *have* to do" anything, I encourage you to really look at what you are forcing yourself to do, repeatedly, over time. This is a dangerous slippery slope, inevitably turns into burn out and worth an entire article in and of itself.

When this type of self-limiting language comes up for you (which it will for all of us) you might start by saying something like "thank you, but no thank you" or "cancel, clear, delete" or even "stop it" and chose to focus your thoughts and language on positive affirming statements. "What can I do to carve out more time for myself?" "What else can I try?" "Who has been able to do this and what did they do?" "What can I do to get more sleep, eat healthier, manage these issues?" The idea here is to look for, and be part of, a solution, rather than focusing on the problem.

Are you waiting for permission to finally do what you want to do or what your heart is calling you to do? If not now, when? What would it look like if you tried anyway?

I truly believe the Universe is like Nordstrom and Costco in the fact that if you don't like what you get (or what you manifest for yourself), you

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Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB) provides trauma-informed healthcare and support to vulnerable communities affected by disaster, poverty, climate change, oppression, and violence. There are threads that connect the people and communities where AWB works, including a strong one between Haiti, Mexico, and California. In all these places, we collaborate with local healers and service organizations to offer healthcare and “heart” care. To really understand the thread, and contextualize AWB’s programs, it’s helpful to know a bit of recent migration history.

In 2010, a devastating earthquake hit Haiti, a former French colony and one of the poorest countries in the world. Over 200,000 people died and 1.5 million were displaced from their homes. Those who could leave the country migrated to places like Chile and Brazil, where they later found work building the 2016 Olympic Games complex in Buenos Aires. As work dried up and local conditions changed for the worse, Haitians moved north to find safe haven and employment. Hurricane Matthew roiled Haiti in 2016; political violence and poverty escalated; the prime minister was assassinated in July 2021, and another devastating earthquake followed in August. Haitians in South and Central America continued to migrate north, many eventually reaching border cities such as Tijuana, Mexico.

There they joined tens of thousands of migrating people from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and other Central American countries who have fled gang violence, political torture, and poverty over the past decades. Many live in large church-run shelters, and a new tent city has emerged in El Chapparal, the western entry/exit portal to the US. Covid has further imperiled the lives of Tijuana’s refugees and asylum seekers, driving down meager employment and access to even basic healthcare.

Haitians and Central Americans who make it across the border with the help of smugglers, or on their own, then enter a shadow world. Without legal status and documentation, many work in low-paying jobs without labor protection or access to decent employment, housing, or medical care. In California, Central Americans make up 3% of the seasonal farmworker labor force; 75% of that labor force is undocumented. These are the “invisible” essential workers that grow half the nation’s fruits and vegetables and two-thirds of our nuts; the people who, due to illegal status, live in fear of deportation, make poverty-level wages, live in extremely crowded housing, have little or no healthcare access, are exposed to wildfire smoke and pesticides; and who suffer disproportion-



AWB Haiti Program Coordinator Louis-saint Alcide and team in Aux Cayes after the August 2021 earthquake.



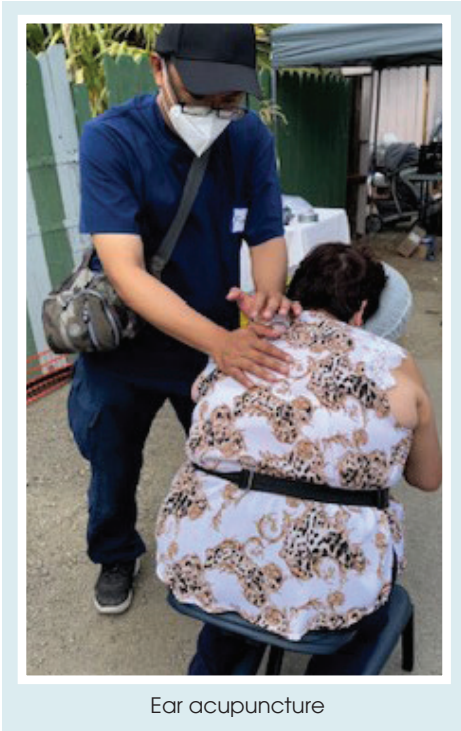
AWB-trained community health worker providing treatments near Port-Au-Prince, Haiti.



Providing care at the Justicia En Salud Clinic in Tijuana, Mexico.



Treatments for farmworkers at Silver Oak winery in Sonoma, CA, in collaboration with the Botanical Bus.



Ear acupuncture

ate rates of Covid, diabetes, asthma, and suicide.

Over the past fifteen years, AWB has followed this thread of human migration, offering trauma-informed care in Haiti, Mexico, and California. We believe that trauma is often at the basis of human suffering, and that unless trauma cycles are interrupted and resolved at the personal, familial, community and global level, suffering will continue unabated. Trauma patterns are dynamic and physically-based. They emerge when *systemic dysregulation*, in response to grave threat, goes unchecked. Physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual problems can manifest and worsen over time if the dysregulated system can’t reset. Somatic treatments like acupuncture are essential to helping bring greater regulation to the system so that emotional processing and recovery can begin. Otherwise, the person is “stuck” in flight, fight, or freeze, which often leads to greater illness and disability over time. Trauma healing helps people feel hopeful, resilient, and empowered. It’s why we call AWB’s work the Medicine of Peace.

We work with local partners, including indigenous healers, who invite us to bring East Asian medicine treatments to their communities.



Healing circle treatments

We offer direct services, including acupuncture, herbal medicine, and massage therapy, and provide trauma-informed care training for local practitioners providing care in their own communities.

TWELVE YEARS OF AWB WORK IN HAITI

Before the 2010 earthquake, acupuncture did not exist in Haiti. AWB’s response after the disaster included sending nine service teams, over a six-month period, to offer ear acupuncture for trauma and pain throughout the country. By trip nine, we began training local community health workers to do ear acupuncture

treatments for pain and trauma, and have since done five large trainings for local health workers and activists. AWB Haiti Program Coordinator Louis-saint Alcide and his team of trained practitioners continue to hold pop-up clinics in multiple towns every week. Within three days of last summer’s major earthquake, Louissaint and his team were in the epicenter region, Aux Cayes, treating families in markets, churches and community centers. Local practitioner training, collaboration with local service organizations and financial support from the international community

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The Benefits of Massage Therapy for the Childbearing Years

By KIERA NAGLE, MA, LMT

Are you a parent or considering parenthood? As we grow through our 20s, 30s, and 40s, the question of parenthood often crosses our minds and becomes part of our conversations, whether we are partnered or not. While there are undoubtedly innumerable joys that come from parenting, one of the major concerns that many folks will have is how or whether the process of conception, the impact of pregnancy, the recovery of postpartum, and the inevitable stresses of parenting may impact their health and well-being. These are important aspects of this major life shift to explore and consider. Some couples may find that even if they are psychologically ready, they may struggle with fertility, while others may think they will have adequate time to transition, only to find that they are suddenly pregnant and faced with a myriad of changes and choices. Some folks may breeze through a pleasant pregnancy, only to face difficulty with labor or in the postpartum period. Many non-pregnant partners may deal with their own stressors as they figure out what role they will play in all aspects of these life shifts. Some individuals may find themselves personally ready for the experience of parenthood, but unpartnered, and in a position to pursue options to make the journey alone. One wellness approach that can help support all facets of these experiences and the way they impact human beings physiologically and psychologically is massage therapy. Let's explore each phase of the childbearing years and how massage may be of support.

CONCEPTION AND FERTILITY

It is commonly known that age has a significant impact on fertility. If you are under 30, you have a less than 10% chance of miscarriage, however, by the age of 35, that increases to 15%, and by 40 it doubles to over 30%. Some folks assume that after years of preventing pregnancy through various means (birth control and other contraceptives) as soon as they are ready to get pregnant, they will have no issue. But unfortunately, some studies have shown that after ceasing BC, there may be at least a few months' delay before conception is possible. In addition, the body may need some time to adjust after going off birth control, and this process might include some uncomfortable symptoms, such as irregularity of the menstrual cycle, amenorrhea (missing periods), dysmenorrhea (painful peri-

ods), PMS, mood fluctuations, weight gain and changes in libido.

How can massage help? There really isn't any good evidence specifically defining how massage can impact fertility. However, there is *very* good evidence for massage impacting some of the symptoms outlined above. For example, in a 2015 study of 102 patients experiencing dysmenorrhea, pain intensity was significantly reduced in the group that received aromatherapy massage with lavender oil, even more so than in the group who exercised. In another study from the same year, even self-massage was found to be effective for reducing the pain of dysmenorrhea, especially if aromatherapy (in this case, rose oil) was included. Acupressure massage was also found to be a helpful intervention for reducing "menstrual distress" and low back pain associated with menstruation in this 2014 study. Partner-administered reflexology was also found to be effective for reducing pain and anxiety for clients with complicated illness in this earlier study

from 2007. So, while it would be unethical to say that massage can help support fertility, the impact massage can have on the pain, discomfort, and anxiety that may accompany the period of transitioning off birth control or going through assisted reproductive technology processes (which may result in similar symptoms and stresses) can be self-supportive and provide positive connections with our bodies and our partners.

PREGNANCY AND LABOR

During pregnancy, the human body proceeds rapidly through profound changes in a relatively short period of time. Each trimester is marked with physical symptoms and emotional impacts, which may be an adjustment for the pregnant person, even if they are not experienced as particularly uncomfortable (though for some, they may be.) In the first trimester, fatigue, bloating, and nausea are common. In the second trimester, we begin to see the postural impacts with frontal weight gain

and the shifting of skeletal structure. Shortness of breath, abdominal pressure, and low back pain may begin in the second trimester and become more exacerbated in the third. In this final trimester, as the pressure on the pelvis increases, and there is more restriction to the major blood vessels of the lower body, pregnant people may experience swelling in the limbs. With the presence of the hormone relaxin softening the tissues throughout the body, some may experience joint instability, especially if they were already prone to hypermobility. Throughout the experience of pregnancy, people may be defining their new identities as parents through a psychological process called "cognitive restructuring" or they may experience symptoms of anxiety and depression for various reasons.

There is significant evidence to show the benefits of massage therapy for pregnancy, and incredibly, these can also impact the baby by supporting a healthy in-utero environment. In one study published in 2012, 84 patients diagnosed with prenatal depression received twice-weekly massage and yoga sessions for 12 weeks. Compared to the control group (who received no intervention), the recipients of massage and yoga had decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety, decreased pain scales, and gave birth to babies of greater gestational age and higher birth weights. Babies who are not born pre-term, and are born with higher birth weights, are less likely to need medical intervention.

What are some other benefits of massage for the pregnant person themselves? Self-administered acupressure on the pericardium 6 acupoint has been shown in several studies to significantly reduce nausea in the first trimester. Reflexology and hydrotherapy have positive impacts on reducing edema (swelling) in pregnancy as does manual lymph drainage. Aromatherapy massage was shown to have a significantly positive impact on stress and immune function during pregnancy. This amazing study from 2008 showed that partner-administered prenatal massage reduced pain in the pregnant recipient, and improved the mood of both the pregnant recipient and the partner/caregiver and their relationship with each other. This was reinforced with a more recent study in 2021.

Some studies have shown the effectiveness of acupressure and sacral

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2021 Roundup: *Pacific College's Free & Low-Cost Treatments*

We've completed the roundup: Pacific College campuses in San Diego, New York, and Chicago combined provided **more than 9,000 hours** of intern, faculty, and administrative hours with an in-kind donation of **more than \$200,000 of free or low-cost treatments** and administrative costs to our communities during this year of the pandemic. Pacific College proudly collaborates with organizations in our communities to provide our students with off-campus real-life opportunities to practice patient care and connection. Events in 2021 included providing care for the Tunnel to Towers run, the Wounded Warriors Project, the Beautifully Flawed Foundation, Camp Widow, frontline workers at Rady Children's Hospital, and more!

Malcolm Youngren, President and CEO of Pacific College of Health and Science, stated: "We set out to serve our local communities on a greater scale than we've ever done before, in spite of the challenges this year presented, and we successfully did just that." We couldn't be prouder to show up in our community and support others on their healing journey. Moments like that are why we do what we do!

WOUNDED WARRIORS PROJECT

The warriors in the San Diego Wounded Warriors Project (WWP) asked to learn about ear acupuncture, so we collaborated on a lunch and learn at their facility on September 24th, 2021! The event was such a success that we were invited to return on November 6th, 2021 for an acupuncture and massage event, where we provided acupuncture treatments and massage therapy sessions. Thank you to our clinic interns who provided this meaningful opportunity for wounded warriors to experience the benefits of auricular acupuncture treatments for acute and chronic conditions!

TUNNEL TO TOWERS RUN

A proud thank you to our Pacific College massage and acupuncture students who kindly volunteered at the Tunnel to Towers run in New York City on September 26th, 2021, an annual event that honors the victims, survivors, and first responders of 9/11. Pacific College has participated in every year of the T2T annual event since its inception.

