

Wellbeing

magazine

February 2019



Walking isn't just
good for you, it's good
for the economy

**PLAY IS IMPORTANT
FOR ADULTS TOO!**
We need to incorporate
it into our everyday lives

**Breathing exercises
for stress**

THE FUTURE OF HEALING

Shifting from trauma informed care to
healing centered engagement

in this issue

In this second issue of the kinship carers' wellbeing magazine we have included hints and tips to help you focus on your own health and wellbeing. Read the articles carefully; in some of them you might find more than you bargained for!

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THE FUTURE OF HEALING:

SHIFTING FROM TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE TO HEALING-CENTERED ENGAGEMENT

by Shawn Ginwright PhD¹

Trauma-informed care broadly refers to a set of principles that guide and direct how we view the impact of severe harm on people's mental, physical and emotional health.

Trauma-informed care encourages support and treatment for the whole person, rather than focusing only on treating individual symptoms or specific behaviors.

What is needed is an approach that allows practitioners to approach trauma with a fresh lens which promotes a holistic view of healing from traumatic experiences and environments. One approach is called 'healing centered', as opposed to trauma informed. A healing-centered approach is holistic, involving culture, spirituality, civic action and collective healing. A healing-centered approach views trauma not simply as an individual isolated experience, but rather highlights the ways in which trauma and healing are experienced collectively. The term 'healing-centered engagement' expands how we think about responses to trauma and offers a more holistic approach to fostering wellbeing.



'A healing-centered approach views trauma not simply as an individual isolated experience, but rather highlights the ways in which trauma and healing are experienced collectively.'

THE PROMISE OF HEALING-CENTERED ENGAGEMENT

A shift from trauma-informed care to healing-centered engagement (HCE) is more than a semantic play with words, but rather a tectonic shift in how we view trauma, its causes and its intervention. HCE is strength based, advances a collective view of healing, and re-centers culture as a central feature in wellbeing. Researchers have pointed out the ways in which patients have redefined the terms used to describe their illnesses in ways that affirmed, humanised and dignified their condition. For example, in the early 1990s AIDS activists challenged the term 'gay-related immune deficiency' because the term stigmatised gay men and failed to adequately capture the medical accuracy of the condition. In a similar way, the young men I worked with offered me a way to reframe trauma with language that humanised them, and holistically captured their life experiences.

A healing-centered approach to addressing trauma requires a different question that moves beyond 'what happened to you?' to 'what's right with you?' and views those exposed to trauma as agents in the creation of their own wellbeing, rather than victims of traumatic events. Healing-centered engagement is akin to the South African term 'Ubuntu', meaning that humanness is found through our interdependence, collective engagement and service to others. Additionally, healing-centered engagement offers an asset-driven approach aimed at the holistic restoration of peoples' wellbeing.



The healing-centered approach comes from the idea that people are not harmed in a vacuum, and wellbeing comes from participating in transforming the root causes of the harm within institutions. Healing-centered engagement also advances the move to 'strengths-based' care and away from the deficit-based mental health models that drive therapeutic interventions. There are four key elements of healing-centered engagement that may at times overlap with current trauma-informed practices but offer several key distinctions:

- Healing-centered engagement is explicitly political, rather than clinical.
- Healing-centered engagement is culturally grounded and views healing as the restoration of identity.
- Healing-centered engagement is asset driven and focuses on wellbeing we want, rather than symptoms we want to suppress.
- Healing-centered engagement supports adult providers with their own healing.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE FUTURE OF HEALING

As practitioners, researchers and policy stakeholders we need to listen to and learn from people who have insights that can advance how we think about trauma and healing. A shift to healing-centered engagement offers new questions and strategies about how to support people who experience trauma. Healing-centered engagement is just a step toward a more holistic and humanistic framework to support people who have been harmed. Such an approach encourages us to think and act more boldly about how to restore people and create places where they can truly flourish.

This article is a summary of a longer paper. The full version, including references, is available from KCV.

¹ Dr Shawn Ginwright is Associate Professor of Education and African American Studies at San Francisco State University and the author of *Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Activists are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart*.

PLAY IS IMPORTANT FOR ADULTS TOO!

by Grandparents Victoria



The importance of play for children has been well documented and has been the subject of KCV projects and campaigns for several years. Now research is emerging about the possible benefits of play for adults. Play isn't just about finding fun ways to kill time; it can also be an important way of reducing stress and contributing to overall wellbeing.

In our society, play can sometimes be seen as unproductive, petty or even a guilty pleasure. This is not true. 'Play is a basic human need as essential to our wellbeing as sleep, so when we're low on play, our minds and bodies notice,' says psychiatrist Stuart Brown.² Over time, he says, play deprivation can reveal itself in certain patterns of behaviour: we might get cranky, rigid, feel stuck in a rut or feel victimised by life. To benefit most from the rejuvenating effects of play, he says, we need to incorporate it into our everyday lives, 'not just wait for that two-week vacation every year.'

What is adult play?

'Defining play is difficult because it's a moving target,' says Dr Scott G Eberle.³ 'It's a process, not a thing.' He says that it begins in anticipation and hopefully ends in poise. 'In between you find surprise, pleasure, understanding — as skill and empathy — and strength of mind, body, and spirit.'

'What all play has in common,' says Brown, 'is that it offers a sense of engagement and pleasure, takes the player out of a sense of time and place, and the experience of doing it is more important than the outcome.'

Why play?

Play has been shown to release endorphins, improve brain function, and stimulate creativity. It can even help to keep us feeling young and energetic. Studies also show that play can improve memory and stimulate the growth of the cerebral cortex.

Studies have found that playful adults have the ability to transform everyday situations, even stressful ones, into something entertaining. One study found that highly playful adults – those who rated themselves high on personality characteristics such as being spontaneous or energetic, or open to 'clowning around' – reported less stress in their lives and possessed better coping skills. Perhaps they have these attributes because they are better able to keep stress in perspective.

'Highly playful adults feel the same stressors as anyone else, but they appear to experience and react to them differently, allowing stressors to roll off more easily than those who are less playful,' says Lynn Barnett.⁴

Types of play

We are all different, and have different tastes and abilities. One way to find the kinds of play that would be most meaningful to you is to try thinking back to the play you enjoyed as a child and find ways to connect that to your life now.

While not all of the types of play listed below will be suitable for you, this list might stimulate ideas of your own. You might even find that you've been indulging in stress-relieving play without knowing it!

