



# The Natural Therapeutics Guide to Wellness



**Welcome. This free guide is our gift to you as you embark on a journey of discovery through our courses, whether it is for personal interest or to become a practitioner of complementary therapies. These basic truths are to help you embrace holistic living for your own well-being and so you may help others around you. It also showcases the quality of our courses.**

**With best wishes,  
Carole Preen**

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## THE VALUE OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



The aim of a complementary health practitioner of any discipline is to treat the whole person and not just the symptom they are coming to see us about. That is what holism is all about, looking at the whole and not just the sum of its parts. We are not just physical beings; our thoughts and feelings are all intertwined with our bodies and an upset in the balance of any one of these can lead to "dis-ease". What we put into our bodies in terms of nourishment and fluid is also important to

help maintain a perfect balance and that is what complementary therapies aim to do; help restore the balance.

The reason for the holistic or "whole-istic" approach as it should be written is that the presenting symptom may just be the 'tip of the iceberg'. See the picture aside and you can see what we mean as what we see with our eyes is not necessarily the whole thing. We need to take a look at any underlying causes of ill health if we are to help the person achieve any lasting improvement in their health. To that end, we do not simply concentrate on providing the treatment we have been asked to provide, but we also look at other ways in which we can help the client to bring about positive changes to their health and lifestyle. We do this through adapting our treatments and offering inspired aftercare advice to help our clients take responsibility for their own health and well-being. As complementary therapists, we are not the solution, just a guide to it.



## Natural Therapeutics - Guide to Holistic Living

That is what this Guide is all about: how we can add to the treatment we are already providing, or for you to address your own healthy lifestyle, by looking at all aspects of a situation. In other words: how can we provide a truly holistic approach, which will allow the client or you to ultimately take a more active part in your well-being? Empowerment is the key to achieving lasting change. Seeking complementary therapies helps to empower you and take back control. It is therefore a partnership and the first step in a new direction of holistic living.

Practitioners who adopt the holistic approach should *practise what they preach*. With that in mind, we will look in some detail at a variety of measures that you, as both a practitioner or as someone just interested in a holistic lifestyle can use to enhance your own health and well-being. The areas we would like to concentrate on in this Guide are:

- How to lead a healthy lifestyle
- The importance of breathing techniques and relaxation
- The basics of good nutrition
- The value of exercise

## LIVING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Our attitude to life is just about the single most important factor in determining our health. How we feel about ourselves is very often our biggest clue as to how we feel about life.

As a practitioner, it is important that you present yourself confidently. You do not have to have all the answers but you should always project a positive attitude, no matter how many problems you may be facing in your own life. Your client deserves your undivided attention during treatment and that means that you must leave your own personal issues at home.

Of course, we all have bad days and we all have our share of problems, but if you, as the practitioner, develop ways of coping with life, dealing with problems and increasing your own sense of well-being and self esteem, then you are going to be able to help your clients through your own good example. Equally, if you are not studying to become a practitioner, this Guide can help you address imbalances in your life and help you make a change for the better.

So, before we start, test yourself to see how you feel currently about your life.

Ask yourself the following questions:

*Am I generally positive about life?*  
*Do I believe that life is an exciting adventure?*  
*Do I have good friends who care about me?*  
*Do I have time for others?*  
*Do I wake up refreshed and optimistic in the morning?*  
*Do I feel that I can cope with, and overcome, my problems?*  
*Do others like to be around me?*  
*Do I feel that I look attractive?*  
*Do I feel that I have an attractive personality?*  
*Am I generous with my time/possessions/advice/feelings?*  
*Do I enjoy life as it is?*

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*Do I have loving relationships?*  
*Do I feel confident about my abilities?*  
*Do I have an important goal in my life?*  
*Do I feel that my life is unfolding as it should?*

If you answered mostly yes to the above questions, the chances are, you are generally physically healthy and can recover from illness quickly. Depending on the amount of negativity you experience in your life, your health level is likely to be less than optimal.

The more positively you embrace life, the healthier you are likely to be and the more quickly you will be able to recover from illness or problems in other areas of your life.

So, if you do have some negative traits, such as, perhaps, low self esteem or lack of confidence, what can you do about it and, as a follow-on, how can you help clients with similar problems?

## POSITIVE THINKING



If you start to persistently challenge your negative thoughts, whenever you can catch them, you will start very quickly to see real changes in the way you react to situations. Positive thinking is a powerful tool for changing the way you approach life. It is based on the assumption that all events you have experienced in your lifetime so far have been created by the thoughts and the beliefs you have held in the past. Whenever those thoughts and beliefs have been negative, your life will have tended to reflect that. All it takes is a negative outlook to destroy all your plans for change.

It is surprising how many negative thoughts go through our minds every day and, by allowing ourselves to believe them; we are denying ourselves the chance to change our lives fundamentally for the good. If we do not believe we are worthy of good things or are not talented enough for the job we want, or not attractive enough to have any friends, we are precluding these things from happening. The person who believes they are dull and uninteresting will project that image and be perceived by others as *being* dull and uninteresting.

So, first of all, it is important to love and accept yourself. This is ultimately, in fact, exactly what we all want from others, but how can we get love and acceptance from others, when we don't even feel we are worthy of having it from ourselves? Remember that others' feelings about us reflect those we have ourselves.

### How do we do it?

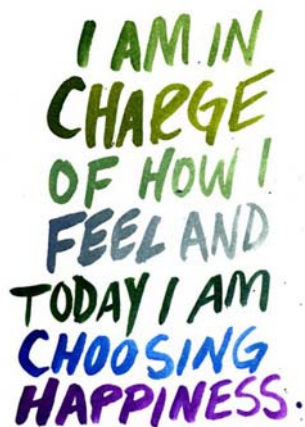
#### 1. Start with never criticising yourself

By criticising ourselves, we lose confidence and can't break out of old habits. If we say to ourselves 'I'm just not clever/attractive, etc. enough', then we will always believe it and never allow ourselves to *be* attractive or clever or whatever else we want to be. We need to be gentle with ourselves, approve of ourselves and keep encouraging ourselves.

From the practitioner point of view, always be encouraging to your clients. Help them with their confidence. If you think they look good, say so. If you are impressed with something they have done, tell them. Encourage them to be gentle on themselves and to see their own good points.

### 2. See the good in people and overlook the bad

If you expect people to be friendly and helpful, then that is exactly what you will find them to be. If you expect your day to be good, then it will be. This is not far-fetched. If you wake up in the morning feeling bad, then you will react badly to everyone you meet. You may not let that car out into the road in front of you. You may growl at your colleagues when you arrive at work. They may seem unfriendly towards you that morning and you may feel that you are not liked or appreciated.



I AM IN  
CHARGE  
OF HOW I  
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CHOOSING  
HAPPINESS.

However, supposing you got up and decided that your day was going to be good. Because you're having a good day, you let that car out in front of you. They smile at you and feel more like letting another car out in front of them. Friendliness is contagious. You arrive at work feeling good and greet your colleagues or clients with a smile. They respond and you feel appreciated. Be upbeat and friendly and people will treat you accordingly, so make an effort to start every day in a positive mood and refuse to allow others to bring you down. Whatever we send out in either mental or verbal form, will come back to us, so it pays to make sure it's what we really want to send out.

This has obvious implications for the practitioner. Your mood will set the scene for any consultation. You should always greet your client with a smile and make positive statements. Make them know how pleased you are to see them. Positive therapists are always busy and successful. Positivity is catching and clients will spread the word about you. You would not recommend a friend sees a miserable therapist!

### 3. Create yourself the way you want to be

Because others will respond to the thoughts you have of yourself, this puts you in the very powerful position of creating yourself. You have absolute power in your own world of thought. You can choose to think whatever you like, so you can either choose limiting thoughts or you can let go of them and create powerful positive thoughts about who you are and what you want to do. Use affirmations, which must be:

- Simple and direct positive statements, such as 'I am happy with myself just as I am'
- They must be in the present tense, such as 'I have a very fulfilling job'. If you say that you would like a fulfilling job (in the future), then that is where your mind will always think of it – out of sight in the future
- This should be what you *really* want, not about what you think you can achieve right now and you must *believe* the statement, however unlikely the outcome seems to be at the time. If you can make your mind truly believe it by repeating it and visualising it strongly as happening right now, your behaviour will follow and people will react to you accordingly
- You must then repeat it to yourself many times during the day. You can have more than one on the go at once, but make sure they are complementary to each other!



The more strongly you feel and visualise it to yourself, the sooner you are likely to achieve it. You can change your own thought patterns very effectively by using this method and, by changing your thought patterns, you can change your whole experience of the world and start creating for yourself the world you want

Help your client to visualise outcomes they wish for themselves. These are simple techniques that are surprisingly powerful.

