

Wellness Newsletter

September 23, 2020

Dear BC Faculty & Staff,

Welcome to the first Wellness Newsletter of the semester. I hope this weekly letter brings you a bit of joy, and ideas on ways to incorporate health and wellness into your daily life. As a yoga teacher and practitioner, I have always felt that the practice of yoga starts working when you begin incorporating it into your daily life; standing in line at the grocery store, sitting in traffic, cooking dinner, and not just a practice that is on that mat. I believe living a healthy lifestyle starts with small simple steps that become daily rituals. Just as waking up and going to work are daily habits, let's begin adding small daily habits to our routine that will help support our health and enable us to live better balanced lives.

Transition into Fall

The leaves are beginning to change color and the air is lighter, more crisp, and clearer. In Ayurveda, which is the sister science of yoga and oldest natural system of medicine, Fall is known as “vata” season. This means that as we transition into this cool, dry, windy, and unpredictable season, we must find balance by filling our daily routine with warmth, oiliness, deep nourishment, and a sense of stability, routine, and groundedness.

Foods to Favor in the Fall

- Root vegetables (sweet potatoes, carrots, turnips, beets, and winter squashes)
- Warming spices (cinnamon, ginger, cumin, fennel, and salt)
- Raw or fresh-roasted nuts and seeds
- Sweet or heavy fruits (bananas, mangos, apples, pears, and cranberries)
- Proteins from small legumes (red lentils, mung beans, split peas, tofu, eggs, meats)

Foods to Reduce in the Fall

- Dry foods (chips and crackers)
- Less caffeine
- Carbonated drinks (soda and bubbly pr seltzer water)

- Large beans (kidney and pinto beans)
- Raw foods

Morning Ritual's

Try adding these ritual's to your morning everyday before doing anything else (checking your email, having your cup of coffee, taking the dog out).

- Drinking warm water with lemon in the morning is an Ayurvedic practice that helps to clear the digestive track of toxins that have built up overnight. Lemon water can be a great form of gut detox for your body. The liver is extremely active during sleep, since this is when your body restores and regenerates itself. This morning practice will help you stay hydrated and flush out toxins that have built up overnight.

Recipe:

1 cup of boiling water

1/4 - 1/2 fresh squeezed lemon

*Experiment with adding a touch of honey and ginger. Mix together and let the ingredients steep for a few minutes. Make sure you drink this before you have had anything to eat in the morning or before you have your morning cup of coffee or tea. This can be done throughout all seasons of the year.

- While you're waiting for your water to boil, start a daily gratitude list. Journaling can feel silly at first, but like anything will become a habit if we practice it daily. Each morning make a list (keep it simple, maybe 3-5 bullets) of things, people, places, and events that you are grateful for. Sometimes we make things more stressful in our heads than they need to be, and a gratitude list can help bring you back to the present moment and to things that truly matter.

Daily Exercise in the Fall

In Massachusetts Fall means shorter days and cooler weather. If possible try going to sleep earlier if you're a night owl, and wake up with the sun. Before winter hits I encourage you to get out for a 20 minute walk each day. Getting vitamin D, fresh air, and outside our homes / work from home space is important for our physical and mental health. Make sure to bundle up so you don't get chilly.

Try these poses throughout the day to help bring heat to the body, but in a grounding way that balances the light and cool energy of Fall.

- Figure 4 (can be done upright in a chair, laying on the ground, or seated on the ground)
- Low lunges with the back knee down

- Backbends on the belly (in yoga think baby cobra)
- Twists (can be done in a chair or seated on the ground)
- Legs up the wall (this is especially great done for 5-20 minutes after a work day, or long walk or run)

Stay Well & Healthy,

Eva

Wellness Newsletter

September 30, 2020

Dear BC Faculty & Staff,

Happy first official week of Fall! The days are beginning to get shorter, temperatures are fluctuating, and the air is more dry and less humid. During times of transition, building routines will help ground us, and help our bodies and mind cope with the sudden shifts.

Journal Prompt

What is your ideal daily schedule? If you could, how would you rearrange your day? What things would make you feel balanced between work and life outside work? Do you need to change the time you go to sleep or wake up? Do you prefer to exercise in the morning, afternoon, or evening? Are you more focused early in the morning or later in the day? What distracts you from staying on task? What hobbies would you like to add into your day?