"The gratitude of the people we worked with at these events and our regular weekly shifts at offsite events for vulnerable populations is very inspiring to our interns. Watching those people have positive responses, a lot of them receiving acupuncture for



Pacific College massage and acupuncture students who volunteered at the 2021 Tunnel to Towers Run.

the very first time, gives the interns such rewards!"

-Valerie Razutis, DAOM, LAC, Associate Director of Clinical Services in San Diego

CAMP WIDOW

On October 15th, 2021, Pacific College massage interns volunteered their time to offer the healing power of massage to the widows of Camp Widow, an innovative program that combines the therapeutic effect of group bonding, training in grief coping, and the healing of learning to laugh again. Our fantastic interns at this event were Pearl Vargas, Christopher Versandi, and Christopher Farrelly, supervised by Dan Halpain ABT, HHP, the San Diego campus' Department Chair of Asian Holistic Health and Massage.

BEAUTIFULLY FLAWED FOUNDATION

We are so grateful to have collaborated with Bethany Hamilton's Beautifully Flawed Foundation at their annual retreat for those with limb differences, in Del Mar, CA. After surviving a shark attack 18 years ago, Bethany Hamilton not only continued to pursue her career as a professional surfer, but founded this organization to inspire others to be unstoppable in their pursuit of happiness.

On October 28th, 2021, eight of our massage therapy and acupuncture interns provided treatments for her retreat attendees after an inspiring day of surfing. Some tried acupuncture for the first time, and others even overcame their fear of needles! Bethany Hamilton will be

presenting as a featured speaker at our upcoming inaugural P3 Summit in May of 2022 in sunny San Diego, California!

"We're looking forward to further developing these strong community connections all throughout 2022. Thank you to our partners for the opportunity to keep changing lives exponentially!"

-Malcolm Youngren, President and CEO of Pacific College of Health and Science

RADY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Most recently, on November 18th, Pacific College alumni volunteered to serve frontline workers at an off-campus community care event

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San Diego massage interns who volunteered their time to offer the healing power of massage at Camp Widow.



Pacific College alumni who volunteered to serve frontline workers at Rady Children's Hospital.

Pacific College Clinical Updates for 2022

By **LENG TANG-RITCHIE, DAOM**

Even an ancient medicine can benefit from modern innovation! The clinics at Pacific College of Health and Science are setting the foundations for further growth and transformations in 2022 and onward. From upgrading our record-keeping system to developing interprofessional collaboration opportunities, as well as increasing awareness and education on healthcare disparities, we are so excited by the changes we envision for our wellness centers.

ELECTRONIC HEALTHCARE RECORDS SYSTEM

Jumping into the digital age, Pacific College launched our new electronic health records (EHR) system, NexusClinical, at our Chicago campus during the fall of 2021. We will be introducing the EHR system in San Diego and New York during the summer of this year. This rollout will include both permanent computer stations and limited tablets for interns to use. In addition to electronic charting, NexusClinical is also a patient management system where patients are provided an individual patient portal through which they can request appointments. HIPAA-compliant messages and treatment follow-ups can be sent securely and directly from the providing interns and clinical faculty. NexusClinical also includes an herbal inventory and prescription management. We cannot wait for Pacific College to convert to completely electronic records! The EHR system will provide groundwork for the College to start accepting health insurance and outcome measurements for future research projects.

HOLISTIC WELLNESS CENTERS

Another focus for 2022 will be on collaborative clinics. We are growing our onsite clinics into holistic wellness centers. With that, we are excited to be adding nurse practitioners and health coaching to our menu of services. The nurse practitioners will be able to provide wellness checks and general non-emergent care, while our health coaches can be our patients' accountability partners and help them navigate the individual health plans set by their providers. Our wellness centers will be rooted in holistic medicine while providing progressive integrative care.

INTEGRATIVE GRAND ROUNDS

Our sights are also set on increasing collaboration with healthcare systems outside of Pacific College. In working with the UC San Diego healthcare system's Center for Integrative Health (UCSD CIH) and UC San Diego School of Medicine, Pacific College students from all programs and all three campuses will be able to participate in their monthly integrative grand rounds. The team of presenters and topics will vary each month from the diverse fields of providers at the UCSD CIH. This includes integrative medicine physicians, naturopathic doctors, acupuncturists, doctors of osteopathic medicine, nutritionists, nurses, massage therapists, health coaches, and mindfulness cultivators. In San Diego, we will be embarking on a new type of practitioner shift, the integrative medical resident shift, where our students will be directly interacting with UCSD medical residents in treating the same

patients. The goal is to teach one another about our respective medicines and share mutual successes. What's better for our ancient medicine than to let it shine in the most modern medical facilities!

MEDICAL SERVICES ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Here at Pacific College, we believe that it is vitally important for medical services be accessible to all. With the complexities of healthcare disparities, the clinical team will be using a multi-pronged approach to eliminating disparities in care, access to outcome measures, and clinical education. In 2022, the clinical department is planning on creating a Health Equity subcommittee with the various stakeholders on campus. The goal is to review the clinic manual and clinical education/classes to see where there may be gaps and areas of opportunity in relation to health difference based on racial or ethnic groups, religion, gender spectrum, sexual orientation, cognitive, sensory or physical disability, size and weight, socioeconomic status, and any other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion. We believe all patients deserve to be treated with respect and compassion, regardless of race, gender, disability, or religious beliefs. We are planning educational events such as Lunch and Learn meetings to learn more about how to interview, assess, and design treatments for patients in all segments of the population. In addition, we are working on increasing our off-site clinics with an emphasis on clinic opportunities in underserved communi-

ties. In the beginning of this year, we have added the New York Harm Reduction Educators offsite to provide holistic services to underserved communities in Harlem. We are actively seeking clinical partners to place our students in interprofessional settings with these underserved and important populations.

Like the transformation and transmutation of yin and yang, we will be educating others on our ancient philosophy while incorporating new technology, looking internally at our own practices while collaborating with external sources, and gracefully surfing the waves of change while staying grounded in our history. We here in the clinical department are so excited for our growth in 2022! **AIM**

DR. LENG TANG-RITCHIE, DAOM, received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, San Diego, and her Master's of Science in Traditional Oriental Medicine (MSTOM) and post-graduate Doctorate of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (DAOM) from the Pacific College of Health and Science. After serving for many years at the College as full-time faculty member, teaching in the Herbol-ogy, Acupuncture, and Oriental Medicine departments, and directing the San Diego campus' clinic (as well as all off-site clinics, including the prestigious UCSD Center for Integrative Medicine and Rady's Children Hospital acupuncture services), she was promoted to Vice President of Clinical Education and Operations. Specific emphasis is placed on integrated clinical development and includes all affiliate relationships, including for Pacific College's holistic nursing division. Dr. Tang-Ritchie maintains a private practice in San Diego.

2021 ROUNDUP: PACIFIC COLLEGE'S FREE & LOW-COST TREATMENTS continued from page 6

for Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego. You know your students are truly passionate about their work when they request to join community outreach events even after graduation! Volunteers at the event included Jessica Boyer, Dr. David Wachtel, Tifania Nazarian, Gabriela Palma-Cruz, Christopher Versandi, and Liz Murray.

WILBUR WRIGHT COLLEGE

On November 11th, 2021, we worked with Hoyam Tanon, the Clinic Director at Wilbur Wright's Wellness Center for their Mental Health Awareness Day. Two of our supervisors and four interns visited the campus to connect with students and perform acupuncture treatments for about 25 students. **AIM**



Massage therapy and acupuncture interns provided treatments for Beautifully Flawed retreat attendees.

can take it back. Seriously. My point with this analogy is that it is better to have tried and decided that you don't like it than to wonder for your whole life "what if".

Gary Vaynerchuk, a business thought leader, encourages people to spend time with 90-year-olds. When he surveyed hundreds of 90-year-olds, they all said that their biggest regrets were living their lives the way others wanted to them to, not trying new things, and not doing what they really wanted to do in life. In other words, **they regretted what they didn't do** more than anything they did do.

I could continue with stories and examples but I'm confident by now you get the point and can probably already identify where you might be holding yourself back.

Therefore, here are some strategies for breaking through limited beliefs and entering a life about which you are totally and utterly excited:

Get clear on your intention/goal and remove any distractions. This means get as specific as possible as to what you want to achieve and let go of anything that is counterproductive, distracting, or taking up your energy. At one point in my life, I wanted to publish a book and I also

wanted to raise two small children, run a consulting company, grow an online product business, and maintain a private practice. It got to a point where I couldn't do it all and something had to go. I chose to create a passions and priority list where I listed all the above in order of joy level and let go of the last two items. That is, when I let go of private practice and the product company so I could finish the book. *Focus and finish*, I like to say.

If coming up with something crystal clear is difficult for you, as it is for many people, I have found that coming up with a theme is just as powerful. Examples: (Specific) I want a private practice where I see approximately twenty-five patients per week, with the majority being cosmetic acupuncture, work four days per week, have weekends off and make over \$150,000 per year with a net of over \$100,000 per year. (Theme-based) I want ease and flow in my practice where I feel I have more than adequate time for myself while making an abundant income that allows me to pay all my bills, take vacations, spend money on myself and have savings at the end. (Specific) I want to get married to a

person who has the following traits (fill in the blank with your check list). (Theme-based) I want to fall madly in love with an available partner and finally feel the joy of a loving, supportive relationship.

Look at your mindset. What kind of mindset are you plugging into? Is it a growth mindset (where anything is possibly with work) or have you adapted a fixed mindset that this is how it is, will always be, I was born this way, it can't get better, I'm not a natural at this, etc.? For more on this I highly recommend the book *Mindset* by Carol S. Dweck, where she explains and proves with several examples how we can, in fact, improve ourselves in any capacity—career, relationships, business, sports, fitness, and parenting. The basic concept she offers is that if you nurture a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset, you can accomplish almost anything. However, if you hold onto a fixed mindset, you will undoubtedly find yourself stopped in your tracks and possibly even giving up.

Let go of the when and how. When we allow the Universe the space to work on the *when* and *how*, I have found that we often get even more than we have asked for. If you

think about it, the *when* and *how*'s are often out of your control anyway. The need to control is ego based and will most likely block the Divine from assisting you. Stay focused on your *what* and *why*. I promise you the Universe will conspire to make it happen for you.

Set your expectations correctly. If you believe something is going to be a struggle, guess what? It will be. Too often our limiting belief lies in statements like "It's going to be too hard" or "I don't have enough time" or "I can't... etc., etc.,". Replace that kind of language with "What would this look like if it were easy?" "What would this look like if it got done with limited time?" "Whom else has been able to do this with a similar situation to mine and what did they do?" The idea here is to seek for a solution rather than feeding the problem. Intentionally transform your journey into one that is calm, flowing, enjoyable (or however you would like it to feel).

Release the attachment and importance of the outcome. This strategy takes muscle and like muscle, it needs to be conditioned and

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Access and Embody Flow: *Qigong Taps Wu Wei, Ancient Flow Technology*

By ROGER JAHNKE, OMD

The most profound medicine is produced naturally—in the human body—for free! This phrase, from *The Healer Within*, is the innovative foundation of a profound personalized peak performance and personal vitality system.

There are many ways to turn on (activate, create, maximize) this miraculous internal medicine. By enhancing wellbeing and function capacity, disease is neutralized (healed). Even better, disease is prevented, and even better again, wellness is sustained, and peak states of performance and flow are initiated and sustained. These methods were fully described in the ancient, totally personalized, yet very practical and inexpensive views of Chinese philosophy, cosmology, Chinese medicine, as well as qigong, taiji, and kung fu.

The Yellow Emperor and his master physicians compiled an entire book on mobilizing the “healer with-

in”: *The Classic of Inner Medicine, Huang Ti Nei Jing* (1).

The Healer Within paradigm is founded on functional coherence of the Three Treasures—Body-Mind-Spirit (also sustained self-awareness, or interoception, of these three aspects of self: posture, breath and mind). This dynamic, a state of balance and harmony at every level of being, is discussed in terms of qi in the Chinese worldview, and in the West more recently as “flow”.

The concept of the flow state in current culture, as described by many contemporary “hackers” of peak performance, and originally by psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, describes “flow” as a state of complete immersion in an activity. A beautiful equivalent in the Chinese paradigm is *wu wei*, “effortless engagement”, as noted by the philosopher Lao Zi (or Lao Tzu) 2500 years ago.

In the ancient Chinese version,

wu wei creates an internal state of no restriction to the highest level of function of the qi, which infuses all of the aspects of the self: body, mind, and spirit. In the contemporary view, the flow state occurs when an individual is fully engaged with an absence of distress or restriction which leads to unimpeded psycho-physiological function.

There are many mechanisms triggered by these states (they are actually not states, rather they are very dynamic): immune function enhancement, shifts in neurotransmitter production, enhanced vagal tone, regenerative influence on the DNA (telomeres and sustained cellular replication). These all suggest that *wu wei* and flow are tapping into a kind of Fountain of Youth, deferring aging and sickness.

