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I’m always excited to see how each issue of our magazine turns out. From the time we come up with article ideas to the day the magazine is printed, a lot can change. So when I see the final proof, I always get a little excited to see exactly what’s going to be included. And I’ve never been disappointed. I was pleased to read “The Definition of Healthy Living” in this issue because it touches on something that many of us around here feel very passionate about: the ability to shape your life by aligning your thoughts with a positive force. I’d like to use this space to delve a little deeper into the topic.

Do you want to be in tune with the positive side of things or the negative? Would you rather dwell on the bad experiences you have had or look forward to all the good things to come? I know my answer; don’t you?

We have a choice: We all attract both positive and negative things, people, experiences and circumstances into our lives. We do this by focusing on either positive or negative thoughts—whether we realize it or not. This is called The Law of Attraction, and until we stop and realize just what we are doing, many of us go through life feeling like we have no control over our futures. If we stop and consciously make an effort to focus on positive emotions and thoughts, there is no limit to the great things we attract into our lives. By doing just that, we can take the guesswork out of the future and create the lives we want.

So how do you control every thought you have throughout the day to keep a positive focus? The good news is you don’t have to. All you need to do is pay attention to how you feel. This is probably the most important part of creating a healthy future for yourself. When you feel good, your emotions are telling you that you are focused on the positive experiences, ideas and people in your life. On the other hand, if you feel sad or angry most of the time, you are focused on the negative.

The key to attracting positives into your life is to realize when you feel bad and to consciously make a decision to switch your focus. We can’t control our unconscious thought patterns, but we can pay attention to how we feel. If you feel bad because you snapped at a coworker earlier, don’t dwell on the past. Instead, think of a nice way to apologize to that person and focus on the feelings of happiness you will experience when the rough patch between you is mended.

I hope this makes sense to you, because I truly believe that the mind is a powerful tool in the Art of Growing Young. If we can harness it and use it to stay focused on all the great things in our lives that we are already thankful for, there is no limit to what we can accomplish. Celebrate what’s good, true and beautiful in the world, and we all contribute to creating more of those great things for ourselves and each other.
Grape Juice
Could grape juice be the next tool in the fight against fat? According to some researchers, the answer is yes. Red grapes are full of resveratrol, a compound that starts a chain reaction in the body that may help keep metabolic syndrome in check by protecting the lining of blood vessels from inflammation, enhancing the function of insulin and increasing glucose tolerance. Red grapes, grape juice and red wine (in moderation) all contain resveratrol.

Yogurt
Craving a delightful creamy snack? Try yogurt for a delicious treat that helps lower your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. New research suggests that older women who eat at least half a cup of yogurt each day have healthier arteries compared to women who do not.

Kiwifruit
Give your immune system a jump-start with golden kiwifruit. A short study has found eating a couple of golden kiwifruit every day can help reduce the negative effects of free radicals in the body. Although green kiwi is more common, the golden variety has now been shown to dramatically increase the amount of antioxidants in the body after just four weeks.

Tea
If you’ve been feeling foggy-headed lately, try drinking tea for a mental boost. A recent study found green tea, and the amino acid L-theanine in it, may help boost memory performance and attention in older adults. According to the researchers conducting the study, there may be something in L-theanine that helps to boost theta-wave activity in the brain. Just be sure to drink your tea fresh; the longer it sits, the lower its antioxidant activity.

Beans
Want a slimmer midsection? Try eating more beans. According to new research, soluble fiber, which has long been known for its role in regulating cholesterol and blood sugar, may help keep belly fat at bay. This latest study on fiber found that for every 10 grams of soluble fiber a person ate each day, 3.7 percent less fat around the midsection was gained over time. Beans of all kinds are very high in fiber, as are many fruits and vegetables. Combine a high-fiber diet with regular exercise and you have a surefire way to help keep unwanted belly fat from accumulating.
If you’re tired of the same old workout routine and get cabin fever spending too much time in the gym, you’re not alone. A growing number of trainers and health experts are suggesting we get out of the gym and into the wild.

Gym workouts are definitely good for improving fitness and managing weight. Whether you use an elliptical machine for a cardiovascular workout, free weights for strength training or any other piece of equipment at the gym, your body will thank you for staying active. However, there is truth in the thought that the limited-range movements involved in activities such as biking or jogging can overwork certain muscle groups while leaving others hardly touched at all. There is also the possibility of getting burned out on the thought of exercise altogether if you get bored doing the same thing every day. Cross training is one way to avoid these exercise pitfalls. But now there is a new choice—something completely new and very old at the same time.

Over the last several years, there has been a growing movement in the physical fitness world to address the downside of relying on the same old exercise routines day after day. For inspiration, the people behind this movement have looked far into our past to see how our ancient ancestors kept fit. This has led many personal trainers and physical fitness experts to leave the gym behind and head outdoors and into the wild.

Wild workouts are based on the skills and movements that our ancestors relied on simply to survive in nature—walking instead of driving, squatting because there are no chairs, climbing trees to gather food, running from danger, balancing to cross a stream with no bridge, throwing rocks or spears to hunt. These daily actions were once necessary for survival.

Today, coaches combine the movements in exciting and unpredictable sequences, one after another in rapid succession, to create powerful workouts that never get boring. This new concept of fitness combines old movements with modern knowledge of strength and conditioning principles.