- **Rough-and-Tumble Play** – Physically active games such as tug-of-war, capture the flag, scavenger hunts, kickball, and dodge ball.
- **Ritual Play** – Activities or sports with set rules and structures such as chess or other board games. These help us to create, strategize, design, and engage in activities that bring people together for a common purpose or goal.
- **Imaginative Play** – Letting your creativity run wild is what imaginative play is all about! Coloring, storytelling, painting, drawing, crafting, and acting all foster our imaginations through play. Taking a class in drawing, acting or cooking is also a great way to get out and meet new people.
- **Body Play** – Yoga, Pilates, hiking, riding roller coasters, mountain climbing, surfing, and snorkeling all come under the heading of body play.
- **Object Play** – Manipulation of objects, building, and designing. This type of play can include building with Lego, playing with Jenga blocks, building fortresses, and solving jigsaw puzzles.

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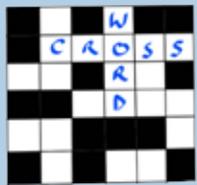
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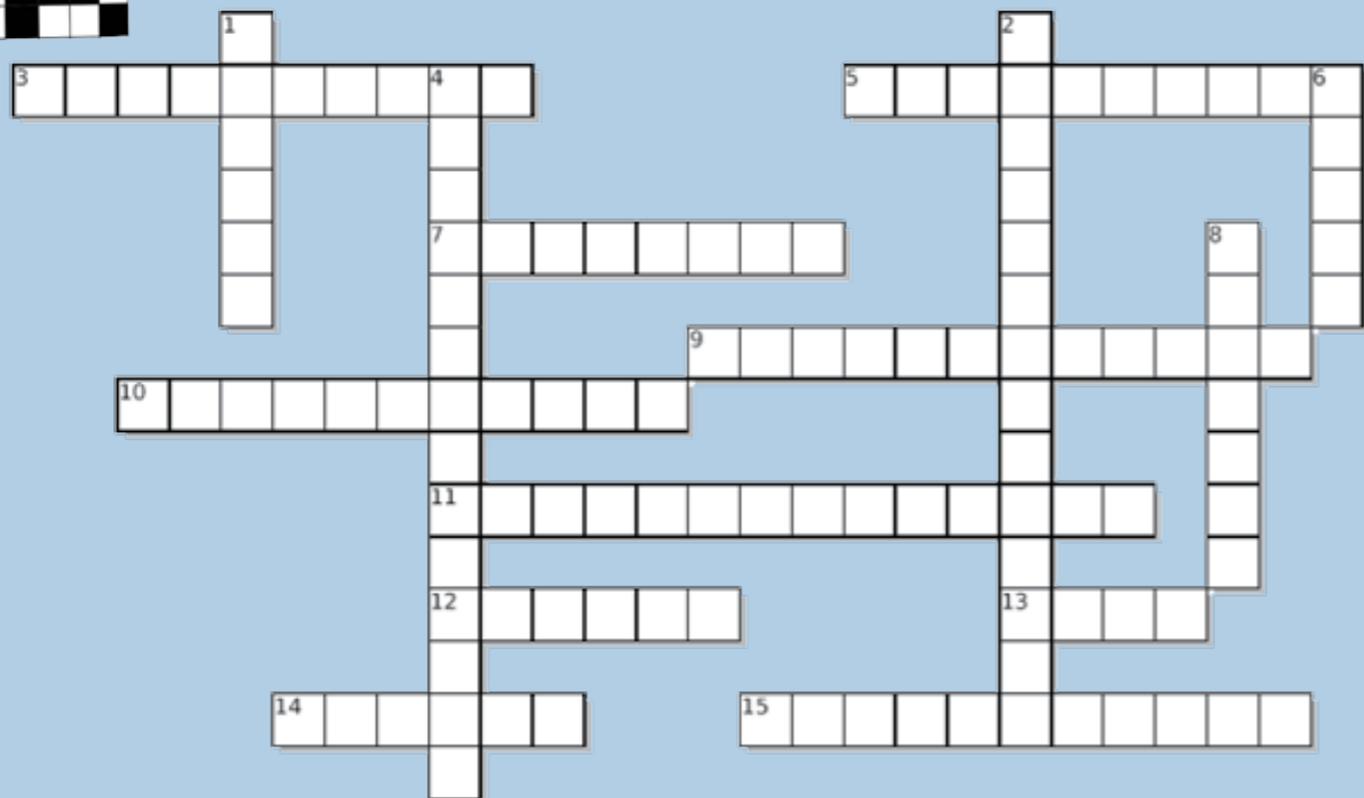
² Founder of the National Institute for Play in Carmel Valley, California.

³ Vice president for play studies at The Strong and editor of the *American Journal of Play*.

⁴ A professor of recreation, sports and tourism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



LET'S PLAY!



ACROSS

- 3. Sometimes the _____ of play is more important than the outcome.
- 5. Play can help release these hormones.
- 7. Play should be a part of our _____ lives.
- 9. Play can have this affect on a person.
- 10. Type of play that unleashes creativity.
- 11. People who are open to this often report less stress in their lives.
- 12. Type of play characterised by set rules and structures.
- 13. Type of play that is also good exercise.
- 14. Play that involves manipulating objects.
- 15. Playful people can more easily keep stress in _____.

DOWN

- 1. Being deprived of play can make you feel like this.
- 2. Physically active games such as tug-of-war and dodge ball.
- 4. Play can help this part of the brain to grow.
- 6. Play is as essential as this basic human need.
- 8. Find ways to _____ play you enjoyed as a child to your life now.

All the answers to the crossword clues can be found in the previous article on play.

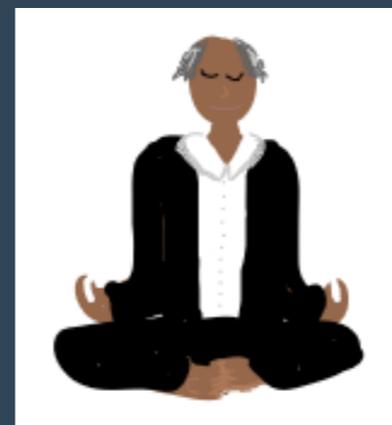
SEVEN BENEFITS OF COLOURING FOR ADULTS

SUMMARISED FROM A POSTING ON 5 FEBRUARY 2016 at Colorit

by Martina Trejo

Seven benefits of colouring are:

- 1. Your brain experiences relief by entering a meditative state
- 2. Stress and anxiety levels have the potential to be lowered
- 3. Negative thoughts are expelled as you take in positivity
- 4. Focusing on the present helps you achieve mindfulness
- 5. Unplugging from technology promotes creation over consumption
- 6. Colouring can be enjoyed by anyone, not just artists or creative types
- 7. It's a therapy that can be taken with you wherever you go



COLORING CAN REPLICATE THE EFFECTS OF MEDITATION

When you meditate, your brain enters a relaxed state by focusing on the present and blocking out the nonstop thinking we all experience. As a result, you reach a state of calm that relieves your brain from the daily stresses of life. Dr. Stan Rodski, (a neuropsychologist) argues that 'colouring elicits a relaxing mindset, similar to what you would achieve through meditation'.