There are many methods for activating these dynamics. All are inherent to what has come to be

called a holistic, integrative, whole-person health system. Some of the ancient methods—acupuncture and massage—require treatment from a licensed medical provider, for which there is a cost. Some of them require the ingestion of nourishing and functional activating substances (herbal medicine), which also has a cost.

Some of them, however, such as self-cultivation through qigong, taiji, and meditation, can be utilized by individuals at home or in public venues (parks, churches, schools, hospitals), for free. Yoga, fasting, nootropics, forest bathing, cold showers, novel (atypical) activities, and even micro-dosing psychedelic plant medicines also have the same influences.

By virtue of this inner capacity for integrating the Body-Mind-Spirit (Coherence of the Three Treasures), some practices such as yoga integrate

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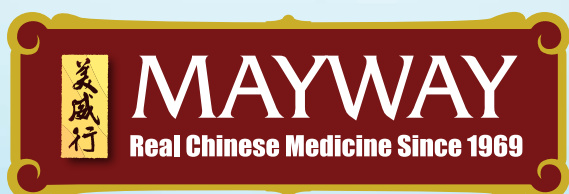
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THE BENEFITS OF MASSAGE THERAPY FOR THE CHILDBEARING YEARS

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massage on relieving labor pain and reducing labor time. There have also been positive outcomes for perineal self-massage prior to labor reducing and preventing perineal trauma during birth. The plethora of positive impacts massage therapy can have for the pregnant person, their partner, and the baby seems infinite. Touch is associated with the release of the hormone oxytocin. The chemical impact of oxytocin in labor is to promote the normal physiological process of labor, reducing the need for medical intervention, induction, and/or augmentation, which increase the possibility of trauma for the pregnant couple and their baby.

POSTPARTUM RECOVERY AND LACTATION

The postpartum period is an often overlooked and under-supported phase for many parents. There is often much focus in treatment during pregnancy and preparation for labor, but a lack of acknowledgement of the needs of postpartum recovery. Once again, there is a significant physical and psychological adjustment that is occurring, and for first time parents, the additional aspect of adjusting to newborn infant care.

While recovery from a birth that did not require as much medical intervention is not minimal, there are also the potential complications that recovering from c-section surgery will involve. Several studies looked at how massage can help reduce pain after c-section. Hand and foot massage administered within 1-2 days after delivery can reduce pain intensity for clients with this more complex version of postpartum recovery.

The hormonal shifts that occur in this period can also increase the possibility of postpartum depression. Another study from 2015 explored how reflexology, given once a day for 3 days consecutively in the early postpartum period, can help to relieve fatigue, stress and depression.

Parents will also need to consider how they will feed their newborn. Many parents want to nurse their babies, given the many benefits for infant development. Nursing can also be beneficial to the lactating parent in their postpartum recovery, but sometimes there can also be complications. This recent study from 2020 showed that breast massage and acupressure can support lactation and prevent mastitis.

And what about massage for the baby? Massage for babies in the NICU improved their growth and development in their first two weeks of life. Massage has also been found to reduce the symptoms of colic which has a huge impact on parent stress levels. There are also benefits “by proxy” when parents massage their babies. This study from 2016 saw a

* THE HORMONAL SHIFTS THAT OCCUR IN THIS PERIOD CAN ALSO INCREASE THE POSSIBILITY OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION.

Another study from 2015 explored how reflexology, given once a day for 3 days consecutively in the early postpartum period, can help to relieve fatigue, stress and depression.

correlation between infant massage performed by the birth giver and a reduction of postpartum depression symptoms and another showed that infant massage increased bonding and attachment between parents and babies.

Therapeutic massage can positively impact our generation's experience of the childbearing years and support mindful parenting. If we access this tool to support our journeys through conception, pregnancy, postpartum, and even learn how to connect with our infants through caring touch, we can see the ripple effects through the rest of our lives, and theirs. **AIM**

KIERA NAGLE, MA, LMT (she/her), has been practicing massage and reiki for over a dozen years. Kiera is the Director of the Asian Holistic Health and Massage Therapy Program at Pacific College of Health and Science, NY Campus. She is the creator of MaMassage®, a protocol for treating clients in the childbearing years, and a training curriculum for massage therapists. Kiera is a DONA-trained birth doula, and a certified pediatric massage therapist. She was the 2018 Massage Therapy Foundation Community Service Grant recipient for her collaboration with Womankind, providing massage for survivors at this NYC based organization serving survivors of gender-based violence. Kiera is the proud parent of a pretty cool middle school kid. Kiera has trained hundreds of massage therapy students and is grateful for the rewarding nature of a career in massage therapy. Many of the techniques referenced in this article, such as acupressure, reflexology, and aromatherapy, are part of the foundational training in the massage therapy program at Pacific College.

have helped create this sustainable program. Meanwhile, some of the Haitians who left and made it to Tijuana are able to receive AWB's care through our community partnerships in Mexico.

ACUPUNCTURE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER

In 2019, AWB acupuncturists began working in Tijuana with the Refugee Health Alliance (RHA), established in 2018 to provide basic healthcare for people arriving on the infamous migration caravans from Central America. We volunteered on Saturdays, crossing the border from San Ysidro, CA with groups of doctors, nurses and other health practitioners organized by RHA to set up mobile clinics in Tijuana residential shelters.

Over time, we joined forces with the Parteras midwifery group at RHA's Justicia En Salud Clinic, which offers daily reproductive and primary healthcare to women and children in the migrant community. The amazing Parteras team is coordinated by Ximena Rojas, a force of nature and a fierce advocate for the women and children of Tijuana's migrant community. Ximena and her team deliver most of the babies born to migrant families, including many from Haiti. Creole and Spanish are the languages of the clinic, which also houses a

pharmacy of indigenous herbs from Mexico and Central America. Acupuncture is offered daily for stress, pain and trauma, and herbs are dispensed for prevention and treatment of many primary healthcare problems.

"Being a part of the volunteer effort in Tijuana, MX has been one of the most meaningful and valuable experiences of my life. A true representation of the traditional use of acupuncture as a medicine for the people, the work simultaneously exemplifies the possibilities for integrative approaches in medical outreach and primary care settings. A joint effort between TCM practitioners, nurses, physicians, midwives, psychologists, dentists, and medical students from the surrounding areas, the experience provides insight into the unique social landscape and accompanying health disparities of the border region in which we live, and emphasizes the interprofessional reciprocity necessary to provide borderless medicine."

-Leah Lind-White, Pacific College of Health and Science alumna

Our relationship with Parteras is based on deep mutual respect, trust, and a shared sense of purpose. Understanding of trauma, what it means to deliver trauma-informed care, and cultural humility are also essential elements of our successful partnership.

It has grown to include ear acupuncture and moxibustion training for the midwives, and creation of a large Chinese herb section for the herb pharmacy. Ear acupuncture is offered daily for stress, pain and trauma, and herbs are dispensed for prevention and treatment of many primary healthcare problems.

AWB does week-long training/service trips every quarter, and has started sponsoring individual practitioners from San Diego and Los Angeles to see patients at the clinic one day a week. This helps the midwives, patients with complex needs, and provides greater continuity of care. Several PCHS alumni and students have been part of AWB's work in Tijuana, and we hope to expand this relationship in the coming year.

On the US side of our southern border, AWB has been providing treatments to farmworkers in the wine-growing regions of northern California and the strawberry, artichoke, and apple fields of the Central Valley. Like our work with Parteras in Tijuana, we collaborate with local organizations, including The Botanical Bus, an organization of promotoras (Latinx community health workers) that bring indigenous herbal and complementary healthcare to farmworkers in Sonoma County, and the Center for Farmworker Families, which advo-

cates for agricultural workers in the Watsonville area of Central California. Clinics happen on a weekly and monthly basis, and we invite local practitioners to join us!

To put it simply, borders fade when it comes to AWB's work. Communities of displaced people are intimately connected, and trauma is a shared experience. Likewise, we as acupuncturists and students can connect with local community organizations, activists, and healers to offer the benefits of East Asian medicine to a fractured world. We can help repair the thread.

For more information about Acupuncturists Without Borders and trauma-informed care training, go to www.acwb.info. If you are interested in joining AWB to provide care in Tijuana and/or California, contact Carla Cassler at carla@acuwithoutborders.org. **AIM**

CARLA CASSLER, DAOM, LAc, has practiced East Asian medicine since 1985 in the San Francisco Bay Area, and is currently AWB's Director of Programs and Community Clinics. She has developed and coordinated field programs in Greece, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Israel, and Palestine, and is part of the AWB team that develops trauma-informed, integrative care training for acupuncturists, students, and other health professionals.

SEX: THE GREAT HEALER continued from page 1

to maintain high calcium levels and avoid osteoporosis. Even octogenarians can revive a fading memory with a few simple mental exercises.

The sex organs are no exception. Women who breastfeed have lower breast cancer rates and celibate men turn up with higher percentages of prostate and penile cancers. A woman who enjoys regular sex may have fewer PMS symptoms. Actively sexual women going through menopause have fewer symptoms associated with the drop in reproductive hormone levels, which means that they get to feel wet and wild into their 90s.

Sex is a known antidepressant: it stimulates the production and circulation of many "feel good" chemicals created by the body, which changes your outlook. Have you ever noticed that depression just can't exist in the middle of great sex? We benefit from using the body in all the ways in which it was designed to be used.

As an acupuncturist and doctor of traditional Chinese medicine, I have had the opportunity to explore the body's relationship between sex and health and performance from a medical perspective different from most. The ancient Chinese physicians

were among history's first sexologists. They spent thousands of years observing their patients to learn more about the nature of gender and the optimal ways to utilize sex for pleasure and healing. For my professional ancestors, sex was not just a pastime to be enjoyed for recreational and procreative purposes, but a highly valued and coveted tool: an anti-aging and peak performance strategy and the source of unlimited power to be tapped into at will. These great sages spent centuries formulating their ideas which, by the first century AD, were already quite advanced.

In this country, sex education is about how babies are made, but ancient Chinese scholars realized that a high level of sexual skill involved techniques that brought both pleasure and health. Multi-orgasmic experiences for both men and women were important aspects of lovemaking. This required men to develop the ability to separate orgasm from ejaculation. The first Kinsey report, produced in the 1950s, documented that male orgasm is not what puts a man to sleep within ten seconds of climax; rather, it is the ejaculatory process. A man could have many

orgasms in one lovemaking session if he could control the release of semen.

The idea that sex is an anti-aging and peak performance cultivation tool is based upon the idea that you can make love with skills that actually generate more life-force. You can lower your biological age by bringing more stamina into your body through sexual play. The vitality that keeps us alive is intertwined with sexual strength. The more vitality generated in the bedroom, the more that is available to live your life. Likewise, if you waste your life-force in the bedroom with unskilled sex, the weaker you become generally. While sexual ecstasy inspires the body to function at its best, sexual frustration propels people into old age.

During your precious few days at a spa or retreat, your mind slows down and your sex drive reminds you that it still exists. An acupuncturist would tell you that this is because the pot of energy that governs the mind also governs sex drive. There is one battery to run both heads, so to speak. This is true for both genders. When your brain is cranking 24/7, there is not a whole lot of juice left

over to keep your sexual engine running. It isn't that your libido is gone; it's that it's being used to cut a path through that jungle of mental activity you muddle through every day. So why wait until you are off in some resort with hot springs and palm trees? Rejuvenate your sex drive now! If you follow the idea that quieting the mind lets your libido speak louder, you can allow for the heat of passion even on a Wednesday. You can create islands in time even during the most hectic schedule. And what else is there to do on an island? Listen to music, stroll through beautiful scenery, dine upon fine food in a relaxed atmosphere, regain your strength, and boogie your brains out.

I have always suggested a once-a-week date night to my patients, even if they are single. Sexy self-care is important for health, longevity, and achievement. If that is not suitable for you, come up with your own variation, but taking the time for your sexual self will change everything for the better. Your stamina, outlook, health, athletic abilities, and love affair will improve. The rules are that

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Fire Cupping for Mastitis

A case study in effective pain relief for breastfeeding new mothers

By **DEB DAVIES**, DACM, LAc

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Acupuncture Today.

This article examines the treatment of a 42-year-old mother presenting with a chief complaint of clogged and painful milk ducts from breastfeeding with Chinese medicine, specifically using cupping. It demonstrates the simplicity and effectiveness of this modality. Why aren't more acupuncturists using this method while also suggesting the answer? It isn't taught. The specific methods used on one patient to alleviate the discomfort that brought her to seek treatment are discussed while emphasizing the ease and effectiveness of using this procedure. The results prove that while cupping is underused, it can be an effective method for treating clogged milk ducts and mastitis. A better dissemination throughout the Chinese medical community of the results breast cupping can provide, and the methods to perform the technique, would enable more acupuncturists to help new mothers have a better breastfeeding experience.