The resulting workouts are fun and unpredictable. They can be tailored for any skill and fitness level, so everyone can get the workout he or she needs. There is even some evidence that the unpredictable nature of these workouts can be good for mental health, as the brain must constantly recognize changes and adapt to what is being asked of the body. Combined with what the muscles, ligaments, bones and tendons must do, the entire body receives a workout in balance and spatial awareness that is great for improving proprioception, which is the ability to accurately sense where we are in space relative to our surroundings.

The only thing better than the results you can experience from a good wild workout is the feeling you have while doing them. Getting outdoors, the constantly changing movements, overcoming new challenges—people who try these different workouts are amazed at how fun they can be. It’s less of an exercise routine than it is a chance to get outdoors and have fun with a group of like-minded people.

If the idea of getting outside and into nature isn’t something you find appealing, there are indoor versions of wild workouts as well. Some coaches specialize in finding creative ways to create wild workouts in urban environments.

The human body is not suited for modern living. Sitting at a desk all day and then driving the car home is so vastly different from what our ancestors did that it can wreak havoc on many areas of wellness. Coaches and teachers of primitive fitness workouts believe that the way you look and feel is directly related to how you move. If you learn to move well, your body will naturally look good.

Wild workouts help to build strength, boost the cardiovascular system and improve coordination through a wide variety of full-body challenges—everything you can get at the gym and more. The next time you look at your jogging shoes and wonder how you will get through another run around the block, seek out a wild workout and experience the difference for yourself!
“Make time for regular physical activity, engage in stress-reducing activities, and spend time with friends and family.”
What is healthy living? Is it eating a healthy diet full of fresh fruits and vegetables? Is it exercising regularly? Is it avoiding too much junk food? Is it dealing with stress? Does it include relaxation? Healthy living is all these things and much more.

A healthy lifestyle comprises many activities, concepts, thoughts, people, actions, meals and more. Although this might sound intimidating, a healthy lifestyle is actually quite simple. Essentially, a healthy lifestyle is one that promotes healthy aging, or the Art of Growing Young.

While the Art of Growing Young is a vast collection of ideas and practices, it can be broken into three important categories: Healthy Eating, Healthy Living and Healthy Thinking. Focusing on these three categories will help break the concepts into three easy-to-follow, nonthreatening steps.

HEALTHY EATING
Healthy eating is exactly what it sounds like. A healthy diet is one that is composed chiefly of whole, natural foods. First and foremost, this means a wide variety of fruits and vegetables that are taken from as many local sources as possible and eaten as fresh as possible. Fruits and vegetables are the cornerstone of any healthy diet because they provide the body with many of the critical antioxidants, minerals, vitamins and phytonutrients it needs to function at optimum levels.

Other natural foods that should be consumed are lean sources of protein such as whey protein, chicken, fish, lean meats (optimally from grass-fed, not grain-fed, animals), and legumes and other vegetables. Protein is required for several processes in the body, including the building and repairing of muscle tissue after a workout. Protein-rich fish is doubly important because fresh, cold-water fish such as black cod, sardines, salmon and mackerel contain high levels of omega-3 fatty acids. These amazing fatty acids have been shown time and time again to have great benefits for the brain, heart and nervous system.

Low-fat dairy products will help grow and maintain strong bones. These include low-fat and no-fat milk, cheese, yogurt and kefir. Non-GMO soy products and whey protein supplements can also be a big help.

A healthy diet also requires making good choices for drinking. Avoid sugary sodas, fake juices and alcohol. Instead, drink lots of fresh, pure water; herbal teas; and 100 percent fresh juices. A small amount of red wine is thought by many experts also to be beneficial.

Healthy eating also requires limiting certain foods that are high in natural saturated fats. Man-made trans fats should also be avoided. Stay away from chemicals that act as preservatives and flavor enhancers, such as MSG and coloring agents. These are largely avoided by sticking to homemade meals and forgoing fast-food meals and junk food, especially prepackaged dinners and other nonnatural foods. Read the labels on all the prepackaged foods you buy. Better yet, buy fresh foods that don’t come in packages.

HEALTHY LIVING
Healthy living is the concept of finding a lifestyle that promotes the Art of Growing Young. This means making time for regular physical activity, engaging in stress-reducing activities, and spending time with friends and family. Currently, doctors recommend at least thirty minutes of regular physical activity most days of the week for optimum health. While we tend to associate exercise with weight loss, it is actually good for many aspects of a healthy body. Regular bouts of walking, biking, swimming or any other activity that gets the heart pumping will also help support a healthy circulatory system, ward off depression, promote healthy sleeping patterns, reduce stress levels, boost mood, increase libido and much more. Perhaps best of all, it doesn’t matter what activity you choose, just as long as it gets you moving and it is enjoyable enough to you that you will continue to do it. Walking is regarded by most as the best overall foundation of regular exercise. But remember that varying your physical activities can help keep you active and will help to reduce boredom.

A stress-reducing activity is virtually anything that leaves you feeling calmer and less stressed than before you started the activity. From meditation, tai chi or yoga to music, candles and reading, there really is no wrong way to alleviate stress. It all depends on what you enjoy doing. Even activities like playing cards, board games and computer games or working crossword puzzles can be good ways to relax. Chronic stress is hard on both the body and the mind. As long as your chosen activities reduce stress, it is good for your body.