He further mentions that 'like meditation, colouring allows us to switch off our brains from other thoughts and focus on the moment. Tasks with predictable results, such as colouring or knitting, can often be calming.'

Dr. Rodski told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 'The most amazing things occurred — we started seeing changes in heart rate, changes in brainwaves ... there are three key elements — repetition, pattern, and detail

— that prompt positive neurological responses in participants. When you have things that you can predict will happen in a certain way, it's calming for us.'

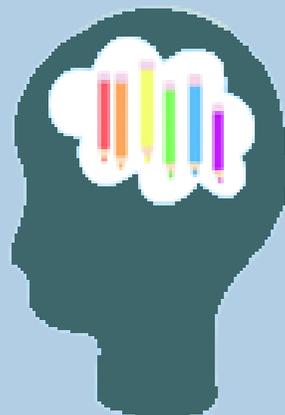
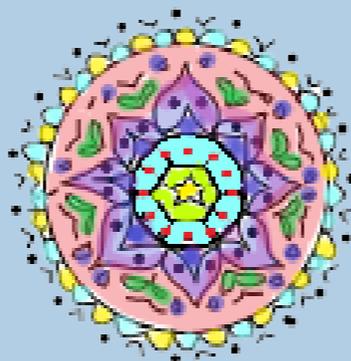
COLOURING MANDALAS OR GEOMETRIC PATTERNS HELPS WITH STRESS

A study published in the *Art Therapy Journal* of the American Art Therapy Association 22(2) pp. 81-85 supports the idea that colouring mandalas or geometric patterns actually does help lower stress and anxiety levels.

Nancy A. Curry, BA, and Tim Kasser, PhD, Professor and Chair of Psychology at Knox College, undertook a study to examine colouring therapy which 'combines elements of art therapy and meditation'.

In the study 84 undergraduate students received 'a brief anxiety-induction', and were randomly assigned to colour either a mandala, plaid form, or blank piece of paper (p. 81). Curry and Kasser reported that 'anxiety levels declined approximately the same for the mandala- and plaid-colouring groups and that both of these groups experienced more reduction in anxiety than did the unstructured-colouring group'.

'It was the complexity and structure of the plaid and mandala designs that drew the participants into a meditative-like state that helped reduce their anxiety.'



THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND HOW COLOURING HELPS REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY

Most of us simply know that we enjoy colouring. Whether we are by ourselves or with a group of friends, we experience a sense of relief and are given a break from life's issues. But psychologically, what goes on in our bodies to allow us to reach this peaceful state?

Cleveland Clinic was interested in this very topic and shared some insightful thoughts from clinical psychologist Scott M. Bea, PsyD. Dr Bea states about colouring, 'We are not disturbed by our own thoughts and appraisals. The difficulties of life evaporate from our awareness, and both our bodies and our brains may find this rewarding.'

An article by Piedmont Healthcare states that 'colouring can be beneficial for adults because it has a de-stressing effect. The act of colouring requires repetition and attention to detail, so you are able to focus on the activity, rather than your worries'.

'It relaxes your brain, lowers activity in the amygdala, which is responsible for our fight-or-flight stress response that can lead to inflammation.'

Dr. Joel Pearson, a brain scientist at the University of New South Wales in Australia, told *Medical Daily*, 'Concentrating on colouring an image may facilitate the replacement of negative thoughts and images with pleasant ones.'

On Nine MSN Dr. Pearson explains further:

'You have to look at the shape and size, you have to look at the edges, and you have to pick a colour. It should occupy the same parts of the brain that stop any anxiety-related mental imagery happening as well.'

COLORING HELPS ACHIEVE MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a key to achieving reduced stress levels. Instead of worrying about decisions made in the past or things too far ahead in the future, mindfulness keeps us committed to the present.

So just how does mindfulness tie into colouring? Dr. Bea told Cleveland Clinic, 'Adult colouring requires modest attention focused outside of self-awareness. It is a simple activity that takes us outside ourselves. In the same way, cutting the lawn, knitting, or taking a Sunday drive can all be relaxing.'

By removing ourselves as the focal point for our thoughts, we become immersed in what we are doing in the present moment. When this is accomplished, colouring becomes 'very much like a meditative exercise,' Dr. Bea said.

COLOURING HELPS COUNTER THE INVASIVENESS OF TECHNOLOGY

All day long we use some form of technology. Whether we are stuck at a desk looking at a computer screen, or scrolling through Facebook getting updates on our friends, it is very rare that we unplug and enjoy the world around us.

The Pew Research Centre published a report that uncovered some alarming statistics in relation to mobile connectivity:

- 67% of mobile phone owners find themselves checking their phone for messages, alerts, or calls — even when they don't notice their phone ringing or vibrating.
- During sleep, 44% of mobile phone owners have slept with their phone next to their bed because they wanted to make sure they didn't miss any calls, text messages, or other updates during the night.

We need to invest in hobbies that help us unplug. Colouring does just that.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN ARTIST TO ENJOY ADULT COLOURING

There is no skill level that must be acquired before you are considered an expert in colouring. By the time we reach adulthood, it's safe to say a majority of us have accomplished colouring in between the lines.

Even if you have never picked up a coloured pencil in your life and completed a colouring page, it can still be pleasurable because you have nothing to lose.

Dr Bea mentions in Cleveland Clinic that 'it is hard to mess up colouring, and, even if you do, there is no real consequence.

As result, adult colouring can be a wonderful lark, rather than an arduous test of our capacities.'