Mindfulness Tips for Working from Home & in General

1. Build a morning routine - It might mean waking up a few minutes earlier, but having time for self care in the morning, even if it's just 10 minutes, can help you feel prepared for the work day ahead. This might be the time in which you wake up and drink a glass of water, make your coffee or tea, wash your face, do a couple of stretches, take five minutes to meditate, or simply take a few deep breaths. This is your time before checking emails, without distractions, to put your health before anything else.
1. Movement - Exercise is especially important right now because it can reduce stress, boost the immune system, and improve sleep, all things that have been compromised for most people during the pandemic. Since most of our lives have become more sedentary with the closing of so many businesses and gyms, it is important to get about 30 minutes of movement in five times a week. This could be a walk, a yoga practice or any other class, stretching, cardio, or light weight training.
1. Unplug - The amount of time we spend staring at a screen for most people has increased greatly the past few months. Find moments in your day in which you can unplug. This might mean eating your meals without your phone or computer

nearby, taking a walk and leaving your phone at home, or reading instead of watching TV before bed. Even if it's simply taking the first few sips of your coffee without checking your email, these moments will help you unwind.

1. **Build Boundaries** - This is especially important if you are working from home some or full time. It is easy to forget to close your computer at some point in the day, and you might find yourself working more than you did pre-pandemic. If you find yourself easily distracted, try to clear out a space in which is just for your work hours, such as a desk area or room not in which you sleep in. If you know you have more energy in the morning than later in the evening, perhaps you start your day with 20 minutes of movement. Create a schedule that works for you, and give yourself a few weeks to adjust to it.

Butternut Bisque Recipe

This dish is something my mom has been making the past few years as soon as the weather gets a bit cooler. She got the recipe from the book, Isa Does It: Amazingly Easy, Wildly Delicious Vegan Recipes for Every Day of the Week, by Isa Chandra Moskowitz. Don't let the word vegan make you think this dish will be bland tasting, as it is quite the opposite. I recommend buying already cut up squash as it saves you time. If you cook the squash ahead of time this dish will take about 20 minutes to put together.

Ingredients

1 large butternut squash (or 2 packs of already cut up squash)
Vegetable oil
1 tablespoon coconut oil
1 medium yellow onion diced
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 cloves garlic minced
1 tablespoon ginger minced
1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1/2 cup dry white wine
3 cups vegetable broth
1 cup regular or lite coconut milk
2 tablespoons maple syrup
2 tablespoons lime juice

Instructions

Preheat oven to 425 F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Brush or spray the parchment lightly with vegetable oil and place cut up squash pieces on the baking sheet (buying already cut up squash is much easier than slicing a whole squash). Roast for about 45 minutes, or until the squash is very tender.

Preheat a 4-quart pot over medium heat and add the coconut oil. Sauté the onion in the oil with a pinch of salt for about 7 minutes, until lightly caramelized. Add the garlic and ginger and sauté about 30 seconds.

Mix in the red pepper flakes and salt. Add white wine and deglaze the pan by scraping the bottom with a spatula. Add butternut squash and add to the pan along with the broth (peel most of the skin off if not pre-cut). Add the coconut milk, maple syrup, and lime juice and heat everything through.

Add all the ingredients to a blender to blend soup until smooth and creamy. Remember to lift the lid every few seconds to let steam escape so it doesn't build up. This with a little water or extra vegetable broth if necessary.

Stay Well and Healthy,
Eva

Wellness Newsletter

October 7, 2020

Dear BC Faculty & Staff,

Welcome to our third Wellness Newsletter! Each week I try to share a few tips for finding balance in daily life. Remember, creating new habits and changing old ones can take weeks or months to establish, and I truly believe by observing yourself, you can be your best teacher. Take a few moments each day to check in with where you're at. Ask yourself how much screen time have you had today? Have you taken breaks every 30 minutes or so to get up, stretch, or go for a walk around the block? Are you eating foods that support you? Are you getting enough sleep, or taking in too much caffeine? Do you need to turn the news off and enjoy the simplicity of quiet?