Spending time with friends and family is important because we humans are inherently social creatures. Especially later in life, after retirement, social isolation can be damaging.
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Developing friendships and support networks earlier in life can be of incredible benefit in later years. Social clubs, family get-togethers, regular lunch dates—spending time with other people helps keep the mind spry and self-esteem high.

HEALTHY THINKING
When it comes to the Art of Growing Young, healthy thinking is the art of following your feelings in order to learn how to align yourself with positive thoughts, people, experiences and ideas. This may be the overall most important factor in growing young. Destructive thought patterns are negative thoughts that lead to negative outcomes. Every day we have thousands of thoughts—far too many to be aware of every single one.

Instead of trying to monitor each thought, try to recognize your moods. When you are feeling down, you are probably focused on negative thoughts. But when you feel happy, you are more likely focusing on positive thoughts. When you notice a negative thought in your mind, recognize it for what it is. But instead of dwelling on it, push it aside and find a positive way to look at the issue. Realize that the bad thought is there, but also realize that it is not you. For example, instead of focusing on being stuck inside because of a rainy day, focus on the flowers that will grow after the rain. Or focus on the enjoyment you can get from reading a good book while listening to the relaxing sound of raindrops falling on the window.

Once you have learned to focus on positive thought patterns, you will quickly realize that there is nothing you can’t attract into your life. The more positive-minded people you make friends with, the stronger this attraction will be as your life progresses. The mind is an amazing, powerful tool that is all too often overlooked regarding your health; make use of it and see just how strong it really is.

THE ART OF GROWING YOUNG
Anyone who has an interest in living a healthy lifestyle is aware of the importance of diet and exercise. But there are other, less known aspects of the Art of Growing Young that you may not be aware of, some of which we have referred to above. For example, developing friendships with positive-thinking people who also want to be healthy is very worthwhile. Watching TV programs or movies that have a positive message, reading positive books, listening to positive radio programs, attending positive lectures, and participating in a hobby you enjoy are all examples that are beneficial to your well-being.

These are just the basics of the Art of Growing Young. Categorizing activities into healthy eating, healthy living and healthy thinking is just one way to break down healthy living and the Art of Growing Young. In reality, there are countless aspects involved. But don’t be intimidated. Staying focused on positive ideas, watching what you eat and making time for regular physical activity will ensure you are always on the path to wellness. Everything else will come naturally! The mere fact that you are reading this magazine and especially this article is a good testimony that you are interested in your overall well-being and are on the right path. Enjoy!
“On a quieter day, there are many activities such as meditation, listening to calming music, and participating in activities you enjoy that also help reduce the effects of stress.”
Do you feel like if you’re not under pressure, you just can’t get things done? Or do you think that if you don’t have the nagging feeling that you need to accomplish more, you will end up sleeping half the day away? If you answered yes to either of these questions, you may be addicted to stress. But don’t worry—there is help.

People who are “addicted to stress” usually enjoy the adrenaline rush they experience from stress, even if they aren’t aware of it. Stress actually developed as a survival trait. When the body is stressed, one of the first things it does is release adrenaline to give a burst of energy in preparation for either fighting or running away.

The stress caused by modern living may not be the same as an impending attack from a wild animal, but the body doesn’t differentiate between them. So when your job stresses you out, the same adrenaline is released as would have been released in a cave many eons ago while you were being chased by a hungry bear. For a lot of people, the rush of energy feels good. It feels so good, in fact, that the term “adrenaline junkie” was coined to describe people who seem to be addicted to activities that cause massive amounts of adrenaline to flood the body.

You don’t have to enjoy skydiving, rock climbing or other extreme sports to be an adrenaline junkie. Everyday experience can produce the same results. Have you ever gotten stuck in a traffic jam when you were already late for work? Did you notice that you couldn’t sit still? Part of your increased agitation is due to the increased adrenaline in your system. Even moderate amounts of stress, such as that from a looming deadline, can boost adrenaline levels. A stressful day spent jumping from meeting to meeting and project to project can keep a constant supply of stress and adrenaline in the body, giving you the energy to keep going. But that energy can’t last.

While experiencing the adrenaline rush of a stressful situation may feel good to some people, there is a negative side they often don’t consider. Once your body has used up the adrenaline, it will become worn out and crash. A stressful day at the office may keep you energized, but as soon as it wears off, you may find you hardly have enough energy to drive home. It’s hard to enjoy the company of your family if you can’t stay awake when you are all home together.

Another problem with being addicted to stress is that it takes a physical toll on the body. Constant stress can cause a wide range of symptoms, ranging from simple headaches, anxiety and muscle cramps to more serious issues such as depression, weight gain, heart disease, drug or alcohol abuse, and blood sugar management issues.

Several forms of stress in moderate levels can be a very positive, motivating force in your life. Knowing that if you don’t pay your bills you may lose your home is a positive stress that keeps you motivated at work. The stress of not wanting to put on too much weight can be a positive force that encourages you to eat a healthy diet.

It’s only when stress levels get too high or you become addicted to the rush of trying to get one more task done before the day is over that stress becomes a health problem. Unfortunately, modern living tends to make stress a lifestyle component that many of us can’t avoid. The good news is that there are lots of tricks and activities that help lower stress.