TAKE YOUR LOVE FOR COLOURING WHEREVER YOU GO

How many times have you been in an airport or stuck at the DMV (Dept of Motor Vehicles) with nothing to do? The amount of time we spend waiting can seem endless. Of course, mobile phones could be the answer to



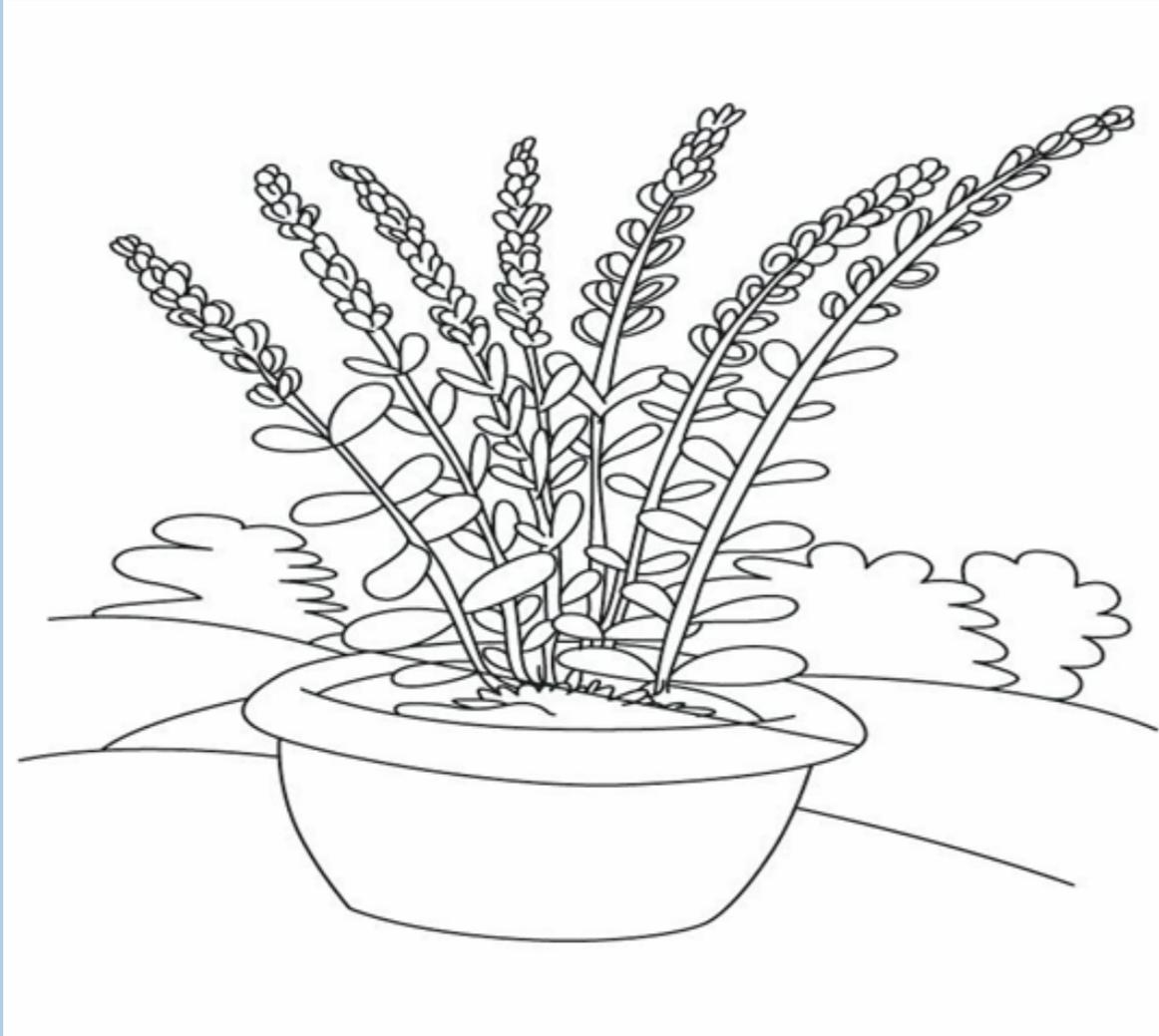
ceasing our boredom, but after a long day of work, you probably want to do something more calming. This is where having an adult colouring book comes in handy.

Colouring is a hobby that is easily portable. Most colourists take their books with them while traveling, heading out to the park, or relaxing at a coffee shop.

EXPLORE THE WORLD OF COLORIT AND REAP THE BENEFITS OF COLORING FOR ADULTS

If after all of this you are still wondering whether or not to join the adult colouring craze, we have one final reason why you should . . . it's fun!

<https://www.colorit.com/blogs/news/85320388-amazing-benefits-of-coloring-for-adults>



KCV has 20 \$100 gift vouchers to give away. Call 9372 2422 to claim yours.

TEN WELLBEING USES FOR LAVENDER

(Note: Some of these tips involve using lavender oil in or near your mouth. If you are going to try these tips, please ensure you buy a bottle of lavender oil that is safe to ingest.)

1. The scent of lavender is well known to relieve stress and increase relaxation. Diffuse the scent around your home by burning lavender oil in an oil burner. Never leave an oil burner unattended, and be sure to extinguish candles before sleeping.
2. Add a few capfuls of lavender oil to a warm bath to relax body and mind.
3. Place a few drops of lavender oil on your pillow or a handkerchief to help you sleep at night.
4. Massage a few drops of lavender oil on your temples to relieve headaches.
5. Lavender can help to relieve dry skin, like the symptoms of eczema or dermatitis. Add a few drops of lavender oil to two tablespoons of any nut or vegetable oil, such as almond, coconut or sesame. Apply to the affected area. You may also wish to add a tablespoon of jojoba oil.
6. Add a capful of lavender oil to 100ml of baby oil and massage onto tired feet at the end of a long day.
7. Place a drop of lavender oil behind each ear, around the navel, and on the end of your tongue to relieve nausea and the symptoms of motion sickness.
8. Lavender oil can be applied to relieve the pain of minor burns or sunburn. First cool the affected area with clean water, then gently apply lavender oil. For sensitive skin, dilute with another oil, such as baby oil.
9. Lavender can help to reduce fevers in adults and children. Add a few drops to lukewarm water and gently wash the body.
10. Lavender can be added to a number of recipes for a flavour boost. You can even add a few drops to a glass of water or a cup of tea. Lavender tea can also aid in easing indigestion.

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Bosisto's Lavender Hints & Tips

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WORD SEARCH – FLOWERS

Z	Y	N	L	M	L	A	V	E	N	D	E	R	C
G	O	R	C	H	I	D	P	O	S	Y	R	H	U
A	R	M	E	T	U	F	L	O	W	E	R	S	L
R	P	V	W	H	T	N	I	C	A	Y	H	V	I
D	E	T	N	A	L	P	L	U	S	Y	L	I	L
E	T	L	I	D	O	F	F	A	D	A	P	T	A
N	U	K	A	P	R	C	N	W	E	D	U	N	C
I	N	M	P	O	R	T	A	E	L	A	Z	A	Z
A	I	Y	S	L	H	J	D	N	A	I	R	I	S
S	A	E	D	E	L	W	E	I	S	S	I	N	G
I	X	Q	M	S	E	L	F	Q	L	Y	D	N	A
R	B	U	T	T	E	R	C	U	P	O	A	I	L
R	M	O	J	H	A	T	A	R	A	W	S	Z	G
S	U	N	F	L	O	W	E	R	Y	U	Y	R	A

Azalea

Buttercup

Chrysanthemum

Daisy

Daffodil

Edelweiss

Gardenia

Hyacinth

Iris

Flowers

Lavender

Lilac

Lily

Orchid

Petunia

Poppy

Rose

Sunflower

Waratah

Zinnia

WALKING ISN'T JUST GOOD FOR YOU – IT'S GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON ABC RN – 29 November 2018

by Farz Edraki

It's a truism that walking — as with most forms of exercise — is good for you.