Causes of Disease and Imbalance

- Seasonal affect - the effects of seasonal variation can cause the body to go out of balance if one does not pay attention and respond to the changing qualities of the seasons.
- Misuse of the sense organs - this can mean too much stimulation, as well as too little. The nervous system is taxed by digesting too much information from the sense organs, which will cause the sense organ to begin to suffer (think red, itchy eyes from too much time staring at a screen, or having too much salt in one meal and then feeling the need to increase salt in every meal).
- Suppression - in other words, when we know what the right thing is to do, but do the opposite anyway. When we suppress hunger, the need to cough or sneeze, go to the bathroom, cry, drink water, or any other natural force, the body goes out of balance. The same goes for when we stay up too late even though we are already tired, or go back for more dessert when we are already full. Cravings usually subside when we come back to balance.

Tips for Balance in Daily Life

- Eat a big lunch and small supper.
- Create daily routines / habits. It often takes months to get a new habit to stick, so be compassionate towards yourself during this time.
- Eat with the seasons. In general, it is best to have warm, oily foods as the weather gets cold and dry, and light, dry foods as the weather gets warm and humid.

- Limit computer, smartphone, and TV time as much as possible. When you're not working, try to step away from your devices to give your eyes a rest.
- Stick to natural, unrefined foods without added flavors, white sugars, or too much salt.
- Eat every meal seated, not standing, and take a few breaths in gratitude before you have your meal.
- Practice right speech - notice how much you talk from day to day and if you tend to criticize. Also be mindful of the sound that goes in your ears. The type of music you listen to or what you watch on TV will affect your well-being.

Kichari is a simple recipe that is easy to digest, has detoxifying qualities, and is quite nourishing. This is a great meal to eat multiple times a week. You can mix it up by adding vegetables you like. Once you get the hang of it, it's a quite simple recipe to make.

Kichari Ingredients

6 cups water

1 cup basmati rice

1/2 cup yellow split mung dal (green mung beans with skin removed - ideally smoked for 1 hour)

1 tbsp Fall Spice Mix

2 cups vegetables chopped into cubes or strips (since it's Fall, consider choosing from beets, broccoli, carrots, collards, kale, spinach, squashes, and pumpkins)

1 tsp salt

Fresh cilantro to garnish

Fall Spice Mix Ingredients

1 tbsp coriander seeds

1 tbsp cumin seeds

2 tsp fennel seeds

1 tbsp turmeric powder

2 tsp ginger powder

Tempering Ingredients

1-2 tbsp ghee (coconut oil or butter work as well)

1/2 tsp cumin seed

1/2 tsp coriander seed

1/2 tap fennel seed (optional)

Kitchari Directions

In a large saucepan, boil 5 cups water on high heat. Set other 1 cup aside to add during cooking as needed. Rinse the rice and dal twice or until water runs clear. Add them to boiling water, along with the spice mix. Keep on high heat until liquid boils again. Then immediately turn the heat down to low. Add hard vegetables such as squash, carrots, and pumpkin now. Partially cover the pan with the lid ajar and simmer for 20 minutes without stirring.

Check after 20 minutes to see if it needs more water. If the dal is not submerged, it does. Pour the additional cup of water on top and do not stir. If using leafy green vegetables add those on top to steam now.

Warm the ghee or butter in a small skillet on medium heat. Add the tempering spices and cook about 203 minutes. Remove from skillet and add to kichari. Add salt, stir well, and let stand, covered, for a few minutes.

Kichari should have a soupy, soft consistency. Garnish with cilantro.

Best Wishes,

Eva

Wellness Newsletter

October 14, 2020

Dear BC Faculty & Staff,

I hope this letter finds you well. Remember this week to take rest when you need rest, take small breaks to move your body throughout your day, and sip warm drinks throughout your day as the weather gets cooler.

Stress Management

For most people, stress plays a bigger role in life than we would like it to. Stress is a fairly universal element of the modern human experience, and while some stress is appropriate, even productive, we now know that too much stress can be quite harmful, and can compromise our health physically, mentally, and emotionally. While there will always be stressors that we can't control, encouraging our nervous systems to respond to these situations in a healthier way is the key to reclaiming our health.