Physical activity such as running, playing sports, exercising, swimming and anything else that gives you a good workout is great for reducing the effects of stress on your body—physical activity uses up the products produced by adrenalin, which are designed to promote intense physical effort. On a quieter day, there are many activities such as meditation, relaxation techniques, listening to calming music, aromatherapy and participating in activities you enjoy that also help reduce the effects of stress.

If you think you may be addicted to stress, don’t worry. Take a few deep breaths, let a few items on your to-do list slide until tomorrow and replace them with the stress-busting activity of your choice. You will soon realize that it’s just as easy—and much more healthy—to become “addicted” to taking care of yourself.
CHALLENGE #1:
Avoid Dessert
Cutting out desserts is an easy way to reduce the amount of fat and calories you eat in a day. A single serving of ice cream can add about 170 calories to your meal; a large piece of apple pie could increase your calorie count by over 400. Challenge yourself to eat dessert only on special occasions, such as birthdays, instead of after every dinner. If you are one of the many people who like to finish nearly every meal with something sweet, the amount of calories this challenge can cut from your diet could be staggering. If you find you just have to have a sweet treat after dinner, try switching to fresh fruits such as strawberries, blueberries or peaches.

CHALLENGE #2:
Don't Clean Your Plate
Were you told to always clean your plate by your parents? While being wasteful may be bad for the environment, always cleaning your plate can be bad for your waistline. Challenge yourself to stop eating when you are full, not when your plate is empty. This challenge can be especially beneficial when you are eating out at restaurants that serve huge portions, as many popular establishments do these days. One tip: Ask for a to-go box right away and put half of your meal in it before you even start eating. This will give you a much healthier-sized portion. Then listen to your body and stop eating when you are satisfied, not when you feel like you are about to burst. It may take some time to retrain yourself to stop when you are full, but not cleaning your plate is a great calorie-cutting challenge.

CHALLENGE #3:
Eat Your Veggies First
Eating your veggies first is a healthy challenge at any time, but it’s even better if you have already mastered the challenge of not cleaning your plate. When you sit down to a meal, eat most of the fruits and veggies on your plate before you dig into the other foods. This will help you increase the amount of fiber, vitamins, antioxidants and other nutrients you eat while you also limit the amount of fat and calories you obtain from less-lean cuts of meat.

CHALLENGE #4:
Drink Water Before Meals
Drinking a glass of room temperature water fifteen minutes before a meal causes two important reactions in the body. First, it will reduce your appetite simply by taking up space, so it will reduce the amount of calories you eat in a meal. Second, water before a meal helps to stimulate digestive functions, which will help your body more efficiently utilize the nutrients you are about to consume and expel the waste it does not need. Of course drinking water also helps keep the body hydrated, which in turn helps you feel and look better. If you drink one glass of water before every meal, that’s three you will be sure to have out of the eight daily glasses recommended by doctors and nutritionists.

CHALLENGE #5:
Quit Fast Food
On-the-go meals have become a staple in fast-paced societies. Unfortunately, it is incredibly hard (and sometimes just impossible) to find a healthy meal at a fast-food restaurant. Quitting fast food may be the hardest challenge, but it is also the most rewarding. People who successfully quit fast food often report feeling happier, experiencing more energy and being more successful with weight management. Substituting homemade healthy snacks and meals that you bring with you on the go instead of stopping at the nearest fast-food restaurant will drastically reduce the amount of fat, calories, salt and preservatives you consume. And homemade meals just taste so much better. Don’t feel bad if it takes several attempts to master this challenge. Simply realize that every time you avoid a fast-food meal, you are helping your body stay healthy.

Are you motivated into action by setting goals? Do you like a good challenge? Here are five healthy eating challenges that can help turn a so-so diet into a healthy one in no time.
The concept of obesity and overweight are relatively new. Thousands of years ago, being overweight was nearly unheard of. Our hunter-gatherer ancestors were struggling to survive on a diet radically different than what we are used to today. Overindulging on unhealthy junk food simply didn’t happen. Such food didn’t even exist.

Over the centuries, a shift has occurred; as lifestyles began to include less exercise and more unhealthy foods, waistlines began to expand. For a time, being overweight was viewed as a sign of wealth and prosperity because it meant a person didn’t need to engage in manual labor and could afford more food. Obesity was therefore more common among high officials and royalty in Europe during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as well as in the royal classes of Polynesian cultures.

Today, overweight and obesity have reached epidemic proportions around the world, especially in the more developed countries, with more than one billion adults classified as either overweight or obese. And the problem isn’t just with adults; children are affected as well.

As the epidemic of obesity has spread, the accepted definition of healthy body weight has become blurred. The standard definition of obesity is simply an excessive amount of body fat. But what constitutes excessive? While the scientific definition has stayed constant, our perceptions have changed. In the past, it was easier to see the difference between healthy, overweight and obese because the majority of waistlines you would see in day-to-day living were healthy, or close to it. Comparing yourself to the people around you is no longer a good standard. Because some waistlines you see are so large, they can make overweight seem healthy and healthy seem undernourished.