John Howard credited his longevity as PM, in part, to daily walks; Albert Einstein walked to sharpen his mind; writer Henry David Thoreau needed four hours a day to preserve his 'health and spirits'.

But walking isn't just good for your physical and mental health; it's also good for the economy.

And we're talking billions.

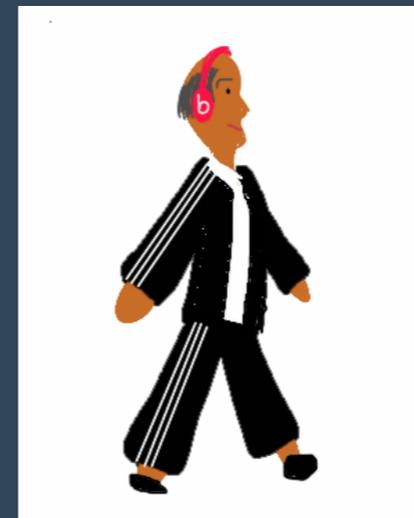
Aside from savings to the public health system, urban planners and economic analysts argue that the more walkable' your community is, the more economically viable it is.

'GOOD FOR HEALTH, GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY'

Just 30 minutes of walking a day can 'reduce your risk of heart disease by about 35 per cent', says the National Heart Foundation's Trevor Shilton.

It follows that the effects on the public health system — in terms of savings — are monumental.

'There's a range of studies around cost-benefit and the economic benefit of reducing heart disease through walking and through physical activity,' Mr Shilton says.



'If you reduce cardiovascular disease by 35 per cent, there'll be massive savings in relation to deaths, hospital admissions, expensive medical procedures, and keeping people well and productive in their communities.'

'They're broken down generally into direct medical costs, which we estimate at about \$1 billion per year.'

It's not just heart disease. Walking also reduces cancer and diabetes risk, and boosts mental health.

'Basically, when it comes to the built environment in our cities and neighbourhoods, what's good for health is also good for the economy, environment and good for social policy as well,' Mr Shilton says.

Helen Lochhead, Dean of the Faculty of the Built Environment at the University of New South Wales, agrees.

'The difference between walkable places in cities, and non-walkable places is the difference between healthy people, and not-healthy people,' she says.

'Chronic disease is prevalent in car-dominated environments as opposed to pedestrian environments, which are very people-friendly, and which encourage people to walk and talk, and be part of the city.'

'It's quite evident [that] the design of the city, and walkability, actually produces healthier outcomes in the community.'

WHAT MAKES A CITY, TOWN OR NEIGHBOURHOOD 'WALKABLE'?

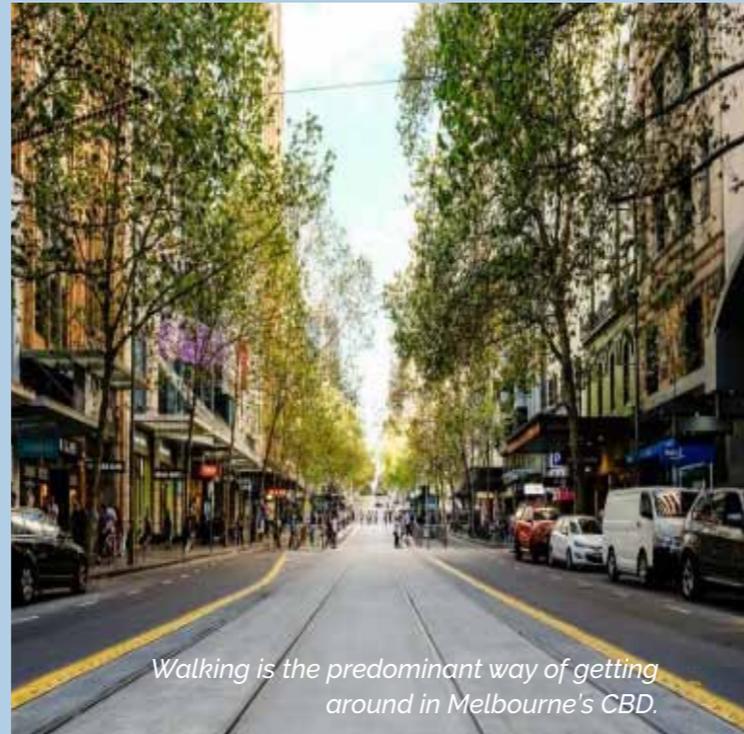
It's a term you've probably heard bandied about before.

Not surprisingly, 'walkability' refers to how conducive an area is to walking; generally speaking, inner-city CBDs are more walkable than suburbs or country towns.

'In large cities like Sydney and Melbourne in the CBDs, walking is the predominant way to get around,' says Terry Rawnsley from SGS Economics and Planning.

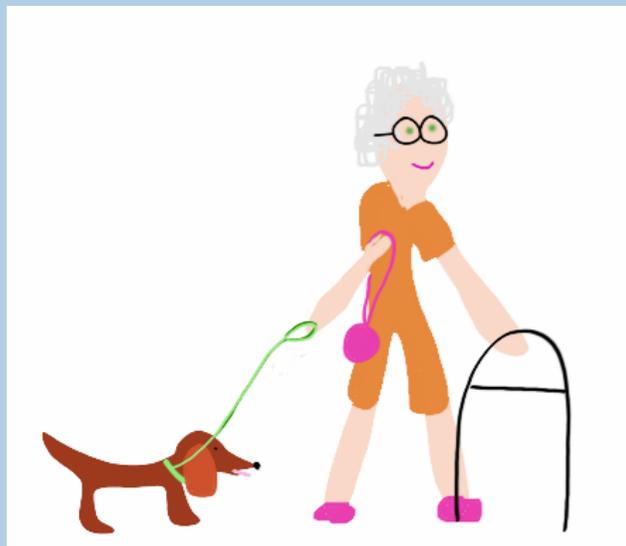
'If you want to walk from your office to see your client or from the office to see a collaborator, or to get a coffee, you're not jumping in your car, you're not catching a bus, you're using your feet to walk a short distance.'

'We looked in the city of Melbourne and basically 85 per cent of all the trips in the city of Melbourne are by foot.'