5 Steps to Renewal

- **Slow Down** - When we're accustomed to living a fast-paced, busy life, slowing down can feel utterly impossible. For those of us who can muster the courage to begin to invite a slower, more balanced way of being into our daily routine—one gentle step at a time—the rewards are often felt quite immediately. One of the best ways to slow the pace of our lives is through devoted and purposeful self-care: taking time every single day to be still, quiet, and immersed in self-nourishment.
- **Indulge in Self-Care** - Each day, regardless of what else might be going on in our lives, a devoted practice of self-care reaffirms a deep commitment to Self, to wellness, and to vibrant health. Do what appeals to you, and remember that it is usually best to choose just one or two new practices to start with. Some ideas of self-care are: take a bath, drink herbal tea, massage your feet before bed, be in nature, read before bed, rest when you need rest.
- **Commit to a Daily Routine** - Our physiology is very much adapted to—and supported by—some sense of regularity. Adopting even a modest sense of routine gives our nervous systems a number of comforting and reassuring reference points throughout each day. Things like eating meals, going to bed around the same time each day, and maintaining a consistent work schedule are a few that can have a profound effect on the nervous system.

- **Quiet the Mind** - Subtle practices such as yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises can be effective in resetting the nervous system and cultivating a healthier physiological response to stress.
- **Eat a Supportive Diet** - Committing to eating a balanced diet does not have to be an overwhelming or taxing endeavor. In fact, when we're dealing with chronic stress, our lives are often rather complicated, and our systems generally respond better to solutions that are comparatively simple. The diet needs to be a wholesome source of nourishment and grounding. Focus on healthy, whole foods, and minimizing processed foods, stimulants, and refined sugars. focus on emphasizing healthy, whole foods, and minimizing processed foods, stimulants, and refined sugars

Digestive Tea Recipe

1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds

1/2 teaspoon coriander seeds

1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds

4-5 cups water

Heat the water in a stainless steel pot over high heat. Add the seeds. Allow the tea to boil for 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the preferred strength. Strain out the seeds, place in an insulated thermos, and sip throughout the day.

Best Wishes,
Eva

Wellness Newsletter

October 21, 2020

Dear BC Faculty & Staff,

Welcome to our fifth Wellness Newsletter! I hope you are all well and settling into Fall with ease. Fall can often feel like a time of transition and instability, with constant weather changes, going back to work after the summer, and preparing physically and mentally for the winter ahead. This might seem obvious, but we are also still living in one of the strangest seasons yet - that being the pandemic. This is a gentle reminder that it's normal to feel out of your normal routine. If you find yourself craving more comfort food, more connection, slower practices, and more time for contemplation, you are not alone. This is the time to be kind with ourselves and the people around us, and to not be too rigid with expectations.

One way to create more stability in your life is by adding in routines, or rituals as I like to think of them. Below I have listed a few tips for a daily routine. If you read below and think there is no way these will fit in your life, and that you have no time, try choosing just one. It takes months to turn something into a habit, and is even harder to change old habits that aren't serving us well. Incorporating just one of these things to your daily life will help create a sense of space and structure in your day.

Daily Routine Tips

- Wake up and go to sleep around the same time each day if possible. Our bodies like routine.
- Wake up with the sunrise. This might mean going to bed a bit earlier. Studies have shown that we are clearest first thing in the morning, and that our bodies naturally want to be in rhythm with nature. As the days get shorter I feel this isn't that difficult - does anyone else start to feel tired as early as 6pm in the winter? That is completely normal as our bodies are adjusting to the time change.
- Practice self-care first thing in the morning. When we sleep our body is going through a detoxification, so when you wake up it is important to clean out the body. This could be with a tongue scraper, brushing your teeth, or using oil on your body if your skin is dry.
- Drink hot water first thing in the morning. Our bodies get dehydrated when we sleep, and warm water vs. cold helps to cleanse and kick start your digestion. I

like to add a bit of lemon or lime to my morning cup of water, whatever I have around.