#### **4. Let go of your negative thoughts**

Start to get into the habit of catching your thoughts and examining them. If they are negative, stop them or reword them to be positive rather than negative. You do not have to clutter your mind with these thoughts. Programme in times during the day when you will stop what you are doing and examine the thoughts going round in your head. If they are negative, ask yourself what practical value they have. What sort of thoughts are they? If you are worrying about a problem, ask yourself if you can solve it. If you can, do so. If you can't, drop the thought immediately - remember that it is unproductive and not achieving anything, then try

again to let it go. Holding on to negative thoughts only hurts one person..... you. Bearing grudges can literally tie you up in knots and make you ill. Don't allow yourself to be so affected in this way. It is completely pointless and the person who you are directing these thoughts at will not be as hurt as you are. If you become a practitioner and find that a client is talking to you in a negative way about their life, encourage them to reflect too. As a therapist, you have great responsibility and often what you say carries more weight just because of the position you hold in relation to the client, so you can often help where others may have failed.

**no  
negative  
thoughts  
allowed**

#### **5. Take care of your appearance**

By making the effort to look good, we can increase our self-confidence and boost our morale. It does not mean having to spend vast amounts of money on new clothes, or on trying to look younger, more beautiful, etc. It means taking time to do some of the little things that make us feel more positive about ourselves. It can mean having a haircut or wearing bright or cheerful clothes we feel good in. Once we start to be kind to ourselves, not only will we start to feel more confident and positive, but we will also project a more positive image towards other people.

As a practitioner, you can boost your confidence by wearing clothes you feel good in. It is often a good idea to wear some specific items of clothing that represent the impression you wish to create, such as a therapy tunic to get you prepared.

#### **6. Take time for yourself**

Taking time for ourselves is very important in combating stress. It signifies that we consider ourselves to be of value; that we matter. Taking time can be as simple as having a bath with oils and aromatherapy candles or spending an hour in the garden reading a book. It can be as extravagant as spending a week on a tropical island or trekking in the Himalayas. The important thing is to recognise that it is time that you are giving to yourself; time that you do not have to feel guilty about. Above all, it should be something you really enjoy doing.

Depending on your therapy, you can often provide time out for your clients. Simply by listening, you have created a special time for them. This in itself encourages them to feel that they matter. If, in addition, you provide a relaxing and pleasant treatment, you will be enhancing this feeling of well-being. Always try to make your treatments feel special and give your undivided attention to your client. Whatever therapy you offer, make sure you have therapy yourself – again practice what you preach.

### **7. Cut down on stress and hassle in your life**

Identify the things which are making you stressed and either eliminate them from your life, or start to prepare yourself to cope with them. Decide whether you really need them. Sometimes we continue to honour old responsibilities to ourselves or others long after they have become irrelevant or unhelpful. Review the things you feel responsible for and decide whether they are still valid. If you are not able to let them go immediately, then work towards dropping them, or perhaps handing them on to someone else, or sharing them. If you want to keep them, then look at practical ways of limiting their impact.

Practice good time management. Don't put off things you really need to do, as doing them and crossing them off your list is always less stressful than putting them off but leaving them constantly on your mind.

Work your way through problems. Enlist the help of others if you can and get them to brainstorm solutions with you. Then choose a solution, plan for it and carry out the plan as quickly as possible. Every problem solved leaves you more time for what you really want to do.

As the practitioner, you should not provide advice or counselling to your client unless you are properly qualified to do so; however, you can help them by listening and suggesting any of the above techniques if you think they are appropriate.

### **8. Do not repress or deny your emotions**

This only compounds unhappiness and stress. Admit your feelings and accept them. Keeping strong feelings bottled up only causes them to resurface later as illness. Don't be afraid to cry. Crying can relieve anxiety and let loose bottled-up, dangerous emotions. Learn to laugh. Laughter is healing. Above all, try not to take life too seriously.

As a practitioner, very often, clients will discuss personal matters with you and they will often get emotional. Sometimes you may be the first or even the only person to whom they have opened up. Always allow them to let their emotions out. Give gentle support and encouragement and always have a box of paper tissues handy. Do not worry about your treatment time being taken up. Simply allowing people to let go and cry or talk is very healing, and that is what you are there for.

### **9. Create a pleasant and welcoming home/therapy room environment**

Keep the noise level down, as noise contributes to stress and makes it impossible to relax. Use cushions, rugs and other fabrics to absorb noise and create a feeling of comfort. Choose colours carefully to create a relaxing and peaceful atmosphere. Warm lilacs, creams, browns and pinks are good. Avoid bright primary colours, as they can be too stimulating. For example, yellow is the colour for mental clarity and stimulates the mind, which is great for an office. However, it is the worst colour possible to paint your bedroom or therapy room! Use as much natural lighting as possible as this promotes feelings of freshness and well-being. Use essential oils for their calming and relaxing

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effect. Paintings and furnishings can help make your place special and create exactly the atmosphere you want.



Make sure that the environment is warm and welcoming and that you will not be disturbed by noise, such as phones, knocks on the door and, as far as possible, avoid working in rooms close to heavy traffic noise, children shouting, etc.

Make sure the room is ready as the client enters with no trace of the previous client to be seen. That way it will feel like it is all for them.

*Now make some plans to make beneficial changes to your lifestyle.  
List 4 ways in which your own lifestyle is creating negativity:*

1

2

3

4

*Now suggest 4 changes to your lifestyle, which would bring about positive improvements.*

1

2

3

4

*Plan these changes into your life over the next two weeks and monitor the results.*



## DEEP DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING (Or THE COMPLETE YOGA BREATH)

Many people breathe with the upper part of the lungs only. This can be due to habit or tension in the stomach muscles and the diaphragm. This type of breathing can cause the following problems for the body:

- The body expels too much carbon dioxide
- The blood becomes too alkaline
- Blood vessels narrow and circulation to the brain is restricted
- Palpitations, dizziness, feeling faint and chest pains can result
- Panic attacks may occur and these can lead to hyperventilation



By learning the full diaphragmatic breathing (or the complete yoga breath), this cycle can be broken. Deep breathing relaxes mind and body, and supplies oxygen and energy to the whole body. Be aware that people suffering from asthma may be unable initially to take in very deep breaths. In this case, simply ask them to breathe in as much as is comfortable and safe for them.

Start by sitting upright in a chair or lying on the floor with head and knees supported by cushions. Breathing slowly, using the diaphragm, chest and clavicle area, draw in, through the nose, as much air as possible, as slowly as possible. Start by first filling the diaphragm area. Place your hands on your stomach and feel it expand as you breathe in deeply. Keep breathing in slowly and fill the chest cavity. Finally raise the clavicles to allow in the maximum possible amount of air. This will ensure that the body gets an increased amount of oxygen, which it will use to burn up nutrients delivered to the body tissues. The brain will benefit from the added oxygen and a general feeling of relaxation and well-being will be achieved.

Hold the breath for a few seconds, as this will allow the lungs to use up as much of the inhaled oxygen as possible. Then very slowly breathe out through the mouth. Empty the lungs as completely as possible to expel the maximum amount of carbon dioxide, as this will leave the lungs ready to take in extra oxygen in the next in-breath.

Practise this several times, but stop if you feel dizzy or start to hyperventilate. Use a ratio of 2:1 when breathing, e.g. breath in for 4 seconds (or 6), hold for 2 (or 3), breath out for 4 (or 6) and hold for 2 (or 3) before the next breath.

This type of breathing not only energises the whole body, but, by alternately expanding and contracting the diaphragm, chest, lung and shoulder areas, the muscles of the upper body relax, leading to relief from tension headaches, back and neck aches and stiff shoulders. Use this type of breathing several times a day to get used to breathing correctly and also use it at the first sign of anxiety or a panic attack coming on. Make sure you can do it when you are not going to be disturbed and can relax. Make sure you turn your mobile phone off!

## RELAXATION

There are a great many benefits to be gained from relaxation:

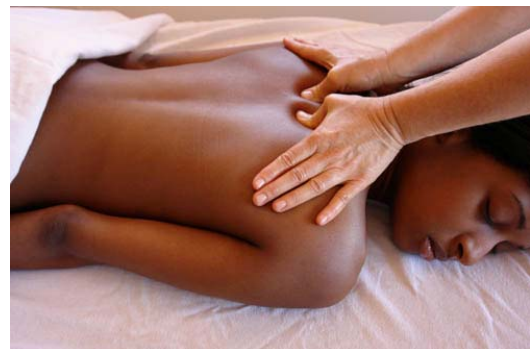
- Calming and soothing the mind
- Relief from depression and anxiety
- Relief from stress
- Control of unproductive worrying thoughts
- Promotion of feelings of well-being and inner peace
- An increased ability to cope with the stresses of everyday life
- Enhanced physical, mental and spiritual awareness



Learning to relax the whole body can slow down or turn off symptoms in our bodies caused by stress and tension. The key to controlling anxiety is being able to relax. Stress causes muscles to tense up and this leads to many different kinds of aches and pains, such as tightness in the chest or headaches. The aches and pains can then cause worry and hence stress. The constant tension causes fatigue, which depletes our healing resources still further.