AUSTRALIAN CITIES WITH HIGH WALKABILITY

- Haymarket, Sydney: 99
- Carlton, Melbourne: 97
- Brisbane City, Brisbane: 95
- Northbridge, Perth: 95
- Canberra City, Canberra: 95
- Adelaide, Adelaide: 90
- Hobart, Tasmania: 92
- Darwin City, Darwin: 87



In contrast, a lack of congestion and better parking options in regional centres makes driving more viable.

'Even for a short journey of maybe a kilometre or two, smaller centres are still jumping into the car, because that's the quickest way,' Mr Rawnsley says.

Other factors that affect walkability include traffic and road conditions, footpath options, and proximity of amenities.

There's even a way to measure how walkable your neighbourhood is: Walk Score, a website which assesses any address on a walkability score from zero to 100.

'The algorithm, I would say, is flawed in some ways,' says Jeff Speck, a Boston-based city planner and urban designer.

'But it actually produces pretty accurate results from something less than 50, which is a place where most people aren't walking, to anything above 90 [which] is called a "Walker's Paradise", and everything in between.'

'Generally speaking, when a Walk Score is higher, levels of obesity and all the related diseases are lower.'

GOOD FOR YOU, GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Urban planners say investing in walkable communities is also an investment in local economies.

'We know that [in] communities where people walk a lot, [they] are increasingly nearer to things that they value,' Dr Shilton says.

'In other words, businesses become more viable, so there's business benefit.'

One study found increasing the level of walking connectivity in Melbourne by just 10 per cent would add \$2.1 billion to the economy.

On a broader level, according to urban economists, walking also promotes more productivity and connectivity of knowledge-based industries.

'In the work we did for the City of Melbourne, we looked at a pedestrian score,' Mr Rawnsley says.

'What we found is if you went from a score of, say, 50 up to a score of 100, then the jobs in that area became eight per cent more productive.'

'That means that for every hour they worked, they generated an extra eight per cent worth of income.'

Mr Rawnsley attributes this to *agglomeration*, an economic term nodding to the benefits of clustering of similar businesses.

'Agglomeration is all about being able to connect with other like-minded firms, connect with clients, be close to your competitors as well,' he says.

'It's all about how you learn from your clients, competitors and peers. A lot of this happens informally: you're out looking for a coffee and you bump into a client and you'll have a chat and you'll learn something.'

'That exchange of information is really what drives modern knowledge economies like Australia.'

But, as Professor Lochhead points out, 'cars and people can cohabitate, and they do'.

Building and promoting walkable communities requires investment from local governments — internationally, Washington DC, Kyoto and New York are all recent examples of this.

Mr Shilton points to Times Square as an example of the many benefits of a pedestrian focus.

'Yes, you saw massive increases in walking, but guess what? You [also] saw fewer vacant shop fronts, you saw people sticking around and buying lunch and business turnover improving,' he says.

Locally, Melbourne's CBD is a frequently cited example where concerted efforts have been made to promote walkability.

'It's a very well-designed city for walking,' says Mr Rawnsley, citing examples like purposefully designed 'block links' — multiple building entrances and exits, which encourage pedestrians to walk through.

'That's basically trying to replicate the laneway network.'

'The more links, the more laneways, the more passageways and more overpasses that you provide within the built form, the more connections that can be made for our pedestrian network.'

'It's almost like thinking about the City of Melbourne like a human brain — the more and more neurons you can link together and fire, it makes the city a smarter and smarter location.'

And Professor Lochhead says the cities lagging behind on walkability will ultimately pay a price.

'The public health outcomes, the outcomes in terms of pollution and lack of connectivity, in disconnection between people in society, lack of access to jobs and services, is manifold when you don't actually build in connected, pedestrian-oriented, walkable communities where all of those things are within a close range, tight-knit environment,' she says.



New York City's Times Square is an example of the many benefits of a pedestrian focus.

HOW 'STRESS BALLS' CAN HELP YOU

Stress balls come in many shapes, sizes, and colours, but are usually small balls filled with a pliable gel or clay that are held in the palm of your hand. Squeezing the ball can release tension and help to relieve stress. Stress balls can also be used to help strengthen the muscles of the hand and wrist.

Consult with a doctor before treating stress or injuries on your own.

EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT FROM STRESS BALLS

Just about anyone can use a stress ball. They are inexpensive, and many businesses give them away as promotional items. If you are using a stress ball to help with a specific condition, you should definitely discuss the situation with your doctor.

EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

Tension Release: When you tighten your fist around a stress ball, the muscles in your hand and wrist tighten up. When you release the ball, the muscles relax, which can release tension and stress.

Stimulation of Nerves: Squeezing a stress ball can stimulate the nerves in your hands. These nerves are connected to parts of the brain that are associated with your emotions.

Diversion of Attention: By focusing on the stress ball, you will stop thinking about the source of your stress. Your mind and your body relax – similar to the effect that you can get through mediation.

Mood Enhancement: Stress ball use can also release endorphins, which act as pain relievers and sedatives and can improve your mood.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Lower Risk of Stress Injuries: Regular use of stress balls can strengthen the muscles of the fingers and hands. Improving the muscle tone of these muscles can prevent repetitive injuries.

Treatment of Hand Conditions: Using a stress ball can exercise the fingers and hands which may be especially helpful in conditions like arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Stress balls may prevent the development of these conditions as well.

Warning: Use of stress balls in carpal tunnel syndrome may be helpful but may also aggravate the condition.

Improve Circulation: Contracting the finger and hand muscles improves the blood flow to the hand and wrist area. This helps remove toxins and other waste products and improves function.



Physical Therapy: Physical therapists use stress balls that contain gels of varying consistency to strengthen and rehabilitate the muscles of the fingers, hands, and wrists. The different gels offer different resistance while strengthening the muscles.



ANOTHER TYPE OF STRESS BALL - CHINESE STRESS BALLS

Chinese stress balls or *Baoding* balls soothes nerves. They are made of harder materials and are painted. Most of these stress balls have metal or some other substances that make jingling sounds when moved.

To get the soothing effect, you should rotate two stress balls in one hand and make them rub together. You can also rub them between both palms. The noise that Chinese stress balls make can be soothing and stress relieving.

Sources:

<https://woman.thenest.com/stress-ball-exercises-hand-6533.html>

<https://www.livestrong.com/article/141645-what-are-benefits-stress-balls/>

<https://stress.lovetoknow.com/stress-ball-benefits>

STRESS BALL EXERCISES

Grip Strength

Hold the stress ball in the middle of your palm. Wrap your fingers around the ball and squeeze – hold for two to three seconds, then relax. Repeat for one minute, then rest for one minute. Repeat three times then switch hands. As your endurance increases, squeeze the ball for 90 seconds and rest for 30 seconds.