A 42-year-old female, 33 days postpartum, presented with a white spot, or plugged milk duct, on her right nipple. It hurt for her baby to latch on to her breast to feed and after breastfeeding. She was breastfeeding every 2 to 3 hours around the clock and experiencing constant burning pain in her left nipple. A white bleb (small blister) was visible on the tip of the patient's right nipple, one half inch in size, with her left nipple appearing darker than the right. Upon examination, both breasts were swollen and warm to touch. The patient noted they had been larger and warmer in the past two days than they had been since she gave birth. The patient believed her baby may have a tongue and/or lip tie but was resistant to the surgery necessary to correct it, due to the discomfort it could cause her baby.

I diagnosed her with heat and toxic-heat affecting the liver, stomach, and gallbladder channels leading to accumulation of pus with an underlying spleen qi deficiency, liver blood deficiency, and both liver and kidney yin deficiency. To treat, I cupped both breasts with glass cups, using the subsequent acupuncture prescription to clear toxic-heat, move stagnant qi in her liver and stomach channels, and tonify her spleen and kidneys. The points Spleen 4 and Pericardium 6 were used to open the chong channel, Large Intestine 11 to clear heat, Ren 6 to tonify kidney, Ren 12 to tonify

spleen and stomach, Small Intestine 1 to promote lactation and benefit the breast, and Stomach 43 to clear heat from the stomach channel.

The patient lay supine and opened both sides of her nursing bra (this does require a level of trust and comfort in the patient) then self-applied organic coconut oil on her breasts followed by several drops of lavender essential oil. A warm, large glass fire cup with 90-proof rubbing alcohol to light the cotton was used, with the treatment room kept warm. I warmed the cup with the fire before applying it to her skin, checking the temperature with my hand to make sure it was neither too hot nor too cold for her breast. This is very important to ensure the patient is comfortable and won't be caused further discomfort from incorrect cup temperature! I then placed a warm cup directly over each of her nipples and left them stationary. There was a heat lamp warming her lower abdomen as I did the cupping and the rest of her remained covered with blankets.

She experienced near instant relief! The bleb burst, milk exploded into the glass cup, and the patient's pain immediately decreased. Milk continued slowly seeping out of her nipple, so I showed the patient how to break suction when she was ready, and she removed the cup after two minutes.

Two hours after my patient left my office, she sent me a text say-

ing she just did a Rodin soak (warm Epsom saltwater soak, dipping her breasts into a large bowl for two minutes) after feeding. Attached was a picture of discharge that was preventing her milk from flowing and contributing to her pain. She expressed her tremendous feeling of relief since she was cupped, and then again when this accumulation of discharge came out.

My experience from attending hundreds of births as a birth doula, and supporting these same women postpartum, led to the concept of cupping for mastitis relief. I educated myself with the help of many postpartum women with clogged milk ducts who trusted me to help them feel better. Every single time I have used this technique, it has quickly yielded remarkable results.

Not many acupuncturists are cupping breasts, despite it being easy and effective. This drives me to shed light on this technique and the topic of supporting new mothers to the full capability of Chinese medicine through an easy-to-learn technique. Beyond ensuring the comfort level of the patient during treatment, you are simply clearing heat while moving stuck qi and blood.

This type of treatment can be applied to the thousands of women in the U.S. who attempt to breastfeed their children and end up in pain. Mastitis can become so uncomfortable that many women have stopped breastfeeding due to the pain and

lack of an effective, lasting treatment. If we can help these breastfeeding mothers have freely-flowing breasts, they could potentially breastfeed longer—an option which is wonderful for mother-child bonding as well as for building healthy immunity for the child—yet so many women are forced to choose otherwise from the pain of mastitis.

In the end, she did decide to take her baby for a laser tongue tie procedure to fix his tight jaw. As soon as the procedure was complete, both mother and child began much better breastfeeding sessions, where she experienced little to no pain. The baby is now getting plenty of milk, gaining weight, and is less fussy overall. The patient came in once more 3 weeks later, and we repeated the same treatment to clear out any residual accumulations. Since I have not heard from her again, the conclusion is that the combined treatment of mother and child was effective in relieving any breastfeeding pain.

While this is one case study that proved to be especially responsive to breast cupping for mastitis, through my experience in my pre/postnatal specialty practice, it is not an abnormal result. Fire cupping has been an uncomplicated and effective modality for many women who have come into my practice and allowed me to treat them. By sharing this method, I hope to encourage other acupuncturists to turn to cupping when they encounter the same complaints from new mothers. **AIM**

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DEB DAVIES, DACM, LAc, is passionately following her calling by supporting families in a natural way throughout their pregnancy, birth, and postpartum journeys. She is a doctor of Chinese medicine, a childbirth educator, a best-selling author, a birth doula, and a mother. "From Fearing Your Birth to Loving Your Birth" is Deb's signature birth preparation online class for expectant couples.



The 6 Healing Sounds and Their Therapeutic Applications

By OSNAT LIVNI, HHP, CI

Sounds are among the most powerful vibrations in our universe. Do you recall hearing traffic noise from afar, a sleepless night when neighbors are partying several blocks away, or joyful sounds of children laughing in a distant playground? Sound waves have the power to penetrate through cement walls and glass windows. They have a significant impact on our brains as well, as they vibrate through the nervous system and soft tissues of the human body. The sounds we absorb and the sounds we voice have significant impact on our daily experiences.

The six healing sounds are primary, pre-language vocal expressions. Regardless of culture, race, or geographical location, babies all over the world express these sounds prior to communication through words. According to the Taoist teaching of Chi Nei Tsang, the six healing sounds are associated with the 5 Elements and the Navel Gate.

Each of these vocal tones vibrates through the body in a unique frequency that activates a specific element and its related organs.

Chinese medicine views the internal organs as containers of the qi, our life force energy, including our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects. The healing sounds help to harmonize the qi vibrations amongst all these aspects. By using a specific vowel, sound waves access a particular organ and open up energetic blocks and stagnation, restoring flow and vitality.

As infants, we make these sounds instinctively to support and strengthen the development of our life-giving systems. As we grow, the sounds are replaced with words, and we stop using them.

Toning the six healing sounds is a powerful practice that preserves our connection to our primary instincts as infants, assisting in nurturing and rejuvenating the internal organs throughout our life.

Toning requires deep breaths with long exhalations to vocalize the sound. This brings calmness to the entire nervous system, allowing us to open blocked qi, balance the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual vibrations, transform unsupportive feelings or thoughts, and enhance our health and wellbeing.

Toning activates our vocal cords and opens up the throat chakra. This energetic center is associated with the communication, expression, creativity, and speaking one's truth.

The throat is also a bridge between the head and the chest. The healing sounds connect our brain with our heart, creating harmonious flow between the body, the emotions, and the mind.

INTENTIONAL SOUNDS

Intentional sounds are very beneficial for emotional healing. Scientists have found that sounds and music have a therapeutic effect as they register in different areas of the brain. The beat, rhythm, pitch, and volume each activate a specific area of the brain and harmonize them—especially the amygdala, the part of the brain that processes emotions and feelings.

Emotions are the bridge between the dense and the subtle vibrations of the body, as they contain two components:

1. The energetic element of **energy in motion** (“e-motion”, “emotion”). Flowing waves of subtle vibrations influence the state of the electromagnetic field.
2. The physical element of **feelings**. As the refined energy of the emotions accumulates more density, it produces chemical changes and physical sensations.

Feelings are the languishing of sensations, in which the emotions communicate with the physical body. They bridge between the subtle vibrations and the tangible aspects of our physical experience. Balancing the emotions supports the healing of physical symptoms enhancing flow and vitality.

There are many therapeutic applications of the healing sounds. I still recall the profound experience at my first exploration of these sounds in a Chi Nei Tsang training course. Various sensations and symptoms in my body began to make sense and heal. I learned to recognize them as energetic blocks calling for attention.

Later on in my practice, I created the “Soul-Gate Healing” emotional release process. It includes verbal intentions to increase awareness of one's emotional stress and tools to transform tension. Blending this process with the healing sounds helps my clients overcome various symptoms and purify un-supportive beliefs and tense emotions. It is especially beneficial when incorporated with hands-on methods, such as:

CNT internal organ manipulations: to support the functions of the organs for purification and rejuvenation with hands-on techniques while toning the sounds.

Navel points: to open up the Navel Gate, our original gate of nourishment and purity.

Massage: to release pain, stress, and toxicity from the body's cells, increasing qi circulation and strengthening overall health.

Acupressure points: to enhance the potency and therapeutic effect of the points.

Balancing the chakras: to harmonize the main energetic centers of the body and their related organs.

Qi/yoga/meridians stretch: combines the healing sounds with qigong movements, yoga, meridians stretch, and meditations. This practice deepens the connection to our core, to the breath, to oneself, and to others. It strengthens the physical body, calms the emotions, and harmonizes our yin and yang energy flow for rejuvenation and relaxation.

In our divided world of systematic race, cultural hate, aggression and survival challenges, practice with healing sounds helps to unite us all as human beings. It brings us back to our pre-language authentic self, so that we may bridge our differences, heal, and find peace within and without.

SOUL-GATE HEALING – THE ART OF TRANSFORMATION WITH THE SIX HEALING SOUNDS

The Sound: JJJJJJ – Wood
Vibrates in the jaw. Opens the liver and gallbladder. Transforms resentful attitude into forgiving gratitude.

Toning JJJJJ helps transform anger into forgiveness and compassion.

The Sound: Haaa – Fire (Yin)
Vibrates in the chest, heart, pericardium, san jiao, and thyroid. Transforms blocked emotions into creative motions.

Toning Haaa helps transform anxiety and self-doubts to excitement, love, inner guidance, and gratitude. Let go of inhibition and trust your intuition!

The Sound: VVVVV – Earth
Vibrates in the lips; activates the spleen and stomach. Transforms survival tension into abundance and expansion.

Toning VVVVV helps transform worries to fulfillment, contentment, and calmness; a sense of balance, harmony, abundance, prosperity, and clarity regarding the spiritual path.

The Sound: ZZZZ – Metal
Vibrates in the nose, activates the

lungs and lower intestine. Transforms stress and negativity into the vital force of creativity.

Toning ZZZZZ helps transform grief to letting go and the courage to flow with life's changes.

The Sound: Whooo – Water
Vibrates in the lower abdomen, the spine, bladder, kidneys, adrenals, and reproductive system; transforms fear to freedom.

Toning Whoooo helps transform fears to inner peace, confidence, and trust of oneself and others.

The Sound: Heeee
Vibrates at the waistline and activates the Navel Gate – good for overall healing and wellbeing. **AIM**

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The Science of Hearing by Douglas L. Oliver .
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She is a graduate of the Bio-Energetic School of Massage in Israel, the Clayton School of Natural Healing, and the Mueller College of Holistic Studies in the USA. She was trained in traditional Chinese medicine, acupressure, and Chi Nei Tsang through San Francisco State University and the Healing Tao Center of Mantak Chia in NY. Osi is an AOBTA certified instructor and NCBTMB Provider.

Osi has been in the healing field for over 30 years and has been teaching since 1995. She is a faculty member at Pacific College of Health and Science. She served as the head of the Asian program at Mueller College, taught at the California Naturopathy College and IPSB College, and offers independent workshops and private sessions. She has published training videos, study books and articles.

In her practice, Osi provides a unique blend of emotional and physical healing.

She brings a special body-mind-spirit awareness to her work based on her qigong and yoga practices, as well as her experience as a modern dancer. Visit: www.soulgatehealing.com

Getting Started with Cold Therapy

By Thomas P. Seager, PhD

The reasons to begin a regular practice of deliberate cold exposure are multidimensional and complex, including relief from pain and inflammation¹, muscle gain and hormonal rebalancing², increased insulin sensitivity and metabolic health³, autoimmune regulation⁴, accelerated ketogenesis for cancer control⁵, and psychological resilience for stress management⁶. However, the methods by which people begin cold therapy are similar and simple. It is recommended to reacclimatize to cold exposure slowly, to get used to the *idea* of being cold, before you move on to more advanced practices.

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF COLD THERAPY AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Figure 1 below summarizes some of the methods for beginning a deliberate cold exposure practice, and some of the risks that are experienced at more advanced levels.

LEVEL 1: INTRODUCTION TO COLD EXPOSURE

During hot summer months, people seeking to cool off will eventually find their way to the beach, pool, lake, mountain stream -- or backyard sprinkler. Along the entire Pacific coast, the North Atlantic, and even the Great Lakes, water temperatures will be cold enough to promote some of the benefits of cold therapy. In this way, most people have fond memories of experiences with cold water -- especially as children.

One of the reasons we grow more sensitive to cold water swimming as we age is because our bodies gradually lose the brown fat that kept us warm as babies. Because brown fat is packed with mitochondria for energy production, they are the key to supercharging our metabolism and maintaining thermoregulation during cold exposure. Without regular exposure to cold temperatures, our bodies adapt by gradually

shrinking stores of brown fat until there's hardly any left when we reach adulthood. Children, on the other hand, haven't lost all their brown fat yet, so they typically are more comfortable in colder weather, despite the fact that they have a larger surface area to body mass ratio.