There are some general tips to remember to get the most out of your relaxation exercises:

- Allow a regular time for your relaxation practise, preferably at the same time each day
- Make sure that you won't be disturbed during your relaxation period
- Make sure that the room is warm and comfortable. Have a light blanket handy as the body can start to feel chilled very quickly
- Use music to create a relaxing mood and mask noise from outside
- Use aromatherapy candles or essential oils if you wish
- Avoid practising if you are hungry or have just had a large meal
- Don't judge your attempts - relaxation is not a competitive sport - just allow it to happen.
- Breathe slowly and regularly, in and out through your nose.
- Breathe from the diaphragm
- Practise once or twice a day for 20 to 30 minutes
- Finally, practise relaxation generally by making time for yourself, to just enjoy being who you are (have a soak in the bath, read a book, treat yourself to a massage)

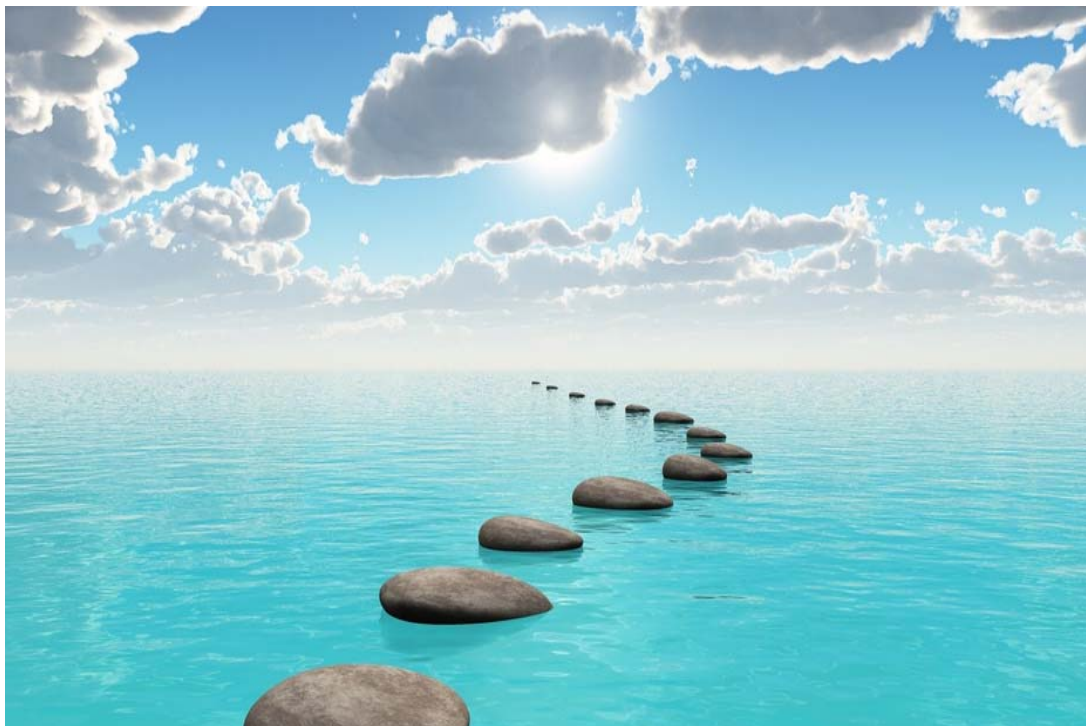


## PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION

Relaxation takes practice and it is easy to think you are relaxed, when in fact; there can still be many tense areas in the body. The only way to know you are totally physically relaxed is to go systematically through each area and relax it. It is often helpful to first tense the area and then release it. This shows us the difference in feeling between relaxed and tense muscles.

To relax the body, first lie in a comfortable position on the floor (Savasana position for yoga practice). Ensure that the room is warm and there are no draughts. A rug or blanket to lie on is best, with possibly a cushion under the knees and/or head for support and comfort.

- Starting with the toes of the right foot, first tense them as hard as possible, and then relax them fully. Feel the experience of your toes relaxing. Do this several times until you are sure they are fully relaxed
- Next move on to the left foot. Tense and relax it several times
- Progress this way up the right calf into the thigh and buttocks
- Repeat with the left calf, thigh and buttocks
- Next tense and relax the lower back, stomach and chest area
- Move on to the right hand, arm and shoulder, followed by the left hand, arm and shoulder.
- Finish with the neck, throat, face and head
- Remain in this position and experience the relaxation for as long as you like, allowing your thoughts to drift without directing them



## AUTOGENIC RELAXATION

The physical relaxation experienced with the progressive relaxation technique can also be achieved or enhanced by using the autogenic relaxation technique. This relies on the mind suggesting to the body that it feels relaxed and, as a consequence, the body actually becomes relaxed. You can try this out on yourself, before using it on clients, by recording the text and playing it back with a music background, or simply by memorising the sequence. You will need to make sure that you spend sufficient time going through each body part. So, before you proceed any further with your reading, try this out.

### **The complete sequence is as follows:**

- Sit or lie down.
- Take 3 deep diaphragmatic breaths
- Progressively relax the body using autogenic relaxation techniques - concentrate on warmth and heaviness
- Feel how the body and mind are after this exercise
- Continue for a few minutes to breath in and out gently, thinking "RELAX" on each out-breath
- Gently bring your thoughts back to the present and get up slowly

This exercise is ideal as an introduction to meditation techniques, but it can also be used on its own as a pure relaxation exercise. The idea behind it is to use the power of suggestion to focus on two aspects of the relaxation response:

- Increased blood flow
- Decreased muscular tension

When relaxing, we naturally feel warmth, as more blood reaches the extremities, and we feel heaviness, as the muscles relax. When doing this exercise, simply allow your mind to follow the suggestion of the words and let go of all tension. Let go of any distracting thoughts, which will take away your attention from experiencing the state of relaxation.

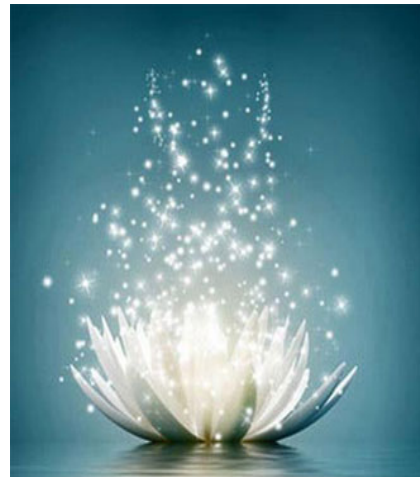
Sit with your back upright on a comfortable chair, or lie down with your head and knees supported for comfort, in the same way as for the progressive relaxation exercises, and take 3 or 4 deep diaphragmatic breaths. Allow yourself to start relaxing your body and your mind. Allow yourself to focus on the sensations of each area being relaxed. Slowly repeat to yourself the following phrases 3 times each, really allowing yourself to feel the responses of your body. If it helps, tape yourself saying these mantras and play it back to yourself whilst you relax.

*I am comfortable, warm and fully relaxed  
My right foot is heavy and relaxed and warm  
My right leg is heavy and relaxed and warm  
My left foot is heavy and relaxed and warm  
My left leg is heavy and relaxed and warm  
My right hand is heavy and relaxed and warm  
My right arm is heavy and relaxed and warm  
My left hand is heavy and relaxed and warm*





*My left arm is heavy and relaxed and warm  
My stomach is heavy and relaxed and warm  
My chest is heavy and relaxed and comfortable  
My shoulders are heavy and relaxed and warm  
My neck is heavy and relaxed and warm  
My face is heavy and relaxed and warm  
My head is heavy and relaxed and warm  
A wonderful wave of total relaxation is sweeping  
over me from my feet right up to my head. I feel  
wonderfully, warm, comfortable and deeply relaxed.  
My heartbeat is calm and regular  
My breathing is calm and regular  
My shoulders are warm and relaxed  
My neck is warm and relaxed  
My face is cool and relaxed  
My forehead is cool and relaxed  
I am drifting further and deeper into a wonderful feeling of relaxation and comfort*



Enjoy the relaxation for a few minutes. Let your thoughts drift but be aware of the physical sensations of relaxation. Remember how it feels to be relaxed and calm. When you are ready to finish the exercise, bring your attention back to the room and your surroundings and say to yourself, 3 times:

*I am completely alert. My eyes are fresh and sparkling. I feel wonderful.*

There are many ways in which you can vary this exercise. It is limited only by your own imagination. There are also self-hypnosis techniques CDs you can buy to induce a feeling of deep relaxation and well-being and to give you some idea of different ways in which you can achieve this either for yourself or with your clients. The main things to remember are to progress slowly up the body, giving suggestions of warmth, heaviness, comfort, sleepiness, etc. Do not forget to use suggestions of alertness when you want to wake up, otherwise you or your client will awake, feeling drowsy and uncomfortable.

If you are going to use essential oils for relaxation, choose oils that are known sedatives and not those that stimulate the mind. Good choices are Sandalwood, Marjoram, Jasmine, Patchouli and Rose. Rose blends well with everything.