Pinch Strength

Strengthen your pinch to improve your ability to hold things between your thumb and index finger. Place the ball between the tip of your thumb and the tip of your index finger. Squeeze them toward each other and hold for two to three seconds, then relax. Repeat for one minute, then rest for one minute. Repeat three times then switch hands. Increase your pinching time and decrease the rest time to make this exercise more difficult.

Opposition

Thumb opposition – the thing that separates us from other mammals – allows you to touch the tip of your thumb to each of your fingers. This is important because it allows you to hold objects of different sizes and manipulate tools with one hand. Hold the ball between your thumb and middle finger and squeeze for two to three seconds, then relax. Squeeze 10 times, then repeat between your thumb and ring finger and thumb and pinky finger.

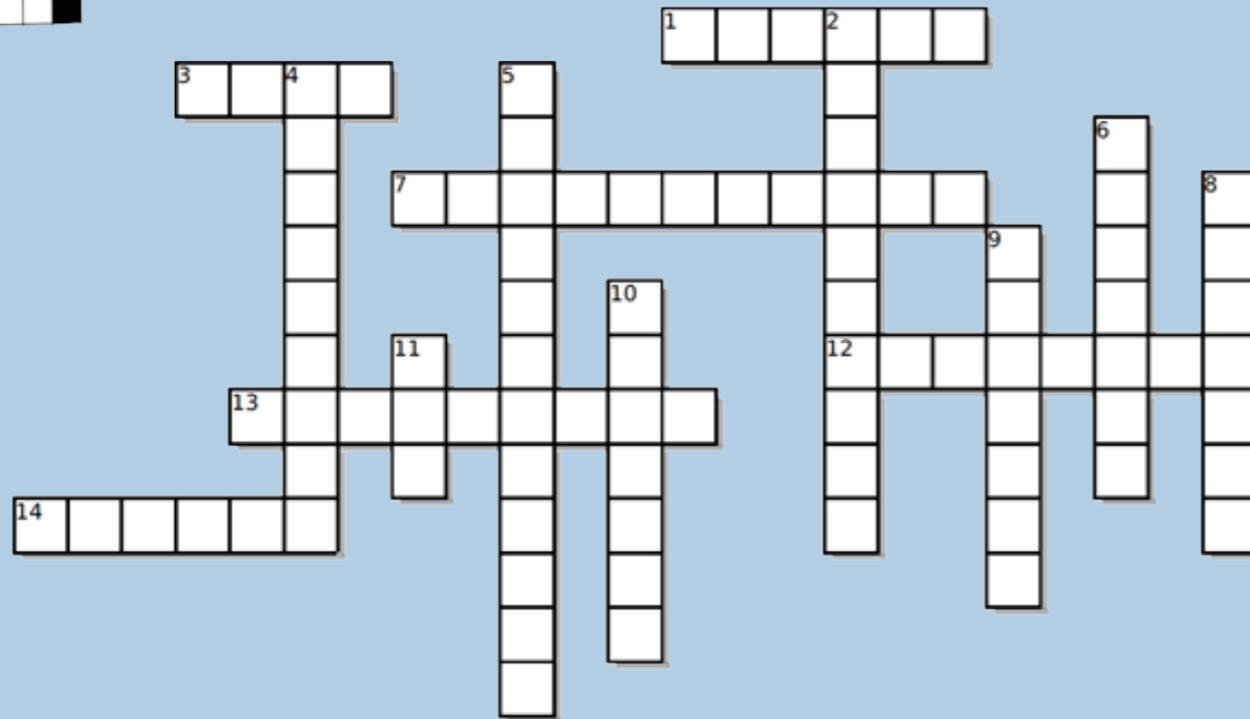
Twisting

Improve your ability to twist the top off bottles and cans with this stress ball exercise – hold the ball loosely in the palm of your right hand. Place your left palm on top of the ball and wrap your fingers around the ball. Hold the base of the ball secure with your right hand. Twist your left hand against the resistance of the ball and hold for two to three seconds, then relax. Repeat 10 times, then switch hand positions and repeat. Alternate the direction of twisting to get the full benefit.





STRESS RELIEF



ACROSS

1. Having these is what separates us from other animals.
3. A substance often found in stress balls.
7. Flexing your hands and fingers may improve _____ in your hands.
12. Stress ball exercises can help improve your ability to open bottles and jars.
13. Focusing your _____ on a stress ball can help you relax.
14. These are connected to the parts of your brain that control emotions.

DOWN

2. Stress balls can be a useful tool in this stress-relieving technique.
4. One of the conditions that can be relieved or avoided by using a stress ball.
5. A stress ball may help this condition, but then again it may not, so be careful.
6. Squeeze a stress ball to release this
8. Wrap these around a stress ball and squeeze.
9. Strengthening these can help avoid injuries.
10. Hard metal stress balls used in China.
11. One of two substances that can be used to fill stress balls.

All the answers to the crossword clues can be found in the previous articles on stress balls.

BREATHING EXERCISES FOR STRESS

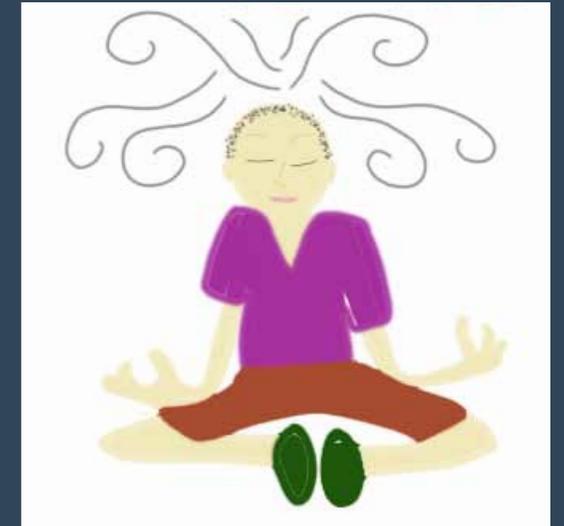
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by Rachael Kable

Using deep breathing techniques is a great way to reduce stress or anxiety. By focusing on your breath, you can take a break from the chatter of your mind and bring yourself into the present moment.

When you focus on taking deeper breaths, you also help to soothe your body during times of stress by kick-starting your body's 'rest and digest' system and reducing the effects of the fight or flight response.

Before beginning the breathing exercises, you may like to follow the guide below to set yourself up comfortably.