Although it takes exposure to frigid temperatures to recruit new brown fat, it may be that periodic cold water swimming is enough stimulation to prevent the loss of existing stores, and any water body that feels cold enough to make you shiver is probably sufficient to get you reaccustomed to more advanced methods of cold therapy, at which greater metabolic benefits are found.

LEVEL 2: COLD THERAPY FOR METABOLIC REGULATION

Most adults in modern, industrialized, Western societies suffer to some degree from metabolic syndrome. As Benjamin Bikman, PhD explains in

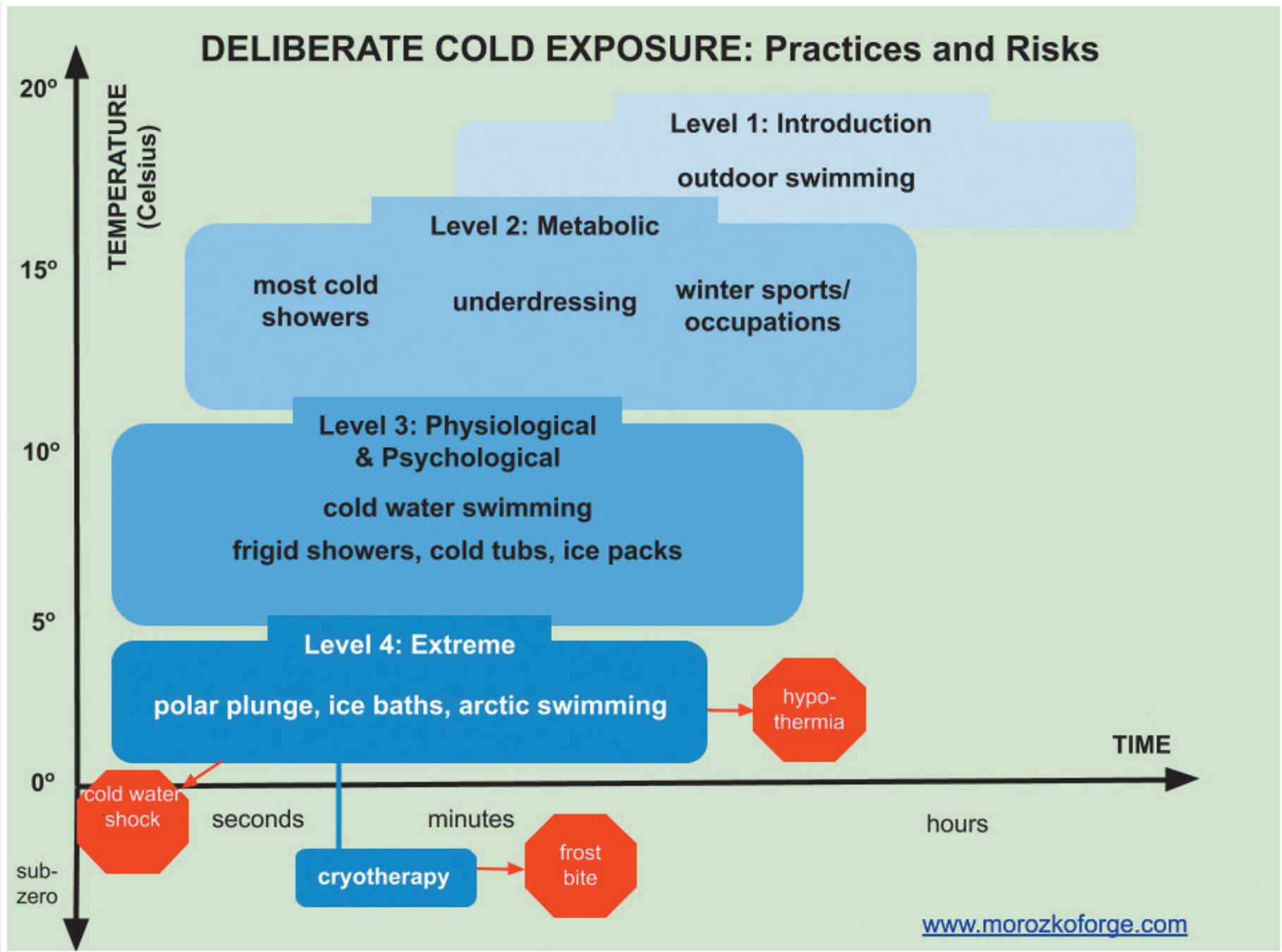
*Why We Get Sick*⁷, the root cause of eight of ten leading causes of death in the United States is too much insulin in the bloodstream -- a condition called *hyperinsulinemia*.

There are several behavioral and lifestyle changes we can adopt to correct our insulin levels, including reducing carbohydrates in the diet and increasing exercise. However, the fastest way to clear glucose from the bloodstream and improve insulin sensitivity is cold therapy. In just ten days of mild cold exposure without exercise or diet restrictions, a cohort of middle-aged German men with type 2 diabetes noticed improvements in glucose infusion rate of up to 80%. (See Figure 2 next page)

These metabolic benefits are obtainable at the next level of cold therapy practice, where temperatures go a little lower. Winter underdressing, cold showers, or winter sports like

continued on page 15

FIGURE 1



Deliberate cold exposure becomes more dangerous at lower temperatures

skiing and ice skating can accomplish the same results as the mild cold exposure in the German study.

LEVEL 3: PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS

While the metabolic benefits of cold therapy are obtainable at mild temperatures for promoting shivering, the psychological benefits don't start until temperatures that will create an anxiety response are reached. One of the standard psychological tests of stress response is called the *cold pressor test*, and it require immersion of the subject's hand in a bowl or bucket of ice water -- cold enough to activate the autonomic nervous system to create involuntary physiological and psychological reactions.

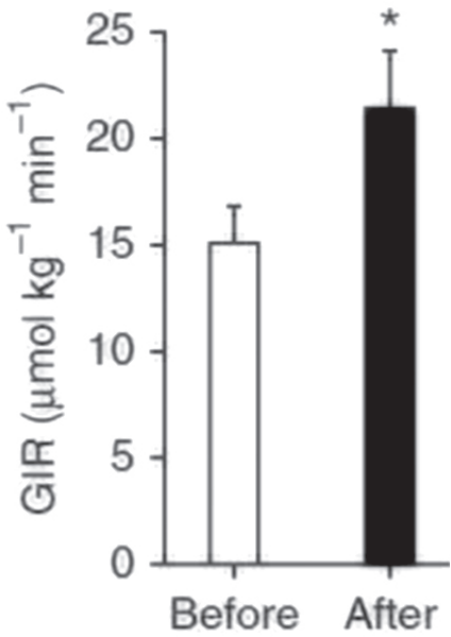
Only freezing temperatures are sufficient to frighten the body into an involuntary gasp reflex, vasoconstriction of the outer blood vessels, and increased heart rate. At this level of cold therapy, it is essential that the cold exposure is *deliberate*. That is, accidental or unintentional cold exposure will stimulate metabolic responses, but may create the wrong psychological stress response by amplifying fears, rather than inoculating against them. Some brave athletes, models, and body builders using cold therapy for pain or inflammation may fail to master the art of deliberate cold exposure without an experienced guide. Although they might tolerate two or more minutes in the cold, their competitive training sometimes causes them to remain in an activated state for their entire cold plunge, thus missing the opportunity to strengthen the parasympathetic (rest and digest) response responsible for calming the brain and body back down.

LEVEL 4: EXTREME COLD THERAPY

The most advanced level of cold therapy is where subjects will encounter the greatest dangers and the coldest temperatures. For example, cryotherapy and ice baths are both representative of the extreme level of cold therapy, but the risks can be different.

Cryotherapy typically takes places in a chamber of liquid nitrogen or chilled air that reaches temperatures of -150°F or less. When exposure exceeds just a few minutes, the risk of frostbite can become serious, because immersion in air so cold is sufficient to freeze the water inside the outer layer of skin cells. By contrast, cold water immersion in an ice bath can never reach temperatures much lower than 32°F -- even in ice baths treated with Epsom salt. The warmer temperatures of the water (compared to cryochambers) eliminate the risk of frostbite and allow longer exposure times. However, the risk of longer exposure is hypothermia, in which the core body temperature can drop one

FIGURE 2



or more degrees below the normal 98.6°F. At such low body temperature, rewarming can require a painful period four or five times longer than the exposure time.

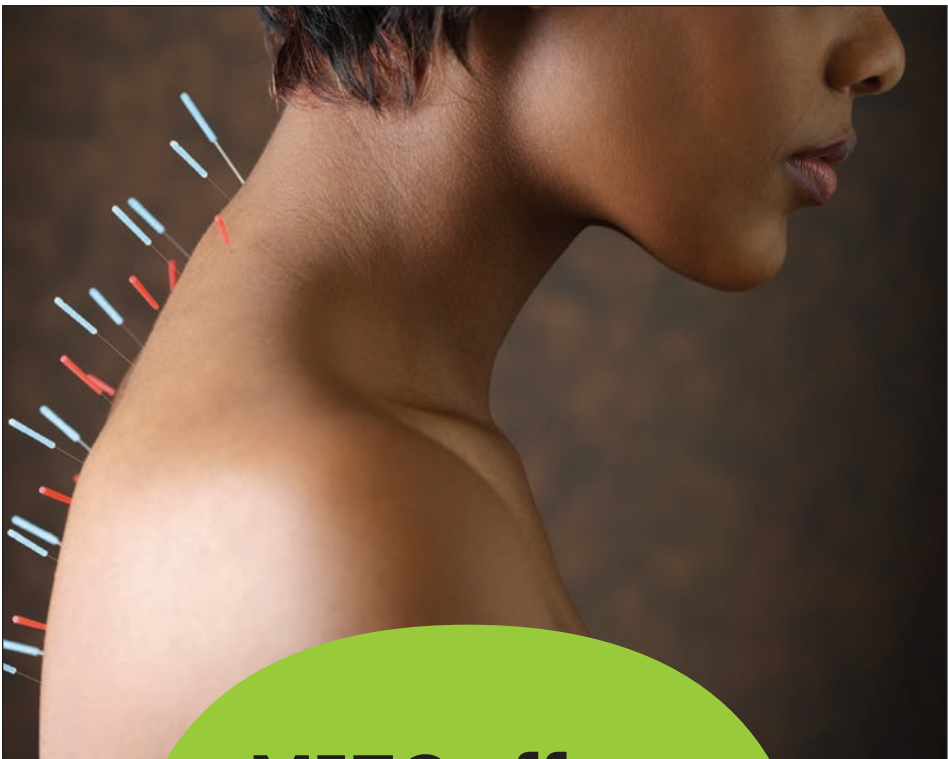
Perhaps the greatest danger to extreme cold therapy is called the *mammalian dive reflex*—a potentially deadly phenomenon that can happen when plunging face-first into icy cold water. The dive reflex takes place when the cold water shock of sudden immersion initiates a gasp response while the breathing passages (nose and mouth) are underwater. An involuntary intake of cold water can result, filling the lungs and drowning the victim.

To prevent risk of the dive reflex, Morozko recommends entering the ice bath feet first, always, and to avoid submerging the nose and mouth face down in the Forge. Only Wim Hof and some Navy SEALs, who are among the most advanced practitioners of deliberate cold exposure in the world, need take the risk of holding their breath under icy water. **AIM**

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10 Clues That Your Screen Time Behavior is Impacting Your Vision

By Gregory Kelly

“My eyes are always tired” ... “My eyes hurt” ... “I’m having a hard time focusing” ... “My eyes feel dry and irritated” ... “Things look blurry”

High amounts of screen time cause the body to give us vision—and quite often posture-related—feedback clues. It can also impact thinking and mood. Let’s focus on the visual system, because clues in this area are (1) a common type of feedback, and (2) an indication of visual system stress. Postural complaints, like neck stiffness and back aches, are partly to mostly a result of ergonomics, or postural discomfort, while looking at screens rather than the mere fact that we were looking at them. Cognitive and mood complaints can be clues that the eye strain stress is exhausting the eyes and the brain.

Almost immediately after computer VDTs entered the workforce in

the 1970s, the workers using this new technology began to have a cluster of similar complaints. Today the group of complaints are categorized as “eye strain”. The exact way any individual experiences eye strain can vary, but a person will have one, and quite commonly many of the following complaints:

- Strained eyes
- Tired eyes
- Itchy eyes
- Irritated, sore, or burning sensations in eyes
- Eye dryness
- Teary or watery eyes
- Blurry or double vision
- Difficulty in focusing
- Sensitivity to light or glare
- Headache sensation

Some people have eye strain and are aware of it, but many others are either unaware—or pseudo-aware, meaning that they fall somewhere between not making the connection between their screen time behaviors and how their eyes are feeling and performing, to realizing screens may be affecting their eyes but not realizing how much. This unawareness or pseudo-awareness is because the digital eye strain complaint(s) can seem relatively minor, be confusing as to what’s causing them, can come and go (i.e., be transient as opposed to constant), or change over time.