The above are all wonderful relaxation techniques to teach to your clients, whatever your therapy. They can be incorporated into massage or other relaxing treatments and can be something the client can take home with them to practise on a regular basis. You can also use photographs and pictures in your practice room, or in the home, to promote feelings of relaxation and well-being. Choose an image, which produces in you the feelings you wish to experience when relaxing.

We offer a Stress Management Diploma as a postgraduate qualification for therapists that helps you fully understand the causation factors of stress and how to create a treatment plan for your clients. Visit the courses list page on our website for more information.

## NUTRITION

The word 'diet' is derived from the Greek word 'diata' meaning 'way of life' and in so many ways what we eat has a huge impact on our own health and wellbeing. However, many people are confused about nutrition - not surprisingly because there are often conflicting and contradictory items in the media about what we should and should not be eating, and what is good and bad.



Eating a sensible and balanced diet is one of the most important factors in gaining and maintaining optimum health. If the body is not properly nourished other therapies will not be as effective as they could be. Therefore, if you are able to advise your clients on the basics of eating well, you will be helping them on the way to taking control of their own health. This does not mean that you should recommend any kind of therapeutic diet or fasting, which can be too extreme and requires careful monitoring, nor sweeping dietary changes which may be inappropriate and could build resentment. Instead, just a knowledge of sensible guidelines which can then be adapted by the client to suit their own particular needs or lifestyle could go a long way to help that client, and also build your relationship with them.

### **We Are What We Eat**

If our food is not rich in nutrients, contaminated with pesticides, or is simply difficult to digest, we could start to see problems. The place to start is always the digestive system - all food goes there first. If it does not get broken down efficiently, it can actually poison the body as well as not deliver nutrients to where they are needed. Not only that, but the theory of embryology indicates that there is a connection between the digestive system and all parts of the body, because all parts of the body start as an outgrowth from it.

An embryo essentially starts as a tube and this tube is the digestive system. As the embryo grows, other organs start to appear as buds from the original tube, growing out of the digestive system in the same way as branches grow out of trees. So, as our bodies continue to grow, they retain a connection to the digestive system. If our digestive system is poisoned and unhealthy, that condition will ultimately spread to the most closely associated organ.



For example, the reproductive system grows from the colon part of the digestive system and if a person suffers from colon problems, such as IBS or colitis, they may also ultimately suffer from reproductive system problems, such as fibroids. So it is not helpful, in this case, to simply treat the fibroids when the original problem lies in the colon: the colon needs to be treated first. Similarly, for most other problems, we should focus attention on the digestive system first.

### Hering's Law Of Cure

By changing our diet, we can ensure that our digestive system is as healthy as possible. Many conditions have been shown to heal when a person adopts a cleansing diet.

As we start to heal our body, we often notice that the most recent problems seem to heal first. This is because they are not as deeply seated. Eventually we seem to go back in time as each condition re-emerges in the reverse order to which it appeared, and eventually we find ourselves back at the very earliest conditions we suffered from. Often, when we are undergoing the process of healing, problems reappear that we had totally forgotten about. As well as healing in reverse order, they are also cured from the top of the body to the bottom, and from the inside of the body outwards. This is in accordance with Hering's Law of Cure (Hering was a notable homoeopath of the last century). So, when we start to heal, we often experience a worsening of some conditions and the reappearance of other conditions before we are completely well. However, if we follow a good diet and exercise regime, together with practising relaxation and positive thinking techniques, we can undo much, if not all, of the damage already caused to our bodies by exposure to stress, pollutants and bad diet.

### HYDRATION

Water is the single most important element for ensuring the health of the body's cells, organs and systems. Without water, we will die within a matter of days. However, many people are dehydrated without even realising it, with the modern caffeine culture, alcohol and stressful lifestyles being just three factors which cause loss of water from the body.

When the body is dehydrated it tries to conserve water by enclosing cells in cholesterol to prevent further losses, although nothing can get into the cell either. This can obviously cause problems with nutrient absorption, but also with water retention as fluid is locked within cells which often causes people to further reduce their water intake and exacerbate the problem. However, if they *increase* their water intake the body will come out of its 'dehydration alert' and allow free flow of fluids, with the subsequent release of toxins for elimination from the body.



Many people drink a lot of tea and coffee, and very little water. It can often be very difficult to persuade clients to reduce their coffee and tea intake as they may have become reliant upon it, either psychologically or from an addiction aspect. Tea and coffee, as well as being dehydrating, can cause other problems, e.g. a blood sugar imbalance, blocking the absorption of nutrients such as vitamin B1, iron and zinc, and can affect the functioning of the thyroid gland. Also, if part of your business is to help people to relax, it is going to be very difficult for them to do so if they are full of caffeine! You should however never tell them to cut it out immediately or altogether: instead, recommend a gradual decrease over a period of days or weeks to no more than one or

two cups a day. Warn them that they may experience withdrawal symptoms such as headaches or restlessness and that if this happens it could be that they were doing too much too soon so should take it more slowly.

It is also a good idea to recommend alternatives to ease the transition. Tea can often be replaced with rooibos tea which is similar in flavour and can be taken on its own or with milk or soya milk, and has the added benefit of being a rich source of vitamin C and antioxidants. Green tea is another common replacement for black tea, and it is indeed a good source of antioxidants, but it should not be forgotten that it still contains caffeine so is still a stimulant.



Coffee is more difficult to substitute but there are options available such as dandelion root coffee, chicory or 'Barley Cup', available in health food shops and some supermarkets. There are also a wide variety of herbal teas available so you could encourage your client to experiment with them to find what they like. Some people take to drinking a mug of warm water instead as they do not like drinking cold water. Use whatever works. Also, try sipping throughout the day instead of thinking you have to gulp it down.

The amount of water that we should drink daily depends on the individual - people in more sedentary jobs or lifestyles will not need as much as those who are more active. Generally, it is very easy to monitor your own hydration by checking the colour of your urine – it should lighten during the morning to pale yellow: any darker indicates dehydration; if it has no colour at all you are drinking too much. Between 8 and 10 8oz glasses of water per day is the general guideline but this should be varied as above or if there are other factors such as hot weather, vigorous exercise or high stress.

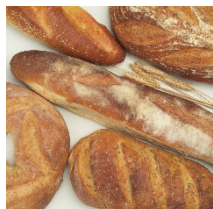
## NUTRIENTS

There are two main classes of nutrients in food: macronutrients are the main building blocks of our food in the form of carbohydrates, protein and fats; and micronutrients are vitamins, minerals and other beneficial substances.

### Macronutrients

Macronutrients provide the building blocks of our bodies, together with providing energy both for immediate use and storage for later. We need a combination of carbohydrates, proteins and fats for good health, yet they are frequently out of balance or of poor quality, which can cause problems with health.

### Carbohydrates



Carbohydrates form the bulk of our diet and are used primarily for energy, on which our whole body's metabolism depends. There are two main types, namely **simple** or **refined** carbohydrates, and **complex** carbohydrates.

Carbohydrates break down by the digestive process into sugar. There are various types of sugar molecules but two most common are fructose (from fruit) and glucose. When fructose and glucose are combined the result is sucrose, or table sugar. The modern Western diet is high in simple carbohydrates such as white flour, white rice, white pasta and sugar – which are termed to be 'empty calories' or, in other words, have no nutritional value. Not only have they had most of their nutrients removed during processing, they can actually deplete the body's own

stores and, in this way, they can cause a 'nutrient debt' and contribute to deficiencies - it can be said that Westerners are well fed but malnourished.

Simple carbohydrates are digested very quickly and the resulting sugars rapidly enter the bloodstream causing a surge of glucose. This triggers the release of insulin from the pancreas, which removes the circulating glucose and pushes it into cells for storage, causing the all-too-familiar afternoon slump that is often countered with something like chocolate! However, this then triggers another surge of glucose into the bloodstream, and so the cycle continues. This seesaw effect can lead to a blood sugar imbalance which can be recognised by eg energy slumps, fatigue, mood swings, and difficulty in concentrating. Over time, if left unchecked, this can lead to more serious health problems such as insulin resistance or even diabetes.

Instead, we should be aiming for a diet rich in **complex carbohydrates** such as *wholewheat* flour and pasta, *brown* rice, beans and pulses, and fresh fruit and vegetables. This type of carbohydrate has its nutrients intact and is digested more slowly, thus releasing a more gradual stream of glucose into the bloodstream and avoiding the peaks and troughs otherwise encountered. Fruit (fresh or dried), however, should only be eaten in moderation due to its sugar (fructose) content, particularly if a blood sugar imbalance is considered, even though it does not generally cause the same seesaw effect as sucrose. Carbohydrate digestion can be further slowed by the inclusion of adequate protein and fats, which are discussed later on.