Just as the concept of obesity has evolved, so has the way we measure it. For many years the body mass index (BMI) was used to diagnose obesity. BMI is a calculation of height and weight that is good for tracking weight over large populations but fails when measuring single people. For example, a weightlifter/bodybuilder would be considered grossly obese according to a BMI measurement.

The waist-to-hip ratio replaced BMI as a more effective way to measure obesity and overweight. The waist-to-hip ratio is a measurement that compares the size of a person’s waist to the size of the abdomen. Once a measurement is taken, it is compared to a chart. The result is much more effective than BMI because it compensates for lean body mass.

The waist-to-hip ratio has given way to the waist-to-height ratio. Measuring waist-to-height ratio is rapidly gaining acceptance, as several studies have found that this is a more valid measurement that removes the bias of just measuring waist circumference that many taller- or shorter-than-average people have.

The World Health Organization has predicted that overweight and obesity may soon replace long-standing traditional public health concerns such as malnutrition and infectious diseases as the most significant cause of poor health. To make matters worse, there are even pro-fat acceptance movements that downplay the health concerns of overweight and obesity.

The simple truth is that the more overweight a person is, the more likely the person is to experience health problems. The list of complications associated with obesity is quite long. The risk of developing high cholesterol,
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type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, heart attack, stroke, sleep apnea, high triglycerides, osteoporosis, skin problems, and many types of cancer greatly increases as weight increases.

The list of complications is long because obesity has many varied negative effects on the body. From excess stress on joints to realizing you need special accommodations that other people don’t, excessive body fat is harmful to the body in many ways, both physically and emotionally. Depression is also quite common among obese people.

The two biggest contributing factors to becoming overweight are a sedentary lifestyle and an unhealthy diet. Certain medications, lack of sleep, stress and other risk factors can also increase the chance of gaining weight. While all these are often byproducts of a modern life, the good news is that they are easily avoidable and reversible.

A person who is not active will not burn as many calories as someone who makes time for regular physical activity. A person who works at a desk all day and then comes home and sits on the couch can easily consume more calories than they expend, which leads to weight gain. Most doctors agree that it only takes about thirty minutes of moderate exercise performed most days of the week to drastically reduce the chance of becoming overweight. Moderate intensity exercises include walking briskly, jogging, elliptical machine use, swimming, biking and skiing.

A regular diet of fast food, junk food, prepackaged meals, skipped meals and oversized portions all contribute to weight gain. On the other hand, moderate-sized meals containing plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables not only help control weight, but also offer plenty of health-promoting qualities.

Because our idea of what constitutes overweight has been skewed in recent years, it is more important than ever to educate oneself on what your own personal “healthy weight” is. If you are unsure, doctors and nutritionists are great resources. They can help you take an accurate waist-to-height ratio measurement and then help you plan an exercise and eating routine that will best help you maintain a healthy weight.
Herbs & Supplements

“With its delightful flavor, refreshing scent and nutritional content, lemongrass is one of the most versatile plants on earth.”
Native to warm temperate and tropical regions, lemongrass is a tall perennial grass that takes its name from its light, citrus flavor. With an extensive history of culinary, aromatherapy and herbal medicine use, lemongrass is an incredibly versatile plant to keep in your garden.

It may not be as well known in Western kitchens, but lemongrass is used as a tea in many African and Latin American countries. Its subtle, refreshing flavor is well suited for soups and curries, making it popular in Thai and Vietnamese cuisine, where it is used to balance hot flavors. And it’s versatile, too, as it pairs well with poultry, fish, beef and seafood.

Lemongrass has long, thin gray-green leaves that are tough and fibrous. Usually only the outside leaves and tips are used to cook with. Often they are chopped very fine or discarded before serving.

Nutritionally speaking, lemongrass is rich in several important vitamins and minerals. It also contains very high amounts of iron and manganese, and it is rich in riboflavin, potassium and copper.

The perennial grass is used extensively in Ayurvedic medicine, where it is believed to help relieve coughing and nasal congestion.

In Cuba, lemongrass is a folk remedy for hypertension and inflammation. Brazilian folk practices included serving lemongrass in a tea for relaxation purposes. It’s clear that lemongrass has a long and varied past in natural and Eastern medicines. Modern science has confirmed that lemongrass has antifungal properties, which may explain many of these ancient practices. Pharmacologically, citral, a molecule found in lemongrass, has even been used in the synthesis of vitamin A.

Lemongrass is also used as natural preservative and pesticide. Organic farmers and gardeners may be familiar with homemade and even store-bought pesticides derived from lemongrass oil. Similarly, many claim that its essential oil is an effective, chemical-free mosquito repellent. It is considered a citronella grass, and certain species of lemongrass are used to make citronella oil, which is used in soaps and insect-repelling sprays and candles.

Because of its refreshing scent, lemongrass is also used extensively in aromatherapy. Its essential oil has a light scent that soothes the senses in much the same way as essential lavender oil. It can be added to other oils and balms and used as a massage oil, moisturizer or lotion. A few drops on the edge of your pillow at night can also help relax away the day’s stress as you fall asleep. To freshen a musty room, mix a few drops of the oil with water and put into a spray bottle, then lightly spritz the room for a natural air freshener.