1. Find a position where your spine is gently elongated (but not strained), perhaps sitting in a chair or cross-legged on the floor. Make any last adjustments, such as rolling your shoulders or turning your head from side to side, so you can comfortably ease yourself into stillness.
2. When you feel ready, you may like to close your eyes. Otherwise, maintain a soft focus on a point not too far away in front of you (this is a great option if you think you might fall asleep!).
3. Start to invite your attention into the present moment, letting other thoughts or distractions softly fall away.
4. You may notice your mind wandering during breathing exercises, and that's okay! Just bring your focus back to your breath as soon as you can. You may have to bring your attention back once, twice, 10 or 20 times – just keep practising and it will start feeling more natural in time.

BREATHING EXERCISES

Here are the breathing techniques I follow to help me manage stress.

Everybody is different, so try each one to find out what works for you.

The Point of Stillness

Start to notice the journey of each breath, moving in and out of your body. See if you can follow this journey for a little while.

When it feels right, begin to focus on the pause at the end of each exhale (before the next inhale begins).

There's no need to alter the length of this pause – it may be very short, or it may be a little longer. This pause is also called the point of stillness, a small space of quiet and rest which we can learn to appreciate.

Deep Breathing

Place one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. Simply feel the movements as each breath inflates and deflates.

You may like to deepen your breaths to maximise the oxygen intake and help facilitate the parasympathetic nervous system (your body's 'rest and digest' mechanism that counteracts the fight or flight response).

This is a particularly powerful breathing exercise to reduce stress.

Oceanic Breathing

The aim of this breathing exercise is to create an ocean sound in the back of your throat.

Gently place your tongue on the roof of your mouth to slightly narrow your throat, but be careful not to tense up too much! You should still feel comfortable and relaxed.

Begin to take deeper breaths and notice the ocean sound being created by your breathing.

Elliptical Breathing

This breathing exercise involves two different steps.

The first is to picture a circular shape in your mind and as you exhale, visualise your breath moving down one side of the circle. As you inhale, imagine your breath moving up the other side of the circle.

Once this feels comfortable, begin incorporating the second step by smoothing out your breath so there aren't any noticeable pauses in the breath cycle; as soon as one breath finishes, the next one begins.

If the second step doesn't feel right for you, return to step one by simply visualising your breath moving around the circular shape.

The breathing waltz

Breathing to relax doesn't always need to be serious – why not try this fun breathing exercise in a moment of need?

Simply breathe in for three seconds, hold for three and breathe out for three. If it helps, you might also like to visualise a waltzing movement in your mind. If this is too much, just focus on counting and finding a pace that works well for you; not too fast and not too slow.

You should notice a deepening and lengthening of your breathing pattern, but not too much that it leaves you feeling out of breath.

HOW TO END THE BREATHING TECHNIQUE

Let your attention move away from your breath by starting to notice the world around you.

Listen to sounds, notice your sense of smell and taste, and feel sensations in your body (such as areas of tension or relaxation, or the texture of materials against your skin).

When you're ready, open your eyes and reconnect with your sense of sight.

While it's great to take the time to make breathing exercises part of your regular routine, I like to use specific ones during stressful situations.

For example, I would use the deep breathing technique before a public speaking presentation and the elliptical breathing technique if I wake up during the night with a racing mind.

'When you focus on taking deeper breaths, you also help to soothe your body during times of stress by kick-starting our body's 'rest and digest' system and reducing the effects of the fight or flight response.'

TEN HEALTH BENEFITS OF VINEGAR



There are many health benefits derived from vinegar. Vinegar is a natural healing agent and bactericide. It is also an anti-inflammatory and can be used on minor cuts, abrasions, bee stings and other skin ailments.

1. Prevent food poisoning

Chopping boards and pastry boards should be scrubbed clean as soon as they have been used to prevent food poisoning germs from lurking in the cracks. Scrub boards clean with salt water and wash down with white vinegar then place in the sunlight to whiten.

2. Sinus problems

Take one teaspoon of apple cider vinegar and one teaspoon of honey mixed with half a cup of hot water. Breathe in the vapour. Repeat four times a day until relief is felt.

3. Ear infections

Make up a solution of equal parts of vinegar and olive oil. Apply to the affected ear using a cotton wool bud soaked in the solution.

4. Nausea

If the nausea is brought on by over indulgence, treat the patient with a teaspoon of clove vinegar. This will alleviate the feeling of sickness.

5. Bee stings

For relief dab the sting with herbal vinegar or apple cider vinegar.

6. Chapped hands

Make a paste of lanolin with a little vinegar added. Rub well into the skin.

7. Arthritis

Mix one teaspoon of cider vinegar with half a glass of water. Drink twice a day with meals.

8. Corns and calluses

Make a paste with one teaspoon of vinegar and enough wholemeal flour to bind the ingredients together. Place on the corn and cover with a slice of onion. Wrap a bandage round the foot and leave in place overnight. Use the same remedy to soften calluses but omit the onion.

9. Headache

Soak the corner of a cotton handkerchief in white vinegar and hold to the nose for five minutes. Breathe deeply to inhale the smell.

10. Impetigo

Treat impetigo with undiluted apple cider vinegar. Dab the affected area with a swab of cotton wool soaked in vinegar five times a day. Try not to touch the affected areas with the hands for fear of spreading the infection to new parts of the skin. The skin should start to clear up in three to four days.

Source

Stein, M. (2005). *Vinegar*. Essex, [England]: Windsor Group.



BRAINTEASERS*

If Teresa's daughter is my daughter's mother, what am I to Teresa?

Thirty white horses on a red hill. First they champ, then they stamp, then they stand still.

What king can you make if you take the head of a lamb, the middle of a pig, the hind of a buffalo, and the tail of a dragon?

I can travel from there to here by disappearing, and here to there by reappearing.
What am I?

*Answers: Son-in-law, teeth, a lion, the letter 't'

WHEN IN NEED: CALL A FRIEND

WHO DO I CONTACT ...

...to find out where the nearest support group operates?
KINSHIP CARERS VICTORIA
(03) 93722422
www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org

...for five free parenting counselling sessions on the telephone?
GATEWAY HEALTH
1800 880 660
www.gatewayhealth.org.au

...to find out what training is available for kinship carers?
CARER KAFÉ
(03) 9416 4292
www.carerkafe.org.au

...to find out what financial and child care assistance is available?
GRANDPARENT ADVISOR CENTRELINK
1800 245 965

...to find out about bereavement assistance?
BEREAVEMENT ASSISTANCE
(03) 9564 7778
www.bereavementassistance.org.au

...to find out about help for problem gambling?
GAMBLING HELP LINE
1800 858 858
www.gamblinghelpline.org.au

...to find out about family mental health and wellbeing?
DRUMMOND STREET
(03) 9663 6733
www.ds.org.au

...to find after hours medical advice?
AFTER HOURS GP HELPLINE
1800 022 222
Nurse on call 1300 606 024



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