Complex carbohydrates also contain fibre, which is needed for good bowel health. Fibre comes almost entirely from plants and is actually a family of substances which form the walls of plant cells. Fibre both bulks out the stool and attracts water into it which softens it and makes it easier to pass, helping to maintain the health of the digestive system and particularly preventing constipation. Constipation is a common problem and should be avoided - it is a major cause of autointoxication, whereby toxins are absorbed through the bowel wall into the bloodstream thereby poisoning the body. If constipation is a problem, some linseeds soaked overnight in water or diluted fruit juice and then drunk the next morning can provide relief. In addition to carrying water, they can also pick up fragments of undigested food in the gut and move it on and out of the body via the bowel, thus removing a potential source of toxicity.

### **Protein**

Protein consists of chains of amino acids linked together. Some of the amino acids can be made by the body whilst others cannot, and this latter class is known collectively as the **essential amino acids** (ie isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine/cysteine, phenylalanine/tyrosine, valine, tryptophan and threonine). You may recognise some of these, others you may not. In nutritional terms, 'essential' means that it can only be taken in by diet, as the body is unable to make it itself.



Our diets are often lacking in protein, or sufficient good quality protein, and this can lead to health problems including fatigue, mood swings, depression, muscle weakness, and indeed myriad other symptoms. You may recognise some of these symptoms as also being symptoms of blood sugar imbalance mentioned above and, as previously discussed, insufficient protein can contribute to blood sugar imbalance as it allows carbohydrates to be digested too quickly.

To provide balance and good health, protein intake must be sufficient and also contain a good balance of the essential amino acids. There are two main classes of proteins,

high and low quality: high quality protein tends to be derived from animal sources, such as meat, fish, eggs and dairy products and is complete within itself; whereas low quality protein tends to be derived from plant sources and is generally incomplete. However, plant sourced proteins can still be used to good effect if they are combined - for example, pulses and grains mixed together - to form a complete protein.

Protein intake should form approximately one-third of our diet. The actual amount needed will vary from individual to individual but this is a general guideline. In practice, if at least a quarter of each meal or snack is a protein source, this alone could help to at least start to regain some balance. However, please see the following section regarding acid and alkaline foods.

### **Fats**

Fats can be taken in through diet and are also produced in the body from excess carbohydrate, and they are a stored form of fuel to be burned later as and when needed.

In today's increasingly diet-conscious society, we are told that we should exclude fat from our diet in order to stay healthy and protect our hearts and arteries. However, research has shown that it isn't the *amount* of fat in the diet that causes disease, but the *type* that is used.

Before going on to briefly describe the types of fats, cholesterol should first be mentioned. Cholesterol is a substance which is mainly made by the liver, and it plays an important role in the production of cell membranes, some hormones and vitamin D. Your body produces sufficient cholesterol for its needs, so any extra from food is often surplus to requirements.

There are two types of cholesterol: LDL (low density lipoproteins); and HDL (high density lipoproteins). LDL cholesterol, also called 'bad' cholesterol, carries cholesterol to the rest of the body, and a surplus can cause health problems. HDL cholesterol, however, carries cholesterol from the blood back to the liver, where it is then prepared for elimination. This type of cholesterol is less likely to be deposited in arteries and is often referred to as the 'good' cholesterol. In general, higher LDL and lower HDL increase the risk of developing atherosclerosis and heart disease. Different kinds of dietary fats can influence the amount of LDL or HDL cholesterol in the body.

**Saturated fats** - these are mainly found in meat and dairy products, and some plant sources such as coconut oil and palm oil. Saturated fats raise total blood cholesterol levels because they boost both HDL and LDL cholesterol, so their intake should be limited although not necessarily eliminated altogether. Plant sources of saturated fats are currently being investigated and may be beneficial in their natural form.

**Trans fats** - Trans fatty acids are produced by heating vegetable oils in the presence of hydrogen, in a process called 'hydrogenation', and it is the common method of making e.g. margarine. The more hydrogenated an oil is, the harder it will be at room temperature. Trans fats raise LDL cholesterol and lower HDL cholesterol so they should be reduced in the diet, if not eliminated altogether as they are the most harmful forms.

**Unsaturated fats** - These are the 'good' fats found in products from plant sources such as vegetable oils, nuts and seeds and can help to decrease LDL and raise HDL. There are two types: *monounsaturated*, which is not essential but can be used by the body to

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create energy, and *polyunsaturated*, which is essential and can therefore only be derived from food.

There are two main types of polyunsaturated fats, namely *Omega 3* (alpha-linoleic acid) and *Omega 6* (linoleic acid), and these are crucial for brain function, skin health and the prevention of a whole range of illnesses such as heart disease, depression, dermatitis and arthritis. Omega 3 can be found in linseeds, soy beans, pumpkin seeds, walnuts and oily fish (e.g. mackerel, salmon, sardines, herring, trout, fresh tuna); and Omega 6 can be found in oils of olive (extra virgin), corn, safflower, and most nuts and seeds. Evening Primrose Oil in particular is an excellent source of Omega 6. Extra Virgin Olive Oil (*Omega 9*) is the best oil to use for cooking but equally it tastes good drizzled over food or used as a salad dressing. Use cold pressed oil whenever possible and do not overheat them.



Reading labels is a good way of identifying foods which are high in fat, and food with 3g of less of fat per serving is considered a low fat food; however, beware high levels of sugar and salt, which are also prevalent in processed foods.

In order to limit 'bad' fat intake, choose low fat or skimmed dairy products, eat leaner cuts of meat, eat a meatless meal at least once a week and remove the skin from poultry. Increase the amount of 'healthy' fats by eating more fish, particularly oily fish, and include nuts and seeds - but only a small handful of each - ensuring that they are chewed thoroughly or ground in a coffee grinder and used as a sprinkle on cereal or porridge at breakfast.

Linseeds are a good source of omegas 3, 6 and 9 but they should be crushed immediately before use as they are very difficult to digest if they are whole (see notes on constipation above), so the benefits of the oil will not be felt.

### Summary

A balanced meal or snack should contain approximately 45% complex carbohydrates in the form of fruit or vegetables, 35% protein, 15% carbohydrates such as brown rice, pasta, potatoes, etc, and 5% healthy fats. This should help to provide all the necessary nutrients in the correct balance to ensure an even release of energy, relieve fatigue and boost mood and brain power. It is beyond your remit to recommend that a client avoids certain foods or food groups unless they have already tested positive to intolerances. However, many clients do not know how to balance their meals so this simple information could immediately improve their wellbeing. On the next page is the food plate that is now recommended by the UK Food Standards Agency and the NHS:



## The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



### Micronutrients

These are substances that the body needs in very small amounts - sometimes just a few millionths of a gram per day - which we know collectively as vitamins and minerals.

Vitamins and minerals are necessary for health and growth and can be found in the normal balanced diet. They can be obtained from either plant or animal sources, and some can be made by sunlight (vitamin D) or even by the body itself (some B vitamins, vitamin K), provided that conditions are suitable. Imbalance or deficiency can cause illness and disease, for example vitamin C deficiency causes scurvy, vitamin B1 deficiency causes beriberi, or calcium deficiency can cause rickets, osteoporosis or osteomalacia. Diet is therefore very important to ensure and maintain good health.

In an ideal world, there would be no need to supplement vitamins and minerals because our food would provide everything we need. Unfortunately, however, intensive farming practices, industrialisation, and the use of agricultural chemicals have depleted the soil with the result that there are fewer nutrients for the plant - and therefore us - to absorb. Eating organic produce, especially if locally grown, can go a long way towards correcting this and should therefore be encouraged wherever possible. Organic produce from this country is grown or reared to the strict standards of The Soil Association and their website is worth a look: [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org). Farm shops, farmers' markets, organic farms and vegetable box schemes are growing in popularity and becoming more widespread, so have a look to see what is available in your area and start to become aware, if you are not already, of the various options to suit a range of budgets.

Certain lifestyle factors can cause the depletion of nutrients from our bodies, such as pollution, cigarettes, alcohol and overuse of stimulants generally, and one of the most insidious and difficult to manage is stress. Such factors make it even more important to



have a wholesome and balanced diet and, together with making lifestyle changes or, in the case of stress, attempting active stress management, this can cause improvements. Even so, you should not recommend that someone takes supplements - even a multivitamin or mineral - as they may be inappropriate for their situation and may adversely interact with medicines or other supplements they may be taking.

### ACID AND ALKALINE FOODS

Over-acidity of the body's tissues and fluids (acidosis) is one of the most basic causes of disease and can cause symptoms as diverse as fatigue, excess mucus, lowered immunity, nervous or stress disorders, weak nails, dry hair and skin, cysts, headaches, joint pain or arthritis, muscle pain, gastritis and acid indigestion. It is thought to be a causative factor in the development of chronic degenerative diseases such as cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis and arthritis, as well as such illnesses as diabetes, bladder and kidney conditions, hormone problems, premature ageing, osteoporosis, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and yeast overgrowth.