- If you are hungry in the morning, have a meal that will hold you over until lunch.
- Early morning is when we are the lightest and clearest, so take time to meditate, do yoga, stretch, listen to a guided meditation, or anything quiet/contemplative. Even if you only have 5-15 minutes, you will feel so much better than not doing anything at all.
- Make lunch your biggest meal of the day, as afternoon is when our digestive fire is the strongest. Try to eat as relaxed as possible. Always sit rather than stand and eat. Take a breath or two before your first bite, put your phone away, and actually enjoy your food.
- Stop eating two hours before bed.
- Try to use dimmer lighting and less screen time one hour before bed.
- If you have a hard time falling asleep try drinking a warm glass of milk, massaging your feet, do some very gentle floor stretches, or read a book.

Apple Crisp Recipe

This apple crisp recipe is really simple, and contains all easy to digest ingredients. It uses almond flour instead of white/wheat flour, coconut oil instead of butter, and maple syrup instead of sugar. Making it took me about 20 minutes, and baking it is about 40-50 minutes in the oven.

Ingredients

5 cups chopped apples (about 4 apples)

Juice from 1/2 lemon

1 tsp cinnamon

1/2 tsp ginger

3/4 cups oats

3/4 cups almond flour

3 tbsp melted coconut oil

3 tbsp maple syrup

1/4 tsp salt

1/4 cup chopped walnuts or shredded coconut (optional)

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. In a large mixing bowl, toss together the apples, lemon juice, cinnamon and ginger. Make the topping in a separate mixing bowl using a fork to stir together the oats, almond flour, coconut oil, maple syrup, salt, and shredded coconut or walnuts if using.

Transfer the tossed apple mixture into an 8x8 inch glass baking dish. Distribute the topping in a layer over the apples and pat down gently with your hand. Cover the pan

with foil and bake for 40 minutes, or until apples are bubbling and soft. Take the pan from the oven and remove foil, then bake for 10 more minutes, or until the topping is crisp. I like to serve with vanilla ice cream or yogurt.

Best Wishes,
Eva

Wellness Newsletter

October 28, 2020

Dear BC Faculty & Staff,

Happy rainy Wednesday, welcome to our sixth wellness letter! I hope you are all staying warm, cozy, and inside today. When you have a moment to read some or all of this letter, I encourage you to take a slow, deep exhalation first. I've been doing this before teaching my classes, before eating a meal, and any other times throughout the day I feel I need it. The exhale can send a response to our nervous system to settle down and relax, and with the anxiety high in the air these days I find it to be one of the most simple practices we can do anytime, anywhere.

Fall Everyday Guidelines

- If your skin is getting dry use a little sesame or almond oil instead of lotion (I like to use it around my nose and other areas on the skin that get dry as the weather gets cool).
- Consume warm food and drinks. If you love salads try adding warm ingredients like rice, quinoa, or veggies. Switch your summer water bottle over to a thermos and sip on warm tea throughout the day.
- Layer up. Wear warmer clothes, and try keeping your ears, hands, and feet warm.
- Allow yourself to rest more. With it getting darker earlier we are meant to be going to sleep earlier and resting more.

Yoga Posture to Try

- Viparita Karani (legs-up-the-wall pose) - This restorative yoga posture can help reduce stress so it is great to practice anytime of the day. It also gives blood circulation a gentle boost toward the upper body and head, which creates a rebalancing after you have been sitting for a long time, or if you just ran or went on a walk/hike. Place a folded blanket about 4-6 inches away from a wall. Sit sideways on the blanket and lay all the way down, then swing your legs up the wall. Rest your hips or low back on the blanket, whatever feels best. If your hamstrings are tight you may need to inch a little bit further away from the wall. Hold for 5-20 minutes.

Carrot Ginger Soup Recipe

This soup is beneficial for anybody, anytime of the year. Warm and nourishing foods are good to eat in the cooler weather, and these ingredients are easy on the digestive system. Carrots are also known to have a relaxing, cooling effect on the eyes, so consider having this soup when you are spending a lot of time in front of the computer screen.