With its delightful flavor, refreshing scent and nutritional content, lemongrass is one of the most versatile plants on earth. Whether it is used to add a citrus kick to a meal, steeped into a digestion-aiding tea, sprayed around a musty room, rubbed into the skin or used in aromatherapy, its light, refreshing scent and flavor can do wonders for your mood and taste buds alike.
Healthy Smiles Make for Healthy Bodies

Good oral hygiene habits are important because they keep the mouth and teeth clean, which helps prevent dental problems such as cavities, gingivitis and bad breath. But a healthy smile means more than just preventing these things. Regular brushing, flossing and visits to the dentist are important to your total body health, not just to your pretty smile.

What your teeth say about your health
In many ways, your smile is a window into your body’s current state of health. Several clinical studies have found direct links between poor oral hygiene and serious health concerns such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes complications and osteoporosis. While a fresh smile doesn’t mean you are immune to these concerns, it can be a good sign that your body is in good shape. On the other hand, a mouth with bleeding gums, cavities and chronic bad breath can be a good indicator that the body may be more prone to developing other health problems. Your gums are very vascular. That means that they contain millions of tiny capillaries that easily absorb things, including bad things. When this occurs, the circulatory system carries these bad things to the areas of the lungs and throughout your whole body.

Without proper cleaning, bacteria and other microscopic organisms can thrive in the mouth, causing inflammation that may actually rev up inflammation throughout the entire body. And every time you swallow, these bacteria enter the body. It’s also thought that oral bacteria can enter the bloodstream and release toxins. Since oral health is important to overall health, it is vital that people of every age practice good oral hygiene. This means brushing for a full two minutes at least twice a day—before bed at night and again first thing in the morning. Brushing after meals is a good idea too. It’s also important to floss at least once a day, as this removes plaque and debris from in between the teeth and along the gum line that most traditional toothbrushes can’t reach. Some automatic electrical toothbrushes can be helpful, especially for those who are physically handicapped.

The final step to proper oral hygiene is to see your dentist at least once every six months. This is probably the most neglected step, as people often have bad associations with dental visits. When many children and adults think about going to the dentist, they picture painful procedures and uncomfortable cleaning sessions. However, the more often a person goes to the dentist, the fewer procedures they will need. Semiannual cleanings help to stop small problems before they become big ones.

Brushing, flossing and regular visits to the dentist are not enough to guarantee a healthy smile. Avoiding sugary and acidic drinks such as soda and flavored sports drinks is important too, as the sugar and acids in soft drinks attack the protective enamel on your teeth. CoQ10 and its redox partner ubiquinol are also crucial to healthy gums, and levels of these important antioxidants can be low, even in young people.

Children tend to be even more vulnerable to poor food choices, making it even more important to teach our kids healthy eating and drinking habits. A child who is raised in a house where water and herbal teas are the drinks of choice will be much more likely to continue those healthy habits as an adult. Don’t keep soda or other sugary drinks in the fridge. These drinks should be a treat for special occasions, not a dinner time staple.

Less soda and more water will do far more than just help protect teeth. Acidic soft drinks cause the body to deplete the calcium stores in its bones as it tries to neutralize the acid in the drink. These drinks are also diuretics, which cause dehydration. The body needs a constant supply of fresh water in order to look good and feel healthy.

No matter a person’s age, everybody can benefit from good oral hygiene habits; a healthy smile and fresh breath can do wonders for your mood, your confidence level and your overall health.
Fruits and vegetables are in the spotlight when it comes to many nutrients, especially antioxidants, but there is another group of edibles that are packed with free radical scavengers—herbs and spices. Many herbs, spices and their essential oils are packed with super-potent fat-soluble antioxidants.

These super spices have extremely high ORAC (oxygen radical absorbance capacity) values, which is how scientists measure antioxidant power. Clove oil has among the highest ORAC values ever measured. For perspective, blueberries, which long ago were dubbed a super-fruit for their antioxidant content, have an ORAC value of over 2,000 ORAC units per gram. Purified OPCs (Oligomeric proanthocyanidins) have an ORAC value of approximately 20,000 ORAC units/gram. While these are certainly high ORAC values, essential oil from the dried flower buds of the clove tree has an ORAC value of well over 10.5 million per gram (although essential oil of cloves is always used in very small quantities, due to its potency). Other essential oils with high ORAC values are oregano, sage, cinnamon and thyme.

While spices may have a higher antioxidant content than fruits and vegetables do, it’s relative to serving size. While you may eat blueberries by the handful, you will never eat cloves, cinnamon, oregano or other spices the same way.

Because of their incredibly high antioxidant capacity, these spices and others are a great tool in the Art of Growing Young because they help fight free radicals that cause oxidative stress in the body. Free radicals are unstable molecules that enter the body from smoking, pollution, pesticides and a wide variety of other sources. Some free radicals are even created by a healthy body as it maintains itself. However, oxidative stress resulting from larger amounts of free radicals has been shown repeatedly in studies to be at least partially responsible for a long list of health issues that were once thought to be unavoidable side effects of aging.

A free radical is actually nothing more than a molecule that has lost an electron. When this happens, the molecule will try to “steal” an electron from other molecules by “attacking” them. This sets off a chain reaction known as oxidative stress. This will continue in a damaging cycle of attacking and stealing electrons until it is stopped by an antioxidant, which is simply a molecule that will remain stable after willingly donating an electron to a free radical.