The pH scale is a measure of acidity or alkalinity on a scale of 0 to 14, the lower end of the scale being more acidic and the higher more alkaline. The healthy body range is between pH 6.0 to 7.5. Most children have a normal pH of 7.5, whereas over half of adults have a pH of 6.5 or lower. Cancer patients usually have a pH of 4.5, especially when the condition is terminal. Cancer cannot exist in an alkaline environment, hence some cancer therapies work on the basis of alkalising the body. The most alkaline is pH 14, which is also extremely potent and has similar effects to highly acidic substances as both extremes of the scale promote chemical reactions both within the body and also with inorganic substances.

### pH of Common Substances

ACIDIC							NEUTRAL		ALKALINE OR BASIC												
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14							
Battery Acid	Stomach Acid (Hydrochloric)	Lemon Juice, Vinegar	Coke and Pepsi	Grapefruit and Orange Juice	Apples, Dr. Pepper Soda	Tomato Juice, Beer	Acid Rain, 7-UP Soda	Black Coffee, Pepto Bismol	Healthy Skin, Hair and Nails	Urine, Saliva, Milk	"Pure" Water, Blood	Shampoos (7.0 to 10.0)	Baking Soda, Seawater, Eggs	Perm Solutions (8.5 to 9.5)	Toothpaste, Hand Soap	Milk of Magnesia, Mild Detergent	Household Ammonia and Cleaners	Soapy Water	Hair Straighteners (11.5 to 14.0)	Bleach, Oven Cleaner	Liquid Drain Cleaner, Caustic Soda

The body can balance itself using dissolved carbon dioxide in the bloodstream to restore and maintain balance, with much of the acid excreted via the lungs. Excess acid causes the body to borrow minerals - including calcium, magnesium, sodium and potassium - from other locations including the bones, soft tissues, body fluids and saliva, in order to neutralise the acid and safely remove it from the body. If the diet is highly acidic, it can cause a strain on the body causing severe and prolonged damage which may go unnoticed for years.

Whilst over-acidity is to be avoided, excess alkalinity, as mentioned above, can also cause problems and, in particular, it can cause bowel disorders by encouraging a

prevalence of 'bad' bacteria, causing problems with digestion and immunity. Bowel toxicity causes toxins which should be eliminated from the body to re-enter the bloodstream and affect the whole body thereby causing illness and disease.

A combination of acid and alkaline foods in the right proportions is therefore ideal, i.e. 70-80% alkaline foods to 20-30% acid foods.

### Acid Forming Foods (20-30% of the diet)

- **Most grains** - particularly those which are gluten-forming (wheat, oats, rye, barley), which can all be only partially digested which leaves a sticky residue on the lining of the intestines which blocks the absorption of nutrients. Also, other food particles can stick to it and putrefy which can cause toxins to leak into the bloodstream and circulate around the body
- **Meat** - all meat is difficult to digest and is acid-forming, although organic free-range poultry is less so than pork, beef and lamb. Red meat intake should be limited to no more than twice per week, and poultry to two to three times. Fresh fish is also acid forming but less so than meat, so should be eaten no more than three to four times per week
- **Dairy produce** - these are acidic and are also mucus forming (see separate section)
- **Processed foods** - not only are these acidic, they are also very dehydrating as they tend to contain large amounts of salt and sugar as well as preservatives, many of which are harmful to the body and just serve to add to the total stress load. They are low on nutrients and contain large amounts of phosphorous, which interferes with calcium absorption into bones
- **Fats and oils** - many seed oils are acid forming
- **Tea, coffee, chocolate** - these are both acidic and dehydrating, and as they are stimulants they also contribute to a blood sugar imbalance and aggravate hot flushes. They also contain substances which can block absorption of nutrients
- **Alcohol** - very acidic but particularly spirits which are made from grains



### Alkaline-forming foods (70-80% of the diet)

- **Most fruit and vegetables** - including juices, although they can have quite a strong detoxifying effect so should be used with care in some people
- **Beans and legumes**
- **Nuts and seeds** - which are also good sources of essential fatty acids, needed by the body for healthy cells which will promote the elimination of toxins
- **Rice** - brown especially as it is less acidic and rich in nutrients. It also attracts water and provides fibre for the bowel. **Quinoa** and **millet** are also excellent grains with millet in particular being alkaline and hydrating
- **Soya products** - such as tofu and tempeh

- **All herbs and most spices** - which can have positive health benefits if used therapeutically (see CHP's Herbal Studies course) and also add natural flavouring to foods

### MUCUS-FORMING FOODS

Mucus is a fluid made in the body by mucous membranes. It is most prevalent in the respiratory tract, where it acts to keep breathing passages moist, and trap foreign particles so that they can either be expelled in a cough or sneeze, or carried down into the digestive tract to be eliminated via the bowel. However, it is also in the digestive, urinary and reproductive tracts.

Under normal circumstances an adult can produce around 1 litre of mucus per day from the nose and/or sinus cavities alone. Additional mucus is produced by tiny glands in the throat and throughout the lower respiratory tract. If you are suffering from a cold, as you are well aware, mucus production soars. We usually do not notice it because it is a reasonably thin consistency. However, problems can occur when mucus thickens.

Mucus is a starchy carbohydrate so whenever foods of a similar nature are digested they can cause an excess of mucus in the body. The food that is most commonly associated with mucus is cow's milk and its products. However, other foods can also cause problems, including sugar, sodium chloride (table salt), eggs, beans, grains (although the wholegrain varieties generally contain less starch, they can still cause problems for some people), starchy root vegetables (e.g. potatoes, parsnips, swedes, etc), and sometimes also citrus fruits. Acid-forming foods also cause mucus to build up in the body. The answer is to *reduce* these foods (you should not advise total elimination unless it is proven that the client is intolerant), and improvements should then be seen.



## EXAMPLE OF A DAY'S DIET

You may now be asking yourself 'But what can I eat then?' The answer is plenty. If you look at 'whole foods' you can't go far wrong. 'Whole foods' are, as you can probably guess, foods which have not been processed, which boost your nutrient intake naturally. Here is a sample day's diet to give you some ideas.

<b>Breakfast:</b>	Porridge with milk substitute (soya/rice/nut, etc), sprinkled with mixed seeds and fresh blueberries
<b>Morning snack:</b>	Apple with handful of mixed nuts
<b>Lunch:</b>	Houmous with sliced vegetables, or chicken/vegetable soup in cold weather
<b>Afternoon snack:</b>	Small plain bioyoghurt with sprinkling of fresh fruit if desired
<b>Dinner:</b>	Meat, fish, tofu or beans with lightly steamed vegetables and brown rice or quinoa
<b>Evening snack:</b>	1 small or half a large banana

Throughout the day drink plenty of hydrating fluids, and herbal tea if you enjoy hot drinks.

Whilst you may not be qualified to advise a client on nutrition, the above information can still be passed onto them to help them to understand that their present diet may not be helping their overall health and how they may take steps to improve it. If your client has specific problems or a medical condition, you should refer them to a qualified nutritional therapist or a GP if they have not already seen one and/or if considered necessary.

The current task is to try and wean people away from junk food onto a diet which is more wholesome and nourishing. It is proving in some cases to be an uphill struggle, yet the science is there that healthier diets improve mood, behaviour and overall health. The adage 'garbage in, garbage out' is not only true of computers but of the body as well, and you are indeed what you eat.

If you would like to know more about the fascinating subject of nutrition, ask for information on the **Introduction to Nutrition and Nutritional Advisor** courses offered by Complementary Health Professionals.

For ideas with regard to healthy recipes, try:

- *The Optimum Nutrition Cookbook* - Patrick Holford & Judy Ridgway (ISBN 0749921706)

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- *Cooking Without Made Easy* - Barbara Cousins (ISBN 0007198760)
- *The Food Doctor Everyday Diet* - Ian Marber (ISBN 140530605X )



## SIMPLE NATUROPATHIC TECHNIQUES

### Rehydration / Soaked Linseeds

In order to switch off the dehydration alert in the body, it is important, as previously mentioned, to drink plenty of water (at least 1½ litres per day). Rehydration and regularity of the bowel, however, can also be achieved by taking linseeds in addition to the water. These hold a large amount of water in their mucousy surface, which is retained during digestion and takes the moisture all the way down to the colon, which can then detect it and switch off the dehydration alert.

NB. Always use organic linseeds from a reputable source. They should be preferably foil packed and protected from light. Linusit is good, as is the Nutrigold brand.

Soak one tablespoon of linseeds in water overnight and take them the next morning together with the water. Repeat for an evening dose of one tablespoon of linseeds.

### Enemas

These are an incredibly effective way of bringing much needed water directly to the bowel. They open up the best exit route for toxins from the body and so they limit the potentially unpleasant effects of detoxification on the body. If you are interested in trying these, make sure you buy the kit from a reputable source, such as Nutrigold, and read their instruction booklet or ask for advice. Do not use them for prolonged periods as they can deplete the body of essential minerals.