Watery eyes, as an example, may mean that we are reacting to an allergen in the environment, so it’s not always obvious the cause is screen time behaviors. While some people experience watery eyes, others experience its opposite, dry eyes. Of the two, watery eyes might be an early phase of an attempt at adaptation to

screen time, with the eyes trying to soothe themselves to replace blinking (we typically blink less when looking at screens). But adaptation can run out, with many people experiencing the opposite feedback—dryer eyes—as the glands that are responsible for secreting oil into our tears eventually produce poor quality or inadequate amounts of the oils that slow the evaporation of tears.

The blurry vision from screen time can be very similar to blurry vision caused by refractive errors (i.e., nearsightedness). The blurred vision could be constant; it could also be intermittent, making it easier to ignore or harder to pinpoint the reason for it. While it’s not unusual for blurred vision, especially at a distance, to be worse post spending hours on a screen, it’s easy to not make the connection between our

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strengthened over time. As stated before, the Universe most often gives us more than we ask for if we get out of our own way and allow. By releasing attachment and importance of our intention/goal we tell the Universe that we trust in the process of life and that we are open to receiving something greater.

Look for the signs. If you look for them, you will see messages from the Divine that your desire is coming your way. Sometimes those signs come in the way of someone else getting or achieving what you want. It is incredibly important that when/if this happens, you celebrate with those people on their achievement. At the end we are all one, and if you pinch yourself off from the collective, you are blocking yourself from receiving for yourself. You can also ask for a sign from the Universe that you are on the right path or that your desire is on its way.

Receive what comes to you. Allow good things to come to you without guilt, a feeling of needing to earn it and/or obligation. The Universe may be testing you to see if you are ready. And when you do finally allow yourself to receive, receive with gratitude as this only attracts more of

what you want to you.

Stay the course. Great things take time. It takes bamboo five years before it sprouts out of the ground, but when it does, it grows incredibly fast. Be patient with yourself. If you are truly aligned with your heart's calling, doing what you love and working towards something for which you are passionate, time will drop away and become un-noticeable.

Speaking of passion, why am I so passionate about this topic and feel so strongly that we, as healthcare practitioners and lightworkers need to master this more than anyone else?

It's because we are models for our patients and the whole world. People look to us to see if we will walk our talk and be the example that we want to see in the world. Our patients, our families, our communities and even the sceptics of the world watch us to see if what we are telling everyone is real, effective, and truly possible.

Since we affect the lives of so many people by our treatment sessions and the way we live our own lives it's even more important that we first learn how to manage our own limited belief behavior so that we can help others do the same.

I am not claiming that this work is easy because it's not. It takes work, dedication, time, patience and sometimes even grace. But I promise you, it's worth it.

If not now, when? What excuses start to come to the surface for you? What if you could eliminate those excuses? What would your life look like if you were living the life of your dreams? What would you be doing every day? How would you feel? How would you serve the world? What gifts would you share? When you are looking back on your life, what do you wish to see?

Sadguru, one of my favorite spiritual thought leaders, often reminds us that life is short and we are mortal beings. Embracing our mortality can help us focus on what's important and chose to live a life full of joy. He is quoted to say: "Once you are clear about what you are doing and why, other people's opinions will not matter."

When it comes to going for your goals/dreams/desires/passions – be sacredly selfish. I mean this. No one is going to give you permission to pursue your dreams. You must give it to yourself. Yes, you need to do the

work, stay the course, overcome limited beliefs, and remove all obstacles to your joy. However, I promise that by taking these steps, you will ultimately find yourself living a life you absolutely love. I am right there with you, still working on these things as well. I've come to realize it's a process and a life-time pursuit. Wherever you are on this journey, please know that you're not alone, you've got this and that living a life beyond your wildest hopes and dreams is my wish for you, sincerely and whole-heartedly. **AIM**

With a commitment to helping others actualize their greatest potential and well-being, **DR. EAST** has been a licensed acupuncturist since 1999 and professor of Chinese medicine at the Pacific College of Health Science since 2004. Specializing in MIE (Motivation, Inspiration, and Encouragement), Dr. East helps practitioners of alternative medicine align with their three P's: Purpose, Passion, and Prosperity. In 2019 she published the book *More Than a Treatment* which held the Amazon bestseller's list in Practice Management for several weeks. She currently resides in Del Mar, CA with her husband and two kids and continues to help patients, students, other practitioners and the general public with her lectures, workshops, books, events, coaching programs, and wellness related products.



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recent screen time behaviors and eye performance.

It's difficult for many adults to make the connection between how their eyes perform and their screen time behaviors; it's even less likely teens and children will make the connection. If you are a parent, keep in mind that children of all ages, even teenagers, may be less likely than adults to figure out there's a relationship between how their eyes are feeling and the time they are spending on devices with screens.

If nothing is done to address eye strain complaints early, they are almost certainly going to continue—assuming our screen time behaviors don't change substantially—and very frequently worsen with ongoing screen usage (the number of years of screen time is a very strong predictor of eye strain). Stress accumulates and the future price is usually higher than today's, so it's important to understand how screens are affecting your eyes today.

Before going any further, take a few moments to rate (e.g., Not At All, Slightly, Moderately, Severely, Very Severely) how you experienced the complaints listed below during the past week. We've put numbers under each of these ratings, to give them a score. Once you've rated each complaint, add up the numbers, to get your total score. Higher scores suggest more severe screen time eye stress. (See Figure 1)

If you had a score of more than a few points, you are like the majority of people surveyed: in January 2021, Neurohacker Collective had close to 700 people rate these complaints. The average score for all participants surveyed was about 16 points. Almost 80% of the participants had scores of 10 points or higher: Three out of 10 had scores of 20 or higher. This was not a surprise. Screen time behaviors for more and more people continue to increase. No wonder more and more people are experiencing multiple eye stress complaints that are causing them significant amounts of visual system discomfort.

Screen time can take a toll on anyone's eyes, ranging from fatigue and strain to dryness and blurry vision. But the exact way eye stress is experienced can vary individually. Eye strain symptoms are often grouped into two main categories—internal (double vision, blurred vision, difficulty refocusing) and external (dryness, excessive tearing, burning, itching). The internal complaints have a lot to do with focusing the eye at about the same distance for hour after hour, which requires ocular and lens muscles to work overtime. The external symptoms are related to stress on the outer surface of the eyes and occur because ocular surface eye protective mechanisms

are, in a sense, getting exhausted. Feelings of eyes being tired, sore, or achy don't fit neatly into either group; they may be more whole eye symptoms. While the toll taken can vary somewhat, in most people, screen time behaviors place stress on all of the eye, from the ocular surface all the way to the retina.

HOW EYE STRAIN IMPACTS COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE AND MOOD

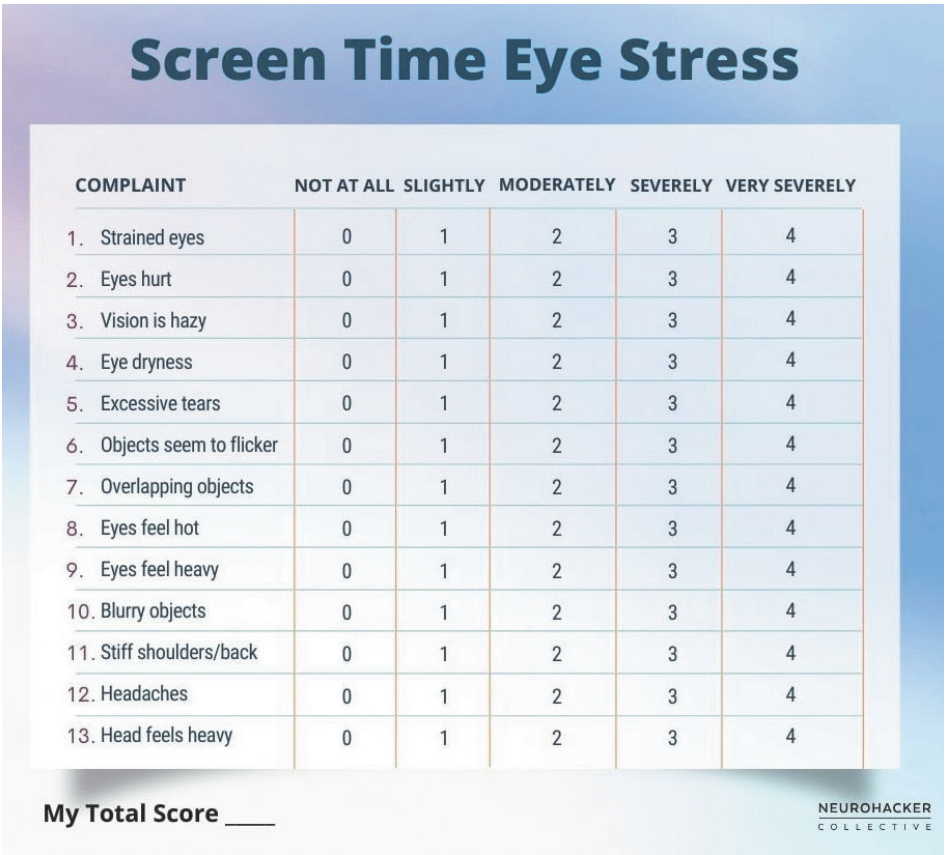
Eye strain can linger after we've turned off the screen, impacting our ability to perform other visual activities after prolonged screen time. It can also stress cognitive performance and mood. This should not be surprising. As neuroscientist Andrew D. Huberman, the head of the Huberman Lab at the Stanford School of Medicine, said when interviewed by Dave Asprey on Bulletproof radio, "The eyes are fundamentally the most powerful driver of what we think, what we feel, and ultimately what we can do, because they set the basic level of alertness or sleepiness."

The eyes are not just two external things connected to the brain; in a very real sense, they are the brain. The retina and optic nerve are, anatomically speaking, part of the brain, and the eye is part of the forebrain during embryological development—essentially birthed by neurological tissue. As we grow from infants to adults, it's the combination of the maturation of the eye working with the brain that creates perception, the ability to see well and perform perceptual cognitive tasks.

Not only is the eye-brain an integrated whole, but sighted humans are primarily visual creatures. For most of us, vision is the dominant sense used to interact with the external world. Because of this, visual processes occupy the largest amount of real estate in the cerebral cortex—this is the area of the brain that, among other things, receives and processes sensory information—with 20–30% of the cortex devoted to vision. As much as half of the human brain may be involved, directly or indirectly, in visual processing according to research conducted in the mid-1990's by scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). So, quite a bit of brain real estate and processing power is used for vision. This means that, when the eyes are open, a large amount of the electrical activity of the brain will be involved in seeing.

Brain electrical activity is a type of work, and like all work, it takes energy. Vision-related activities use quite a bit of metabolic energy. Compared to dark or dim conditions, the amount of energy used by the visual cortex can increase more than 50% as the amount or richness of visual

FIGURE 1



information increases significantly. Thinking and mood are brain functions that require work; they compete for metabolic energy with other cognitive demands. If we are placing more demands on the visual system—which screen time does—it makes sense that other brain work may be short-changed when it comes to brain energy, and, as a result, have performance impacted. For many people, this seems to be exactly what occurs: anecdotally, for example, it's common for people who spend lots of time looking at screens to feel irritable, nervous, agitated, fatigued, or some combination of all of these, as a work or school day progresses and screen time has accumulated.

Spending lots of time looking at screens can negatively impact cognitive performance, especially in areas related to productivity, attention, concentration, and working memory. Even when comparing a seemingly identical type of visual work, reading text, as an example, screens and paper copy don't produce identical performance results. Several dozen studies have reported that students of all ages, from elementary school to college, tend to absorb more when they're reading on paper than on screens, particularly when it comes to nonfiction material. It's thought that some of the difference in reading performance may be related to screens producing a greater workload and consuming more mental resources, which stresses the brain's finite energy resources and information processing capacity.

Screen time behaviors stress the eyes; they also seem to stress the brain. How we are using our eyes can and does impact how the eyes feel and function, as well as how we perform mentally and emotionally. **AIM**

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What is Stress?

By **JAY T. WILES**, BCB, BCB-HRV

DEFINING STRESS

Stress is a ubiquitous term. Just walk down your local grocery aisle and you are going to be inundated with the term and proposed methods for helping in every tabloid. Arguably, the most interesting aspect of this five-letter word is that it is often used in everyday conversation without thought as to what it actually means. Like anything in life, you can become desensitized to a word the more you use it and hear it. When we say “stress”, what are we actually referring to? A physiological experience? Psychological experience? Both? This article is going to tackle the immense subject-matter of stress. What it is, how it manifests, and what can you do about it.

First things first, we cannot ignore the significant, and arguably universal, impact that stress has had on every individual. According to The American Institute of Stress (2021), 77% report that stress affects their physical health. They have even deemed it as, “America’s number one health problem.” It is a problem that affects adults, families, teens, children, seniors, or anyone with a breath, for that matter. If stress is not the root cause of ailment, it will certainly exacerbate symptoms and reduce positive outcomes. If you haven’t gotten the picture yet, it’s a serious problem. The crazy thing is, it is one that is a problem that is talked about, but still somewhat swept under the rug.