After donating an electron to a free radical, an antioxidant will do one of two things: it will harmlessly decompose or it will borrow an electron from another antioxidant. If it does the latter, the antioxidant will be able to neutralize another free radical. There are groups of antioxidants that work together, lending each other electrons, so that they can continue to fight free radical attacks. These groups are known as networks, and the way they work together makes them exceptionally good at neutralizing free radicals and protecting the body. Spices are full of antioxidants that work in this manner, which makes them all the more powerful. After spices, OPCs, which occur in almost every plant food, are probably the next most potent and versatile among the antioxidants.

Since free radicals can attack any part of our bodies, including our DNA—the very blueprint of who we are—it is important to supply the body with the widest range of antioxidants and complete antioxidant networks as possible. Consuming a wide variety of herbs and spices will help ensure that you provide your body with what it needs to help protect against free radical damage. For this reason, it’s important to consume a wide variety of antioxidant-rich foods, including ones you may not normally find in your kitchen. Herbs and spices that are popular in cuisines from around the world may offer antioxidant protection that’s different from your normal diet.

Spices from different cultures can add an exotic and delightful flavor to your meals. One of the most commonly mentioned example is a staple of the East Indian diet: turmeric or curcumin (a component of turmeric). But they can take some getting used to after a lifetime of eating only regional flavors. To help prepare your children for a lifetime of antioxidant protection and delicious meals, do them a favor and introduce them to a variety of different flavors early on. Combining a variety of spices with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables will help ensure that your body receives all the protection it requires to stay healthy.
Typically people catch athlete’s foot from public areas such as gym showers or locker rooms where they walk barefoot on damp surfaces. Poor circulation and a depressed immune system may make contracting the fungus easier.

Most often, athlete’s foot is little more than an annoyance that causes uncomfortable burning and itching in affected areas and often gets better on its own. In a few cases, it can present itself in more serious ways. The good news for even the most avid gym-goers is that there are many ways to help deal with this fungal infection.

While topical antifungal agents are usually prescribed by doctors for treating athlete’s foot once symptoms appear, there are a number of natural ways that you can prevent and treat athlete’s foot.

One of the best ways to help prevent a flare-up is to keep your feet as dry as possible and avoid walking barefoot in areas where the fungus tends to be spread. Keep a pair of flip-flops in your gym bag so you never have to walk barefoot on shower or locker room floors.

Some people seem to be more prone to athlete’s foot than others. If you think you are one of these people, take extra care to wear cotton socks that don’t trap moisture against the skin. Also, find shoes with mesh or small holes near the toes to let fresh air in. Sandals also work well to help get plenty of air to your feet and toes.

If you do find your toes are feeling warm and itchy, soaking your feet in natural antifungal solutions or natural balms made with the same ingredients can be beneficial. Garlic, lemon, tea tree oil, colloidal silver, clove oil and oregano oil all possess some antifungal characteristics. Some people believe garlic and lemon oils to be especially valuable because they leave an acidic layer on your feet that may ward off fungal growth.

Even diet can play a role in dealing with athlete’s foot. Foods (such as yogurt) that contain live bacteria can be good at fighting fungus. Yogurt contains acidophilus, which has been said to help control intestinal, vaginal and oral yeast levels, but it may also help ward off skin fungus.

Including more apple cider vinegar and spices with high antioxidant and antifungal activity in the diet may also be a good idea for people who regularly experience athlete’s foot. Because athlete’s foot is a fungus, doesn’t it just make sense that eating more nutrients that scientists have confirmed to have antifungal properties is a good idea?

We don’t often stop to think about just how big of a role diet plays in our lives. There is much more to the body than just the vitamins and minerals that we hear about in basic health classes.

Because a lowered immune system can make your feet more susceptible to a fungal outbreak, eating immune-boosting foods can be quite helpful too. Broccoli, tea, yogurt, mushrooms, sweet potatoes, blueberries, garlic, oats—the list of foods thought to be beneficial to the immune system is incredibly long. If you consume a diet rich in a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, teas and spices, you will be supplying your body with the nutritional support it needs for a healthy immune system.

The severity of athlete’s foot can range from slight annoyance to downright painful. But if you feed your body right and take good care of your feet, you can dramatically improve your chances of avoiding this problem altogether. ❖
As anyone who suffers from migraines can tell you, they are more than just a headache. Migraines can cause debilitating pain in the head accompanied by nausea, vomiting and extreme sensitivity to light and sound. They can be so intense that sufferers have no choice but to find a dark, quiet place to lie down until they pass. In this two-part article, we will look at common migraine triggers and explore possible ways to manage your migraines.

While scientists have yet to agree on the exact causes of migraines, there are quite a few triggers. Few people who experience migraines are affected in the same way. One person’s trigger may not affect another person at all. A few of the more common ones are certain foods such as alcohol, chocolate and caffeine. Hormonal changes, especially in women; stress; weather changes; and intense physical activity can also trigger migraines in some people.