Ingredients

4 cups water
2 tsp coriander powder
1 lb carrots
2-3 inches fresh ginger
2 tsp olive oil, sunflower oil, or ghee
Dash of salt
Dash of pepper

Directions

In a medium saucepan, begin to boil 4 cups of water and coriander powder. Chop the carrots and add to the pot. Peel and roughly dice the ginger and add to the pot. Boil for 15-20 minutes, covered, until carrots are tender. Add oil or ghee, salt and pepper. Let cool a bit and then pour everything into a blender (remember to lift the lid every few seconds to let steam escape so it doesn't build up) and blend until smooth.

Best wishes,
Eva

Wellness Newsletter

November 4, 2020

Dear BC Faculty & Staff,

Welcome to our seventh newsletter. We are somehow already in November and I'm not sure how we got here so fast. As always, I hope you take a few moments for yourself each day this week, especially if you're feeling excess anxiety and stress. Five minutes in the morning to yourself, an afternoon walk before it gets dark out, or eating your meals without distractions and stimuli around are small practices that can make big differences in your health.

Balancing Insufficient Sleep

Each of us has suffered a restless night at some point in our lives. For some of us, loss of sleep is short-lived; for others, it is chronic. Sleeplessness can be caused by elevated or chronic stress, illness, physical discomfort, environmental factors, changes in our schedule, side effects from prescribed medications, anxiety, and many other factors. Regardless of its origins, losing sleep is hard on our bodies and can be difficult to cope with. Our bodies crave sleep for good reason and there are actually serious health risks associated with sleep loss, which can have complicated effects such as:

- Impaired judgement
- Negative affected moods and emotions
- Increased risk of accidents
- Impaired cognitive ability
- Increased incidence of feeling depressed
- Accelerated aging in the skin
- Increased odds of developing a more serious health problem

But there is hope. Supporting your body to return to a balanced sleep cycle might not be as difficult as you imagine. Here are a few recommendations to balance sleep cycles by quieting and grounding the mind, emphasizing the heavy, slow, and stable qualities that support sleep.

Recommendations to Support Quality Sleep

- Establish a daily routine. Encouraging a sense of consistency in our rhythms and routines fosters a certain stability that is both grounding and deeply reassuring for the nervous system. In our fast-paced modern world where stress and stimuli

run rampant, a routine provides an important foundational level of support for a calmed mind and better sleep. Check out my newsletter #5, from October 21st, for ideas to establish daily routines.

- Before bed consider taking a bath, having a cup of herbal tea or warm milk, or massaging your feet with warm oil (sesame and almond oil is great for the winter, whereas coconut oil is good for spring and summer). These practices relax the nervous system, release tension, and help to quiet the mind.
- Upon waking consider drinking a warm cup of water with optional lemon or lime, sitting in meditation for a few minutes, stretching or doing some yoga for 10-20 minutes, or going for a walk around your neighborhood to get some fresh air.
- Practice good sleep hygiene. Eliminate screen time one hour before bed, dim the lighting in your home, and stop eating two hours before bed.
- For some people reading before bed can be stimulating, so instead try doing a few gentle stretches, sitting in meditation, or practicing a calming breathing exercise.

Empty Bowl Meditation

If you do not have a consistent meditation practice or meditation is new to you, Empty Bowl Meditation is a great place to start. This technique quiets the mind and is great to do first thing in the morning or before bed. Set a timer and practice for five-fifteen minutes.

- Sit comfortably and in a cross-legged seat on a blanket or pillow, with the palms up and placed on your knees, like empty bowls. Relax your fingers as if you are holding a bowl in each hand. Open the mouth slightly with the tongue to the roof of the mouth, behind the teeth. Start by watching the movement of breath, without interfering it. Follow the inhale as the air goes down into your belly, where you will experience a natural “stop” or pause. Stay in this natural “stop” for a fraction of a second, then follow the exhale as it releases out through the nose, which is a second “stop”. Stay in the “stop” or pause for a fraction of a second before continuing the cycle.

Guided Meditations

If you prefer short guided meditations, check out these free recordings of mine.

- [5 Minute Meditation for Grounding](#)
- [7 Minute Meditation for Challenging Times](#)

Easiest Almond Butter Cookie Recipe

If you're feeling like you need a sweet this week, rather than grabbing leftover Halloween candy try this three ingredient Almond Butter Cookie recipe that uses whole ingredients and natural sugar.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup almond butter

1/3 cup maple syrup

3/4 cup almond flour (Oat flour works as well. If you have oats just put them in a blender until they form a flour like consistency).

