



Staying in Touch®

How are you doing?

As spring evolves into summer, things look much more promising than they did a year ago. Although we're not yet out of the woods with the pandemic, at least we're getting much closer to that goal.

This month's issue offers excerpts from two online articles that you may find helpful and inspiring.

The first article is a reminder that exercise and massage can really boost your mood and your energy levels, as well as improving your overall health.

The second article addresses how certain food additives can create problems for your immune system and interfere with your body's ability to do its job properly.

This is valuable knowledge, since most people don't realize these negative effects can be caused by some undetectable preservative found in so many processed foods.

We all want to stay healthy and feel our best, so it's important to stay aware of the things that can help or hinder us in our daily lives.

Keep massage a priority; see you soon for your next relaxing massage session!

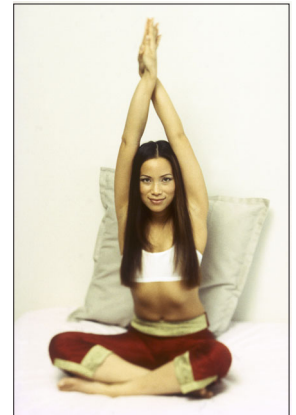
Alternatives To Reset Your Mind, Body And Career After Pandemic Inactivity

by Bryan Robinson, Ph.D.

Many of us lost our ordinary daily routines during the pandemic restrictions. Along with this loss, some people forfeited their daily exercise regimen and frequency of movement. Findings from a new study recommend a minimum of 30 minutes of extra light activity per day and five minutes of movement each hour throughout the day to mitigate Covid-19 restrictions and inactivity. Here are two alternative ways to restart your daily regimen, keep your mind and body active, and keep your career moving.

Exercise. Studies show that exercise is good medicine, not just for limbs and heart, but for the brain as well. One study found that, after 12 months, exercise and movement amped up blood flow to the brain and even helped slow the onset of memory loss and dementia. You can feed your brain the excess blood it needs through aerobics, walking and stretching and toning your body.

Massage and short relaxation techniques. A new study shows short, easy-to-apply relaxation techniques can activate your body's regenerative system (parasympathetic nervous system or the rest-and-digest response) for offsetting stress (your sympathetic nervous system or stress response)—offering a new perspective on how we can treat stress-related disease. Researchers observed higher levels of psychological and physiological relaxation in people after only 10 minutes of receiving a massage. Even 10 minutes of simple rest increased relaxation, albeit to a lesser degree than massage. ***This is the first scientific evidence that short-term treatments such as massage can robustly reduce stress on a psychological and physiological level by boosting the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS).*** Source: Forbes.com



Preservative in hundreds of popular foods may harm immune system

by Chris Melore

Most shoppers probably appreciate preservatives for their ability to keep food around longer before it spoils. Unfortunately, a new report finds hundreds of popular, processed foods may contain one ingredient which harms the human immune system.

Researchers from the Environmental Working Group say nearly 1,250 products contain the shelf life-extending chemical tert-butylhydroquinone, or TBHQ. They find this preservative, used in Pop-Tarts, Rice Krispies Treats, Cheez-Its, and countless other products, disrupts immune health in both animal and non-animal tests. It may even weaken the effectiveness of vaccines against viruses like COVID-19.

"The pandemic has focused public and scientific attention on environmental factors that can impact the immune system," says Olga Naidenko, Ph.D., study lead author and EWG vice president for science investigations, in a media release. "Before the pandemic, chemicals that may harm the immune system's defense against infection or cancer did not receive sufficient attention from public health agencies. To protect public health, this must change."

(See **Preservative ...** on back page)

Preservative ... *(Cont. from front)*

What chemicals are mixing into our food? Researchers looked at data from the Environmental Protection Agency's Toxicity Forecaster, or ToxCast, during their study. Along with examining health hazards from preservatives, the team studied "forever chemicals," or PFAS. These chemicals, commonly used in making food packaging, can migrate from the wrappers to the food itself.

The ToxCast analysis shows TBHQ appears to have a link to poorer immune system health in toxicology testing. EWG researchers call TBHQ a pervasive ingredient in processed foods. The food industry has been using it for decades, with its only function being to prolong shelf life.

Study authors add previous reports point to TBHQ impacting how well flu vaccines work as well as heightening food allergies. Non-animal tests reveal TBHQ can affect immune cell proteins at similar doses which cause harm in animal experiments.

For PFAS, researchers gathered every publicly available study revealing how the chemicals move from the packaging to the food. In 2017, nationwide testing discovered that several fast food chains use wrappers, bags, and boxes covered in highly-fluorinated chemicals.

The EWG team reports that PFAS also suppresses immune function and reduces the potency of vaccines. They add that recent studies find there may also be a link between PFAS exposure and the severity of COVID-19.

The ToxCast results for most PFAS, however, did not match the data from older animal and human tests. Researchers say this just shows how little is known about PFAS and the harm such products may cause consumers.

So why is all this stuff in our food?

Researchers contend the Food and Drug Administration doesn't consider the latest science when regulating food additives. Although companies can legally add certain products to foods, EWG finds some may increase cancer

risk, harm the nervous system, or disrupt hormone levels.

Study authors add that the FDA also often allows food manufacturers to determine which chemicals are safe for consumption. Preservatives like TBHQ were approved to use years ago and have not been reassessed since then.

Are less toxic options available?

The study finds manufacturers can still make processed foods without potentially dangerous additives. Researchers recommend reading food labels carefully. TBHQ is commonly, but not always, listed with the other ingredients.

The study appears in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. **Source:** studyfinds.org

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—John W. Gardner

The content of this newsletter is not intended to replace professional medical advice. If you're ill, please consult a physician.