One of the most common sources of migraines can be found in the diet. Some people find certain foods to be triggers. A few of the most common are alcohol, especially beer and red wine; aged cheeses; chocolate; the artificial sweetener aspartame; monosodium glutamate (MSG); salt; and processed junk foods. Dietary triggers can be tricky to pinpoint because our meals are rarely limited to just one or two ingredients. And two people who both report having migraines triggered by diet may find that their lists of offending foods have nothing in common. Keeping a food diary can be a great help in discovering which foods are more likely to cause your migraine. This will be discussed in more detail in part 2 of the article.

Fasting and going too long between meals also can trigger migraine attacks, as hunger can cause blood sugar levels to drop.

Fluctuations in estrogen during menstruation seem to trigger headaches in many women with a history of migraines. During their periods, women can experience a major drop in estrogen levels, which appears to be a migraine trigger. Consequently, hormonal medications such as oral contraceptives can be very hard on some women who experience migraines.

Whether it’s from the workplace, a strained family relationship or any other source, stress is probably the second-most-common migraine trigger. Chronic stress that can build up slowly can be dealt with, but even situations that cause high levels of acute stress can cause one suddenly. These are harder to prevent and often come in the form of a headache after a run-in with a boss or particularly painful argument with a spouse. While stress levels seem to be rising as modern society moves at a faster and faster pace, there are countless ways in which to deal with daily stress. If stress is a trigger for your migraines, be sure to read the second part of this article, as it will detail many helpful ways to avoid this particular trigger.

Intense physical exertion may cause migraines as well—from a particularly grueling workout to a long flight of stairs to increased sexual activity. If you find that physical exertion is one of your triggers, don’t worry. There are many low-impact exercises and techniques to manage your lifestyle that will let you keep regular physical exercise in your daily life while reducing your chances of developing a headache.

There are quite a few environmental stimuli and changes that can trigger a migraine attack. Some people are sensitive to weather and barometric pressure changes. Others may find bright lights such as glare from the sun or loud noises such as blaring car horns bring on a headache. Strong odors including perfume, paint thinner and smoke have all been reported as triggers too. Avoiding environmental triggers can be especially trying, but with practice it is possible to reduce contact with your particular triggers. Sometimes it is as easy as remembering to keep a pair of sunglasses with you at all times.

Certain medications can cause or aggravate migraines too. Anyone who has a history of headaches should be cautious when first prescribed a new medication, especially oral contraceptives, which seem to affect migraine sufferers more than other medications. When medications cause migraines, doctors are often able to find another suitable choice without that particular side effect.

As you can see, there are a long list of possible migraine triggers. Fortunately, nobody is susceptible to them all at once. In the second part of the article we will explore ways to help identify which of these triggers affect you and find some techniques to lower your risk of developing headaches, such as focusing on nutrition, keeping a food diary, tracking patterns and reducing stress.
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Ask The Expert

Is there an age limit on exercise?

Absolutely not! You are never too old to benefit from regular physical activity, although as you age the kinds of activity you engage in may need to be adjusted. For safety’s sake, elderly individuals and anyone who has lived a sedentary lifestyle for some time should consult a doctor before beginning a new exercise routine, and older or frailer individuals should exercise with expert supervision to avoid injury. That said, people at every age can experience great benefits from staying physically active.

Do coffee, tea and soda contribute to the eight glasses of water I should drink every day?

While coffee and tea can have a healthy place in your daily diet, they generally should not be considered a part of your eight glasses (two quarts/liters) of daily water intake. Unfortunately, many people these days consume most of their water as coffee, tea, alcoholic beverages, and diet sodas. These drinks actually can have a net dehydrating effect on the body, which means you would need to consume even more water. Because caffeine and alcohol are diuretics that promote the removal of water from the bloodstream, any caffeinated drink will cause you to become even thirstier in the long run. In addition, sodas add a tremendous acid load to the bloodstream, which can cause calcium and magnesium loss in the body. Soft drinks should be an occasional treat, not the dinnertime staple they have become. Fresh, clean water should always be your number one choice when thirsty, though herbal (noncaffeinated) teas can be equally or even more health promoting. On a scale of 10, for instance, pure water consumption would rate at 10 while coffee and black tea may be a 7, green tea a 9.

Is there really such a thing as a “good” carbohydrate?

Contrary to what many fad diets are saying these days, not all carbohydrates are bad for you. When it comes to carbohydrates, the difference between good and bad is decided by how fast a food is digested. The speed in which the body can convert what is eaten into blood sugar (glucose) is called the glycemic index. Simple table sugar is used as a reference, with a value of 100. Foods that convert into glucose more rapidly than table sugar have a higher number, while foods that convert to blood glucose more slowly have a lower number. Foods with a high glycemic index stimulate more insulin release than foods with a low glycemic index. For most people, and especially anyone who may be carbohydrate-sensitive, carbohydrate-containing foods with a lower glycemic index are much preferred. This concept can become even more complex when you begin to take glycemic load into consideration as well. Glycemic load takes into account both the glycemic index and the amount of sugars and starch present in the food. Some foods, such as cooked carrots, have a relatively high glycemic index, but a relatively low glycemic load, because their available carbohydrate content is low—as contrasted to a baked potato, which has both a high glycemic index and a lot of starch, giving it a high glycemic load. However, as a general rule, good carbohydrates will supply the body with a healthy, longer-lasting source of energy and should be included in the diet. Bad carbohydrates (which include all refined flour and sugar products) should be avoided whenever possible.
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