Directions:

Preheat oven at 350. Mix the almond butter and maple syrup first. Add the flour. Roll out the dough into even sized balls. Bake for about 15 minutes. Let cool, serve, and enjoy.

Best wishes,

Eva

Wellness Newsletter

November 11, 2020

Dear BC Faculty & Staff,

Happy Wednesday, and welcome to our eighth wellness newsletter. I hope you are enjoying this nice weather we have been having in Boston, and getting to spend some time outside in the fresh air. If you are feeling any mid-week anxiety or stress, remember that five minutes in your day can make a difference. You might try a walking meditation on your lunch break or first thing in the morning, a body scan, a few gentle stretches, or even mindful eating throughout the day.

A Breathing Exercise for the Next Time You're Stressed

At one time or another, we've all experienced stress. These are moments when the mind is racing, breath is short, and it feels like you're all over the place, yet the physical body is still. By learning how to recognize it in the early stages, we can use tools to cope when a stressful situation arises. One practice I have found helpful is pranayama - an intentional practice of restraining and expanding the breath. There are many forms of breathing exercises, and each has its own benefits. Nadi Shodhana, or alternate nostril breathing, is a favorite of mine. It is meant to bring balance to the body, ground the nervous system, and clear any blockages or stagnation that may provoke stress related imbalances or feelings of being scattered.

How To:

Nadi Shodhana involves taking inhalation through one nostril, retaining the breath comfortably for a few seconds, and then exhaling through the other nostril. The exercise is then repeated with the exhalation nostril taking in the inhalation. This practice can be done with or without retaining the breath. For beginners, holding the breath is not recommended. Here is a short guided video on how to practice this breathing exercise: [tutorial](#).

Breakfast Grains

One of my favorite things to have for breakfast in the cooler months is some sort of grain. I like to add cooked fruits, cinnamon, and a bit of maple syrup for flavor, but feel free to add ingredients you enjoy. Make sure you eat a breakfast that will leave you satisfied until you have your lunch, that way you do not end up snacking, which confuses your digestive system. Also, cooking your fruits or any cold ingredients with the grain

makes it easier to digest, rather than putting cold fruits or toppings on your cooked grain.

Grain (1 cup)	Cooking Time
Barley	~30 minutes
Buckwheat	~15 minutes
Millet	~20 minutes
Rolled Oats	~10 minutes
Steel Cut Oats	~20 minutes

Qualities of Food

According to Ayurveda, a health system that is over 2,000 years old, the qualities of your meals can affect the way you feel. The more you pay attention to how you're feeling, the more you can make decisions that will help support your physical body, mental state, emotions, and nervous system. Below are a few suggestions on qualities in foods you might choose to eat depending on how you're feeling. Of course, everyone is different, so beginning to notice how different qualities of foods make you feel will help you get to know your own system.

<u>Symptom</u>	<u>Qualities to Look for in your Food</u>
Anxiety	Warm, moist, soft foods such as sweet potatoes, coconut, almonds.
Congestion	Warm, moist, oily foods such as cooked fruits and veggies, chia pudding, apples, dates.
Dry Skin	Warm, moist, oily foods such as almond milk, dark chocolate.
Headaches	Cool, dry, neutral flavors such as simple rice dishes, kale, spinach, tea.
Lethargy	Warm, light foods such as green juice, grains, chai tea.
Sleeping Difficulty	Warm, moist, soft foods such as barley and soups.

Best Wishes,
Eva

Wellness Newsletter

November 18, 2020

Dear BC Faculty & Staff,

Welcome to our ninth newsletter. When brainstorming ideas for this week's letter, I had Thanksgiving in mind as it is somehow already coming up in one week. With all that has been going on these past months, I encourage you to resist the urge to go into the fast paced tendencies that occur around the holidays, and give yourself a few moments each day to simply be. This could be a few deep breaths, going outside for a few minutes of fresh air, or taking a short nap/rest if that is what you need!