77%

of people report that stress affects their physical health.

So, what is stress? As mentioned before, because of the ubiquity of the term there have been many proposed definitions throughout the years. While a consolidated and universal definition has not been agreed upon, we certainly know, from research, the predominant characteristics of so-called stress. A simple, yet still confusing definition for stress is that it refers to the body’s response to change in stimuli or a stressor(s). Let’s parse this out: similar to the experience of anxiety, many individuals consider stress to be a state

Relational

- Social isolation
- Resentment
- Diminished self-worth/self-esteem
- Guilt/shame
- Externalized anger towards family/friends



or experience that is associated with a person’s perceived inability or limited resources to take on certain demands—note that this is more consistent with the psychological definition of stress. When our perceived capacity to utilize appropriate resources to handle or take on demands is diminished, this can result in the experience of stress. Remember that stress can take many forms. It might even be appropriate to conceptualize stress as somewhat of a shape-shifter. It is also quite important to differentiate between the experience of stress and identified stressors. A stressor is the cause agent or thing that then results in emotional tension. Obviously, stressors can differ from person to person. One person’s stressor could be the other’s joy. Think public speaking: there are some individuals who absolutely relish the opportunity to speak in public, while others tremble in fear of the thought.

One of the unfortunate things that we have done is demonize stress and the human stress response. This is a huge mistake, as stress primarily serves the purpose of helping, not harming. Please remember... stress, at its core, is not intended to hinder, but to provide a guide. From an evolutionary perspective, stress is a signal, a warning sign, but can also provide a means of motivation. While it may be the warning signal to help save you from a threat, it may also serve as a means to increase productivity and help you to more efficiently/effectively accomplish your goal. Stress can be your friend. Stress is your guardian. Stress can be your absolute worst enemy. Does that mean we can choose the direction of its path? A path of influence? Or a path of destruction? Short answer... yes and yes, but it is nuanced—as is everything in health, physiology, and psychology...

EUSTRESS VS. DISTRESS...AND HOW TO HARNESS BOTH

Physical

- Headaches
- Chest pain/palpitations/arrhythmia
- Insomnia
- Shortness of breath
- Excessive perspiration, especially in the peripheries (i.e. hands)
- Reduced appetite
- Fatigue/malaise
- Enhanced pain subjectivity



As mentioned before, stress is not uniform, but is universal. If you take anything from this article, please do not think that stress has to be either good or bad. It is both. Confusing, right? Let’s clear this up a bit by turning our attention to two common terms in the field of stress research and psychophysiology. I am referring to the concepts of eustress and distress.

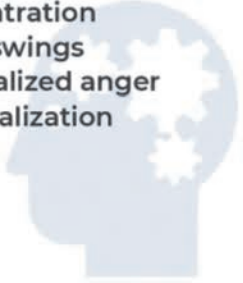
Let’s start with the latter, as this is more commonly identified (and researched for that matter) definition of stress. Distress is thought to be a form of stress that results in a negative impact on the individual. This is loosely defined, but covers a lot of ground. For instance, distress can impact one’s physical, mental, cognitive, relational, spiritual health. To provide a little more context, here is a breakdown of how distress manifests:

Distress tends to be a state that halts progress and subsequent success. It is the experience that inhibits forward movement and relinquishes our ability to thrive and perform. While this is not always the case, it does characterize the predominant features of stress.

Now that we have a working definition of distress, let’s talk about the antithesis: eustress. It is not that eustress and distress operate on a linear plot, like a see-saw; that when one goes up the other comes down. It does not work that way. These are two separate constructs that can be opposing or unified/collaborative. In general, they operate differently. Eustress is the stress that motivates, moves us forward, allows for flow, and gives us drive to perform. A prime example of this is in athletics. Professional athletes will tell you that they operate best out of a heightened stress state—but the Goldilocks principle applies here. Not too hot, not too cold, but just right. That is what eustress is. It is the type of stress that pushes and motivates change. Other

Mental/Emotional/Cognitive

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Difficulty with concentration
- Mood swings
- Externalized anger
- Demoralization



examples of eustress can be exercise, social events, and maybe even work deadlines.

Eustress tends to be very personalized. This goes back to the idea that one person’s joy is the other’s poison. Have you ever heard someone say they work best under pressure? That is eustress. A lot of high-performing executives thrive under intensive deadlines to produce their best work. For others, when they experience a deadline for work, they implode...or explode. It is all about the frame of reference and how you choose to adapt to the event. Yes, I used the word “choose”—it is a loaded statement, but choice is a large variable in how stress affects you.

ASSESSING AND EVALUATING YOUR EXPERIENCE OF STRESS

Now that I have either pushed you away or motivated you with that last statement, I want to examine the question of how you can tell if a stressor is manifesting as distress or eustress. The funny thing is, most people do not take the time to identify or tell the difference, or they get too busy and caught up in the idea that everything is painful. Ever met anyone like this? Exercise is painful. Socializing is painful. Work is painful. Yes, this is psychological and physical pain. It is all viewed from a shaded lens of distress and therefore life is distress...and therefore “I am distressed.” See how the vicious cycle becomes a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy? So, do you know anyone? Maybe the handsome person you see in the mirror?

Regardless, we all have the opportunity to increase our level of self-awareness and learn to self-regulate. Self-awareness is identifying how stress is manifesting, how it is impacting your mental and physical health, and how it might be destroying your social relationships. It may

continued on page 20

be that everything you experience is solely through the lens of distress. What if you viewed everything from the lens of eustress? Crazy, I know, but bear with me. Eustress utilizes the Goldilocks rule, but what if we self-sabotage to drive what should be eustress into the domain of distress? What if we like to take pity on ourselves...or even have others pity us by framing our interaction and experience with stressors in the camp of distress. Do you think that might impact your overall well-being? Of course it would!

I am not trying to convince you that every encounter of stress has to be used to motivate you for change. Sometimes life throws us massive curveballs. A death in the family, divorce, poverty, inequality, etc., these things are tough. But what if there is some level of personal molding and enhancement that can be had in every situation? I'll let you be the judge.

In conclusion: it has not been stated, but stress is here and it is not going anywhere. It is a natural, unavoidable, and necessary part of life. Both for good and bad, stress is going to play an inevitable role in your life. Will you harness every experience as negative and self-sabotage?



Eustress

Eustress is the stress that motivates, moves us forward, allows for flow, and gives us drive to perform.



Distress

Distress is thought to be a form of stress that results in a negative impact on the individual.

Or will you strike while the iron is hot and allow stress to be used in more beneficial ways? **AIM**

DR. JAY T. WILES is a clinical health psychologist, currently working as the Health

Behavior Coordinator at WJB Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia, SC and the Greenville Outpatient VA Clinic. He has specialized training in health behavior coaching, health assessment, nutritional interventions for mental and physical health, motivational interviewing, applied psycho-

physiology, and consultation. Dr. Wiles works as a consultant for companies/organizations, practitioners, and individual patients on nutritional psychology, health behavior change, applied psychophysiology, and health promotion/disease prevention via complementary and integrative practices. He is also board certified in taiji for rehabilitation.

Dr. Wiles has experience in developing and enhancing health behavior programs for patients with diabetes, chronic pain, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and tobacco cessation. He was responsible for the inception of the nutrition clinic in the Veteran's Integrative Pain Center at McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, VA. This center is a self-management, non-opioid prescribing clinic for veterans with chronic pain looking for alternative means to pain reduction. Services at this clinic included acupuncture, biofeedback, anti-inflammatory nutrition, mindfulness meditation, CBT-CP, taiji, qi-gong, yoga, and more. The Nutrition Clinic was developed as a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to pain management via tailored nutrition plans. Operating from an ancestral approach, nutritional approaches prescribed included ketogenic, paleo, anti-inflammatory, and elimination/reintegration lifestyle changes.

Dr. Wiles is passionate about education and consultation with patients and organizations to increase health outcomes through focusing on prevention and well-being, as opposed to disease and symptom mitigation.

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clinical treatment with proactive health and resiliency maximization, a form of wellness-based medicine where the primary physician is within oneself. These systems maximize inherent capacity: homeostatic capacity, mitochondrial fitness, trans-normal abilities, peak performance, and flow.

The core of healing and prevention in the ancient Asian systems is the activation of naturally occurring inner healing resources through personal behaviors through a system called *yang sheng*, which is equivalent to today's health hacking and self-directed wellness systems—nutrients, rest, and hydration, combined with qigong and taiji (and kung fu and yoga). Based on the knowledge, wisdom, and application of Chinese wellness-based practices, individuals, families, agencies, institutions, communities, states, and even nations can easily prevent diseases that are widely known to be preventable and eliminate unnecessary medical costs. This is essentially activating flow!

THE BASIS: QIGONG AND TAIJI

It is widely known that many horrific diseases are preventable. (2, 3) The American wellness and health hacking revolution is now wide awake. Recently, a former US President put the words “prevention” and “personal responsibility” into the same phrase and set 8 principles of healthcare, including “invest in prevention and wellness”.(4) When our society looks for what to actually do about this, one of the cheapest “programs” (due to group-based implementation) is Asian self-care—yang sheng with qigong and taiji: methods for evoking the flow experience.

Buried in the Affordable Care Act, which is controversial but still in force, there are numerous clauses that incentivize health promotion and disease prevention with financial benefits and even penalties for the neglect of health promotion. This suggests that the application of qigong and taiji and all of the Asian wellness-oriented (yang sheng) practices could eventually gain the support of policy and law in coming years. However, while politicians argue and obstruct, favoring big pharma, citizens are not waiting. We are hacking the brain, the vagal system, the telomeres, the mitochondria—and the qi—now.

A SECRET WORTHY OF BEING COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The same mechanism that mobilizes healing resources through Chinese clinical therapeutics can be activated by average citizens at home for no cost. Individuals can heal themselves as well as collaborate with their integrative medical team. The citizens of any nation can solve health crises due to chronic degenerative disease through the application of personal

practice of qigong and taiji, as well as yoga and meditation. We know that people who live engaged holistic lives can experience reduced risk of hospitalization and death.

It is possible for people to curtail the waste of billions of dollars annually. It is a potential bailout—and a kind of patriotism.

MY OWN REVELATION

The words of Lao Zi launched me personally into Asian medicine in 1967, in Cincinnati, Ohio, in Dao De Jing # 10:

“Can you cultivate your essential energy and sustain the suppleness of a newborn with no cares?”

To me, this is the ultimate health/medical insight—a direct reference to the natural, inherent presence of wu wei within each person: a natural orientation to flow. Is it possible that doctors of both conventional and traditional medicine should have more questions for their clients and fewer answers? In my career, this question, and others posed by Lao Zi, form the theoretical and economic basis for the emerging wellness-based system of healthcare and medicine in the 21st century.

Another question that comes from the Dao De Jing, #52:

“Do you practice eternity?”

Questions like this are not typically a part of medical inquiry, but they point to aspects of personal awareness that can lead to healing insight offered by neither surgery nor pharmaceutical products. Eternity isn't trying; it is fully engaged in unfolding. Eternity suggests that we emulate wu wei and flow.

THE HEALER WITHIN

Those trained in Chinese medicine know, either overtly or covertly, that the medicine is not in the acupuncture needle; it is in the patient. The job of the provider (doctor, practitioner) is not to cure the disease, but to maximize the natural healing capacity of the human system.

In a time when we have evidence that many diseases are preventable, it is fair to say that a key solution to problems in healthcare and medicine is to focus on the prevention of preventable disease. The underlying wellness basis which is inherent to Chinese medicine is rapidly becoming a prominent new feature of healthcare and medicine in many innovative initiatives, policies, and programs.

Certainly, the breakthroughs in surgery, pharmacy and diagnostics of Western conventional medicine have relevance. However, it is the “discovery” (probably better referred to as the recovery) of behavioral prevention, and the healer within, that will leave a prominent mark in the medical history in these early years of the 21st century. Awareness

of the inner medicine, the inherent functional elixir, is rapidly infusing into popular culture and ways of being that include flow and wu wei are foundational. You cannot buy flow. You cannot buy wu wei. You can only create them—for no cost.

FUNCTIONAL MAXIMIZATION—FOSTER THE RIGHTEOUS

The profound holistic power of Asian medicine is that it is inherently rooted in two wellness principles that conventional Western medicine have neglected until very recently. The first is the “holistic ideal”—Body-Mind-Spirit. These Three Treasures are always linked in Chinese medicine, but they are only recently becoming linked in the emerging new conventions of Western healthcare.

The second is the “two medicines in one” principle of Chinese medicine. Shared with Western medicine is the “Attack the Disease” model. This is to kill or modify the pathogen or pathogenic factors. Both Western and Chinese medicine have excellent tools for “Attacking the Disease” strategies. Until very recently, the wellness basis, which complements “Attack the Disease”, was unique to Chinese medicine and other holistic forms of medicine: Ayurvedic, native, shamanic, it is known by many names. In the literature of Chinese medicine: the “Foster the Righteous” model. More contemporary: “Maximize Functional Capacity”.