### Moving the Toxins

Substantial changes to diet may produce signs of detoxification, it is important to make sure the channels of elimination are open. This is to take the toxins from the cells to the lymph, to the blood and out through the liver and gall bladder and kidneys and finally through the colon. Often the toxins will get blocked and need to be moved on.

### Skin Brushing

Skin brushing is an excellent way of moving lymph and helping to shed toxins through the skin when they have become stuck in the lymph (often apparent by swollen glands or spotty skin). Start at the feet with a stiff bristle brush and stroke firmly upwards towards the heart and down to the heart from the head, circling anti-clockwise round the colon.



### Hot and Cold Tubbing

This is also a good way of thinning the lymph – alternate a hot bath (but with the head kept cool) with a cold one, or at least add cold water until it feels cold, or use alternating hot and cold showers, always finishing on cold.

### Epsom Salt Baths



Can be used if the body starts to feel itchy or headaches are apparent, as this indicates toxins (or acidity) in the blood. To draw out the toxins (mostly sodium), 1 kg of Epsom salts can be added to bath water. Soak for 20 minutes. This helps supply the body with magnesium (relaxing and detoxifying) and draw out the sodium. Again do not do this more than once a week.

While using all these techniques, remember that the colon must be working properly to provide the final means of elimination, otherwise the toxins will keep moving round the body.

### What this means for the client

While you may not be a qualified nutritional advisor, the above dietary and naturopathic recommendations can still be passed on to your clients. It will help them to see the effects of the diet they are consuming and how it can be improved. The warnings are provided to allow you to explain to them what they can expect if they change their diet substantially. This allows them to understand what is happening in their body and to be able to take control of the amount of change they wish to make, so, although this may sound complicated, it is actually giving you and your clients a good basis on which to plan the changes you or they wish to make. If your client has specific health problems or a medical condition, you should refer them to a qualified nutritional therapist and also a GP if they have not already seen one.



## NUTRITION STUDIES

The aim of this section has been to make you aware of the importance of good eating habits and to enable you to understand enough of the background chemistry and nutritional theory to help your clients make choices to improve their general health levels and to sustain that improvement. It should also have shown you that diet alone can often achieve that change. What we eat has an enormous effect on our health, even if it may not become apparent to us for years. Many studies are now being carried out, which underline the health benefits of good nutrition and these are not restricted to physical health either.

Recent studies have shown that a deficiency of essential vitamins and minerals and, in particular, essential fatty acids, not only leads to physical problems in the body, but also a whole host of mental ones. Most remarkably, a study of criminals, by Dr Basant Puri, has shown that those criminals with the most violent tendencies had lower levels of EFAs in the brains, in particular, the omega 3 series of EFAs, found in fish oils and linseeds. Another study by Dr Stephen Schoenthaler in 1983 had already shown that anti-social behaviour can be decreased by simply replacing heavily processed snack foods with healthier options. It also showed a drop in depression levels with attempted suicides reduced by 100%, the need for restraining measures reduced by 75% and assaults reduced by 25%.

Later government-led studies have repeated these successes by changing the diet away from junk food and providing a basic level of vitamins with increased levels of magnesium, calcium and EFAs. The results were that 26% fewer offences took place within the group given the diet and vitamins than in the control group, given placebos.

So, it is clear that if you can suggest basic improvements to your clients' diets, they can often have far-reaching beneficial results.

## EXERCISE



As with eating a healthy diet, we often know exercise is good for us but never seem to get round to making a habit of it and, often, when we are stressed, the first thing we drop out of our lives is exercise. Often we are just too busy and it is hard to find time for what we consider to be the non-essentials. We believe that we will be able to pick up our exercise regime at some stage in the future when things are better. Unfortunately, when we are working so hard that we have time for nothing else, we never really seem to get on top of the work and things get worse rather than better. It takes more radical action than waiting for the stress or busy times to pass, and if we make a regular time for exercise every day, we actually start to see real improvements in our health.

Exercise can become a cheap and natural way of dealing with a hectic lifestyle. Research shows that increasing the level of activity plays a protective and preventative role against long-term exposure to stress. It can also act as a method of distraction

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from continuous thoughts and worries and helps to provide structure to the day or week.

As with everything else in this module, the first step is to practise good exercise habits yourself and the second is to pass on the benefits of your experience to clients whenever you can. As a therapist, regular exercise can increase your stamina and induce feelings of well-being, so it pays to develop an exercise regime that fits into your lifestyle and which you can easily keep up.

### **Physical Benefits**

- Increases general circulation
- Improves muscle strength and tone
- Improves cardiovascular function
- Improves bone density
- Keeps the body supple
- Improves level of fitness and stamina
- Improves appearance of the body

### **Psychological Benefits**

- Lifts mood
- Improves self-awareness
- Reduces feelings of stress and anxiety
- Reduces depression
- Improves self esteem
- Increases confidence
- Reduces aggression

Many people find it difficult to exercise on a regular basis and most of us feel that our levels of exercise are not as high as we would like them to be. Before we proceed, have a go at answering the following questions for yourself:

*List your favourite methods of relaxing*

*How do you usually spend your leisure time?*

*How often do you exercise each week and for how long?*

*Do you feel that you are getting enough exercise?*

*Do you sometimes feel lethargic and lacking in energy?*

*Do you feel less motivated to exercise when stressed?*

*What, if anything, prevents you from exercising as much as you would like?*

If this questionnaire left you feeling that there is more you could do to improve your fitness levels, and then read on. If it did not, then your good example should be of benefit to your clients, so read on for help in maintaining a simple exercise regime, which you can pass on to your clients.

### **Exercise also helps to:**

- Increase confidence and self-esteem
- Provide an outlet for tension and frustration
- Helps us to relax and improves sleep
- Provides new socialising opportunities
- Helps prevent physical illnesses, such as heart disease and osteoporosis



Taking up exercise doesn't mean having to follow punishing gym schedules every day of the week. It means simply getting more active. Doing the things you may usually do, but more energetically. It can include using the stairs instead of the lift or walking to work rather than driving. It includes dancing, gardening and many other activities not associated with normal 'exercise'. There is some form of exercise to suit everyone, no matter what their capabilities or preferences.

With a few ailments, such as colds and flu, rest for a couple of days is advised, but for most other ailments, it is usually better to keep taking some form of exercise. The most important thing about exercise is that you should enjoy it and should set aside a regular time, each day preferably, to do it.

### Some tips to help:

- Exercise in company – that way you are more likely to keep it up and it will be more fun. Join a class or persuade a friend to join you. Making definite arrangements to meet someone is also more likely to keep you going than trying to do a solitary activity
- Choose an activity that suits you. If you are competitive, choose squash, tennis, etc. If you want to find something which enhances your mood and reduces anxiety, but which is not competitive, try yoga, walking, swimming etc.
- To prevent boredom with repetitive exercise, use music or perhaps try to turn it into a meditation, focussing your attention on each move your body makes
- Start with something you can manage, 20 to 30 minutes 2 or 3 times a week, building up slowly to an hour a day would be good
- Set yourself objectives and monitor progress
- Do not over-exercise to the point where you run the risk of straining yourself. Be gentle with yourself

### Warm-up exercises

For any kind of exercise, warming up is advisable before you start. If you ignore this, you put yourself at risk of injury. Warming up will allow you to:

- increase mobility and flexibility in your joints
- increase the pulse rate to prepare the heart and lungs for more strenuous exercise and increase circulation to the muscles
- Warm and stretch muscles to help prevent injury

Try the following simple yoga warm-up exercises. They can be used before more vigorous exercise or may be used on their own as part of a daily routine to promote strength, suppleness and flexibility to the joints and muscles.

### Eye exercises

Sit or kneel in a comfortable position.

- Blink the eyes in an exaggerated way and let go
- Close both eyes and, without moving the head, look towards the left ear
- Keeping the head completely still, look towards the right ear
- Next look up as if to look inside the top of the head, and then down as if looking inside the throat, again keeping the head still
- Repeat 10 times
- Keeping eyes closed, rotate them clockwise and then anticlockwise, 5 times in each direction
- Blink the eyes in an exaggerated way again, and then open them

### Head rolling

This is a very useful exercise, as most of our tension and stiffness is to be found in our neck and shoulders. Calcification and arthritic deposits build up, and often a gritting sound can be heard when we move our necks. The head rolling exercise will greatly improve this condition.

- Keeping the back straight, let the head fall forward.
- Inhale and raise the head. Turn the head as far as possible to the right.
- Tension should be felt in the muscles of the left side of the neck.
- Exhale, and turn the head to the centre.
- Repeat the above sequence, turning the head to the left.
- Allow the head to drop backwards by its own weight, and then lower it to the chest.
- Inhale and, while holding breath, roll the head right around.
- Roll it first to the right, then round to the back, across to the left and then around to the front, with the face downwards on the forward roll.
- Exhale as the head comes to rest on the chest.
- Repeat in the opposite direction, rolling from left to right.
- Repeat 3 or 4 times each way.

This exercise is very useful for relieving tension headaches, and can be done anywhere, e.g. sitting at a work desk.

### Shoulder Exercises

These are performed in a kneeling or sitting position

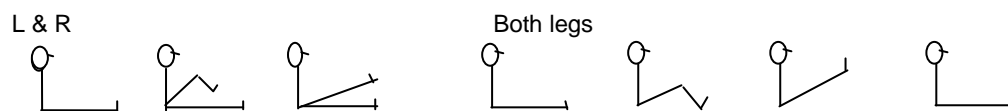
- Hunch the shoulders up to under the ears
- Breathe in, and hold for a few seconds
- Forcibly drop the shoulders, sighing deeply out of the mouth
- Repeat twice
- Rotate the left shoulder in a clockwise direction, then in an anticlockwise direction
- Repeat both ways several times
- Now rotate the right shoulder clockwise, then anticlockwise. Again, repeat several times both ways
- Finally, rotate both shoulders together, first clockwise then anticlockwise Repeat a few times
- Complete the exercise by dropping the head forward

### Leg Bends

- Sit on the floor legs straight out in front, with the palms of hands on floor behind the back, and the arms straight
- Bend right knee, placing right foot on the floor beside left knee
- Straighten the right leg, raising it in the air about 45 degrees from the ground Hold for a few seconds, and then gently lower it to the ground
- Bend the left knee, placing left foot on the floor beside right knee
- Straighten the left leg, raising it in the air about 45 degrees from the ground. Hold for a few seconds, and then gently lower it to the ground
- Repeat each side several times in turn

## Natural Therapeutics - Guide to Holistic Living

- Then bend both knees, placing both feet side by side on the floor.
- Straighten both legs, raising them in the air about 45 degrees from the ground.
- Make sure that the hands are in a comfortable position on the floor, as they will be needed to help support the back.
- Hold the legs in the air for a few seconds, before slowly lowering them to the ground. Repeat this a few times.
- Shake both legs to release any tension, and relax.



### Knee and Thigh Stretch

This exercise helps to stretch the thigh muscles and ease stiffness in the knees:

- Sit in a comfortable position on the floor, with the spine erect, and the legs out in front
- Place the soles of the feet together, knees out to the sides, and bring the feet in as close to the body as possible
- Place clasped hands around the feet
- Gently pull up on the feet, allowing the knees to bend downwards towards the floor, as far as possible. Hold
- Relax and repeat the whole exercise

### Alternate Leg Pulls

This exercise helps to relieve tension in the legs.

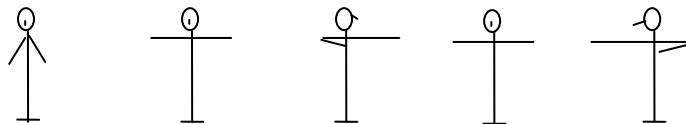
- Sit in a comfortable position, with the legs out in front, as for the previous exercise.
- Place the left foot against the upper inside of the right thigh.
- Slowly raise the arms above the head, and lean backward as far as possible.
- Slowly lean forward, bringing the arms forward so that the hands rest on whatever part of the right leg that they can reach without strain.
- Bend the elbows outward, and slowly pull the trunk downwards towards the right leg as far as possible without strain.
- Hold.
- Release the hands, slowly raise the trunk, and straighten the back. Relax.
- Repeat the above movements with the left leg.
- Repeat each side in turn several times.
- At the end of the exercise, shake the arms and the legs to release any tension.





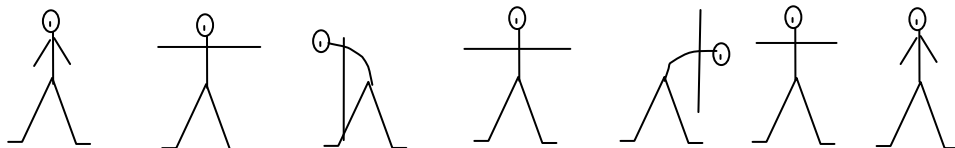
### Twisting Stand

- Stand erect with feet about two feet apart. Inhale and raise the arms to the sides at shoulder level
- Exhale, twisting from the waist to the right. Extend the right arm back, and bend the other arm at the elbow. Turn the head to look behind
- Keep the body upright and the feet facing forward
- Inhale and return to the front starting position
- Repeat by twisting to the left
- Repeat the twist for both sides several times, always keeping the movement smooth



### Side bends

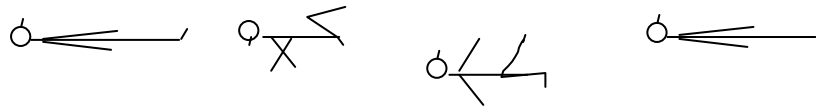
- Stand erect with feet apart. Raise arms to sides to shoulder level, palms facing downward
- Slowly bend to the left, allowing the left hand to touch the side of the left leg as far down the leg as possible without straining. Keep the knees straight and do not allow the head to fall forward. Hold for a few seconds
- Slowly return to starting position
- Repeat towards the right
- Repeat several times
- At the end of the exercise, shake the arms and legs to remove any tension



### Lying Twist

This exercise helps relax the spinal column, and helps prevent back problems such as lumbago and sciatica. It can also relieve back pain and tension in the neck.

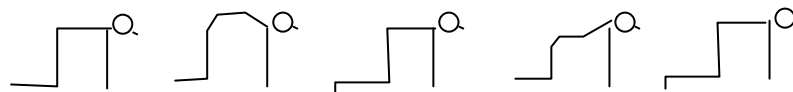
- Lie flat on the floor
- Inhale and raise your knees towards your chest
- Stretch your arms out to the sides at shoulder level, palms of the hands touching the floor
- Relax the head, neck and shoulders
- Exhale and move both knees down to the floor, as close to your right arm as possible. Keep the knees together
- Turn the head to look to the left in the opposite direction from the knees. Keep shoulders flat on the floor
- Inhale, bringing the knees and head back to centre with slow, smooth movements
- Exhale and move the knees to the left this time, turning the head to the right.
- Inhale and return to the centre
- Repeat for both sides several times, keeping the muscles of the abdomen tight as you twist from side to side



### Cat Posture

This exercise stretches the spine, making it suppler, helps digestion and constipation, improves circulation and tones the nervous system. It is very useful before and after pregnancy.

- Start by crouching on all fours with the arms and thighs vertical and parallel to each other
- Support the body on the palms of the hands, the knees, the front of the lower legs and the front of the feet. The knees should be together
- Exhale, slowly lowering the head between the arms, and arching the back upwards as high as you can
- Pull the abdomen in towards the spine
- Hold briefly, breathing naturally, keeping the arms straight
- Inhale, bend your head to look upwards and curve the lower back downwards so that it is concave. Hold breathing naturally
- Repeat the whole sequence several times
- Try to stretch the back up and down as much as possible



### Yoga Mudra

This exercise helps strengthen the abdominal muscles and thighs, and has a beneficial effect on the abdominal organs.

- Sit upright on the heels and inhale.
- Clasp the hands behind the back.
- Exhale and bend forward very slowly until the forehead touches the floor.
- Remain in this position as long as possible without inhaling.
- When ready, inhale and slowly straighten up.
- Complete the exercise with a slow exhalation.

## SUMMARY

By now you should have already practised some of the techniques for health presented in this module. We have covered ways in which you can improve your own lifestyle and provide advice to clients who would benefit from some changes.

We have looked at both physical and mental ways of relaxing and coping with stress. These include positive thinking techniques as well as deep diaphragmatic breathing, physical and autogenic relaxation. These techniques will help promote feelings of well-being and calmness, but will also allow the body the space in which to start healing itself.

We have then looked at diet as a way of bringing the body gently back to health by providing it with all the nutrients needed to allow it to develop a strong immune system, detoxify the cells and to provide the raw materials for the body systems to grow and maintain their health and integrity. By making small changes to our diet, by adopting a high water, fresh fruit, vegetable and fibre diet, with a bias towards alkali-forming foods, we can achieve our optimum health levels.

Finally, we have looked at the positive benefits of exercise, physically, emotionally and socially, and you should have some ideas as to how to build yourself a sustainable exercise regime and provide practical advice to your clients.

Many of the techniques covered are also an essential part of stress management. If you are interested in pursuing these topics, you may find our Stress Management Course enjoyable and useful.

## SELF TEST QUIZ

Self tests are a useful tool to assess any gaps in your knowledge, to allow personal research, and hopefully, you will enjoy them too. Do not return this for marking.

1. What are the rules for making affirmations?	
2. What is the sequence for deep diaphragmatic breathing?	
3. Name the different food types.	
4. What does embryology tell us about the body?	
5. Which foods are mucous-forming?	

**FOR STUDENTS OWN USE**

Topics Covered	Mastered	Working towards
Healthy living ideas  Positive thinking techniques and recommendations for reducing stress  Deep diaphragmatic breathing  Progressive relaxation  Autogenic relaxation  The benefits of nutrition and dietary change  The benefits of exercise		