This is the very essence of wellness-based medicine. Rather than attacking what is wrong, the “Foster the Righteous” model maximizes what is right through the tools of Chinese medicine—acupuncture, herbs, massage, and personal well-being cultivation: qigong. “Foster the Righteous” refines, awakens, and activates the “healer within”—“the inner elixir”. This is the most profound medicine, naturally produced in the body.

While clinically-based prevention has long been present in Western healthcare, only recently has behavior-based prevention been granted any relevance. As Western medicine molds itself to the wellness and prevention framework, what are the primary innovations? Physical activity, anti-inflammatory nutrition, and meditation. What is the key to behavioral prevention? These have been the central points of Chinese wellness—yang sheng—for millennia.

Conventional medical facilities are currently taking on numerous best practices of wellness and functional enhancement from the Asian healthcare model.

FLOW: MIND-BODY ENERGETICS, WU WEI AND MINDFULNESS

Among the most eloquent forms of behaviorally based wellness practice

are the Chinese mind-body energetics practices. Qigong and taiji are the cousins of yoga from India. They are all mindfulness methods, founded upon the actualization of flow.

While questions about qi (energy, function) and the nature of mind (Xin-heart-mind) are the most interesting aspects of qi cultivation, it is the economics of personal wellness that is extremely compelling to our society right now. Qigong and taiji (and other mind-body practices) are the underlying solution to many of the medical cost and quality challenges of contemporary time. They are accessible, easy to learn (simple forms), easy to get people enthusiastic about, easy to disseminate, and inexpensive due to the group-based learning context. It is really very simple: people who prevent disease and activate the inner medicine through self-initiated health enhancement practice need less clinical medicine—whether it is conventional or holistic.

The science of estimating the magnitude of the savings is progressing. For now, we can say that when people prevent disease, society can save 70-90% of the \$3.5 trillion annual cost of the medical system. That's \$3 trillion. That is a huge financial bailout. You can probably guess why no one in policy or finance ever references this.

PROVE THAT THIS IS HAPPENING

Chinese wellness practices are most widely referenced as mind-body practices, moving meditation, and Chinese self-care. Qigong and taiji, in a multitude of forms, are now being implemented in schools, universities, faith institutions, social service agencies, hospitals, clinics, spas, retreat centers, community centers—even the military. In a review of over 70 randomized clinical trials (RCT) (4), the mind-body wellness practices of Chinese medicine were found to be safe and effective in treating and preventing disease. Inspired by this, the National Institutes of Health instituted an annual event called NIH Mind-Body Week for a few years, with several keynotes on qigong and taiji (5).

In collaboration with the University of Illinois, the Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi (IIQTC) convened the National Consensus Meeting on qigong and taiji.(6) One of many new breakthroughs is the research on gene expression and the reduction of cell death (longevity enhancement) with qigong, taiji and other forms of mind-body practice. (7) A program developed especially for bringing taiji and qigong wellness programs to schools, social service agencies, the military, and veterans, amongst others, has trained 300 “practice leaders” in collaboration with the National Wellness Institute

kids, business, money, and in-laws are not permitted topics for discussion and that each date night is consistently planned for.

THE PERFECT DATE FOR SEX AND HEALING

A loaf of bread, a jug of wine and... zzzzz. I don't know who invented the romantic ideal of wining and dining followed by passionate lovemaking, but whoever it was did not understand the human body and probably had mediocre sex. To feel desire and make love well, your body needs certain conditions, just as it does if you're competing in an athletic event or taking an exam. No matter how sublime the meal or elegant the setting, no matter how thrilling the show and romantic the moonlit stroll, if you're stuffed, fatigued and tipsy, your sex won't match the standards set by the rest of the evening. Your bodies will simply not respond with their maximum potential. If you are hoping to get those juices flowing and have only so many hours away from the office, kids, and other concerns and demands, keep the following in mind.

1. The shared pleasure of a sumptuous meal is a lovely way to unite two loving souls, but if you also want to unite sexually, give your body plenty of time to digest. Dine at the beginning of your date and allow at least two hours between the last bite of food and the first nibble of your lover's lips. This means getting started early. Also, eat foods that are low in fat and animal protein, as they

- take less time to digest. Limit or eliminate the meat portion of your meal. If you are eating Italian, try pasta primavera or a marinara sauce; if you are going for Asian food, favor noodle or rice dishes with vegetables.
2. Try having an early dinner before you go out, and make your date a dessert date. A light dessert as opposed to something large and sinfully rich is a fun way to enjoy each other's company and share something sensual without overtaking your system or using up a big portion of the evening. It leaves plenty of time for a long, relaxing chat or a stroll as you digest your food before making love. If you know you are going to have a rich dessert, make sure to eat protein at dinner, as it will help keep your strength more stable for lovemaking by keeping your blood sugar on a more even keel.
3. Or, make love before dinner. Instead of using the intimacy of a meal to bring you together, why not work up an appetite with a delicious intimate encounter? Extend the warmth and closeness generated by your time in bed with a later meal. Eating a frozen dinner in the kitchen can feel like a gourmet feast in Paris when you gaze at each other with satisfied eyes.
4. If you drink alcohol on your date, keep it moderate. Since it lowers inhibition, alcohol can be a sexual asset if either of you is nervous or shy, but drinking ultimately in-

- hibits sexual function by sedating your nervous system, making you less sensitive and responsive. For some people, a small drink shortly before sex provides the relaxing benefits of alcohol without the detriments. For others, even that will backfire.
5. Be careful about your after-dinner coffee. If you feel you need caffeine to have the energy to make love, you probably should ship off to dreamland immediately. The energy you appear to get from caffeine is actually taken from tomorrow afternoon. At about 4pm, you are going to miss it and will compensate by having more coffee.
6. The room you make love in should be cozy and warm. If your skin is cold, your body must use energy to warm it. Believe it or not, this leaves just a little less for intense sexual sensation. Pay special attention to your feet. If your tootsies are chilled, it may take more stimulation of your genitals to warm them up.
7. If you have been looking forward to a wild night of passionate abandon but you are exhausted or stressed out when you get to the bedroom, don't push it. Do not make your date about getting to orgasm come hell or high water. Be honest about your fatigue and take the pressure off yourselves. Use the sexual energy you do have to create a calmer, gentler intimacy, or get some sleep and get ready for a passionate morning.

8. Drink something hot after making love. Red hot passion uses the body's energy reserves. It helps to put some heat back in once you have cooled off. Herb or green tea or hot cider are ideal. Coffee and black tea are not the best choices, since it is best not to stimulate the body with caffeine after lovemaking. Hard liquor should be avoided; because the body perceives it as a toxin and works to get rid of it, alcohol can tire you more.

Healing through pleasure is one of the great gifts of life. By supporting your body with erotic skill and attention, you reap tremendous rewards and make the world a happier place to be. Go at it! **AIM**

FELICE DUNAS, PhD, LAc, began her studies in 1970, before acupuncture colleges or a profession in the United States existed outside Asian communities, then devoted 25 years to building the profession in the U.S. through legislation, curriculum, and college development. AAAOM recognized Dunas as Acupuncturist of the Year in 2001 for introducing the ancient subject of "sexuality as medicine" to the American acupuncture profession and for introducing classical Chinese medicine to thousands of corporate CEOs. Dunas has appeared on many television and radio shows, lectured globally, and serves as a consultant to corporations and hospitals on lowering healthcare costs with acupuncture and alternative medicine. She is the author of *Passion Play: Ancient Secrets for a Lifetime of Health and Happiness Through Sensational Sex* and has contributed to publications including *Acupuncture Today*, *Prevention*, *Glamour*, and *Marie Claire*.

ACCESS AND EMBODY FLOW: QIGONG TAPS WU WEI, ANCIENT FLOW TECHNOLOGY continued from page 21

at the University of Wisconsin, the Veterans Administration, several faith institutions, Asian Pacific Health in California, the Western Nebraska Regional Health Authority, and the Southern Arkansas Council on Aging. As a result, taiji and qigong are rapidly being embraced by policy makers, program coordinators, researchers and funders.

WHAT TO DO?

Accept your sovereignty, your autonomy, your inherent power, your right to self-determination. Stop listening to what others think you should do and determine what you are called to. Yes, some focus is required. The inner medicine, the naturally occurring inner healing resources, the healer within, the inner elixir can not be purchased for any amount of money. We can only create them—for free—through simple methods. A beautiful starting place is

to hack into and maximize the functional capacity enhancement that results from cultivating flow or wu wei. The "drugs" that are produced within your own being through accessible yang sheng methods are astoundingly powerful. There are no side effects. No prescription is required! **AIM**

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DR. ROGER JAHNKE, OMD, has dedicated his professional life to sharing the powerful ancient healing traditions of China. He is the director and chief instructor of the Institute of Integral qigong and taiji, Santa Barbara, California, and a cofounder and recent chairperson of the board of the National qigong Association.

With almost 30 years of clinical practice as a physician of acupuncture and tra-

ditional Chinese medicine and ten search tours to China, Dr. Jahnke has emerged as a key spokesperson for taiji and qigong and is a master teacher of these arts. He has studied hundreds of forms of qigong with master teachers and visited numerous hospitals, institutes, training centers, temples, and sacred sites in China, focusing on the cultivation of qi.

Dr. Jahnke has presented at major conferences on advances in integrative and complementary medicine throughout the United States. He has lectured on self-healing and emerging trends in healthcare and medicine to numerous hospital systems and healthcare associations, including the HealthCare Forum; the Catholic Health Association; the American Medical Association; the National Wellness Institute, Stevens Point, Wisconsin; and the American College of Healthcare Executives, Chicago, Illinois. He is a contributing author to numerous books on health promotion methodologies for both clinical providers and healthcare administrators.



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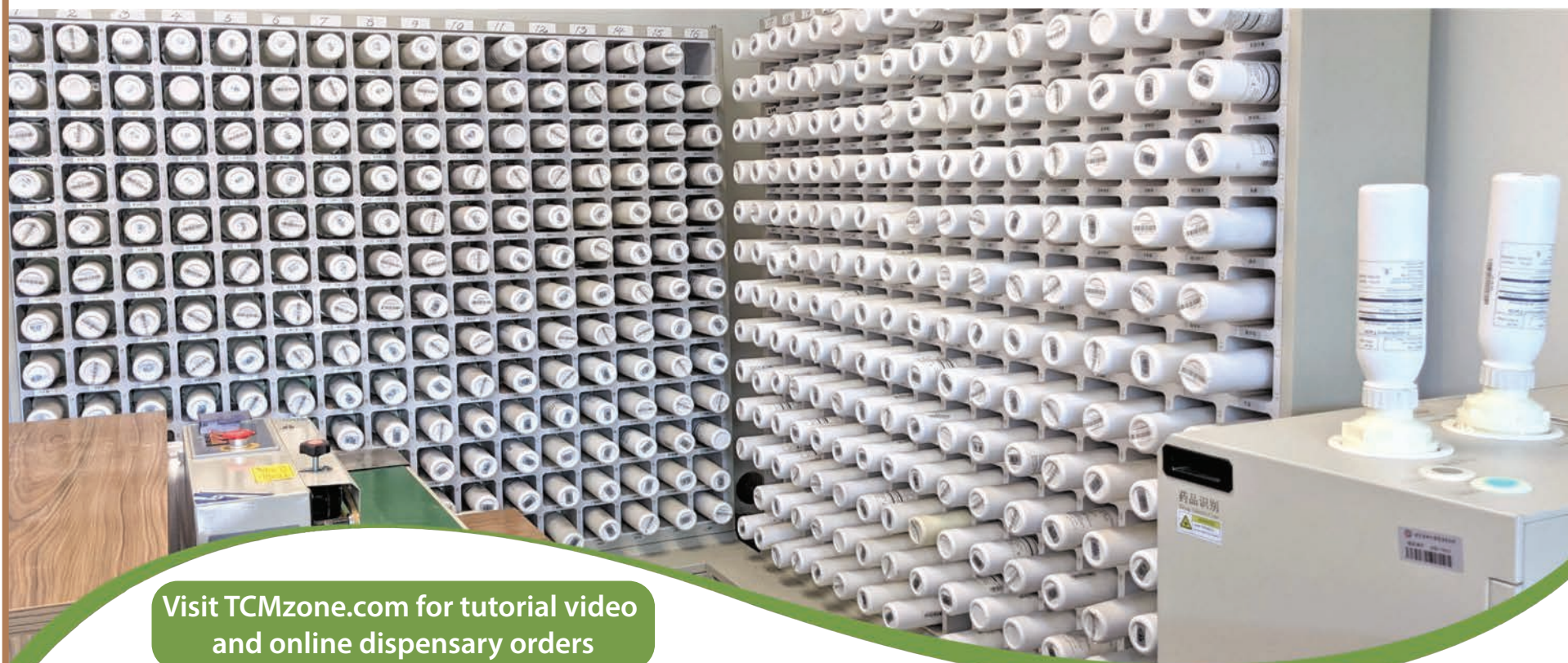
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