Mindful One-Minute Meditations

For many of us, the word meditation brings up all kinds of obstacles - "My mind is all over the place. Who has time? There are so many distractions. I'm not good at meditating." It is true, there will always be obstacles! However, a little bit, over a consistent period of time, can make a big difference. With the business of the holidays fast approaching on top of an already stressful year, giving yourself the gift of presence, even if just for one minute, is necessary. Below are a few different ways to practice a one minute meditation, or longer if you desire. You can practice these anywhere, anytime, at home, at work, or even on a stroll. Practice these mindful meditations without engaging in anything else for 60 seconds, allowing yourself to ease into simply being.

Body Scan Meditation

Begin to scan the body, noticing and observing what's present in your physical structure. Where do you feel ease? Where do you hold tension? Take a full cycle of breath, inhale and exhale. For one minute see if you can soften the muscles in your face, chest, belly, hips, legs, and all the way down to your feet. As you soften, energy is able to flow more smoothly throughout the body and mind.

Sit Spot Meditation

Find a place outside or near a window with a view of nature. Sit and pause, allowing your body to land and settle. Soften your gaze or close your eyes and take several full breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth. With your eyes open, breathe naturally, and let your senses and awareness expand to take in whatever you feel and observe. Allow yourself to be nourished and fascinated by all you see, hear, smell, and touch. If you become distracted, no worries, just make room for all that is present.

Mantra Meditation

Adding a mantra (one or a few words) can help as an anchor for your meditation. Let your words be positive, direct, and affirming. You might use these words coordinated with your breath: “In-Out, Here-Now, Breathing in I feel calm, Breathing out I let go”. Find what works for you.

Eating Tip

The next time you sit down to eat, try taking three deep breaths before you begin eating. Notice the food that is in front of you, such as the color, texture, and any quality you observe. Try doing this in a way that you marvel at what’s in front of you, really bringing appreciation to your food. Maybe even try this at your Thanksgiving Meal!

Baked Winter Squash with Honey

Try experimenting with this recipe - it works with a variety of squashes including butternut. You can also try brown sugar instead of coconut if you prefer the flavor.

Ingredients

3/4 cup walnuts
2 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon coconut sugar
6 cups winter squash, peeled and cut into large cubes
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Pinch of salt
Pinch of cinnamon

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Mix the walnuts with 1/2 tablespoon of the olive oil, 1 tablespoon of the honey and the coconut sugar. Spread the walnuts on a baking tray and bake for 7-9 minutes until they are roasted. Remove from the oven and allow to cool, loosening them from the baking sheet as they cool. Turn the temperature up to 375 degrees. Toss the squash with the remaining 1 1/2 tablespoons of the olive oil, the salt, and the cinnamon. Place in a baking dish with tablespoons water and cover. Bake for 30-40 minutes, until the squash is tender; the baking time will depend on the type of squash and the size of the cubes. Top with the walnuts and serve.

Best Wishes,
Eva

Wellness Newsletter

November 25, 2020

Dear BC Faculty & Staff,

Welcome to the tenth wellness newsletter! I hope you all have a Happy Thanksgiving and enjoy a few days of rest. Although this year might feel different during the holidays, try to focus on all that you do have. Below are some tips for enjoying the next few days of this holiday week.

Relax

Enjoy quiet time by the fire, take a nap, read a book you've been yearning to pick up, get back onto your meditation cushion, or luxuriate in a hot bath.

Exercise

Get everyone in your household to join for a group walk or jog. Head out for a hike with the dogs, haul some wood for an outdoor fire, or make a fort outside (weather-permitting)!

Gratitude

Gratitude is the simplest way to find your center and be present in the moment. Make a quick list of the blessings in our lives.

Connect

Call up an old friend, give an extra tip to the barista, or head to your local shelter with fresh-baked cookies. Taking the time to also connect with yourself, through yoga or meditation, can improve emotional regulation and help you to feel centered and grounded.

Tips to Feel Great After Thanksgiving Dinner

1. Eat your Thanksgiving meal in the afternoon. According to Ayurveda, afternoon is when digestion is the strongest and the best time to be filling the tank to capacity. So try not to eat too late in the day when your digestive fire is the weakest.
2. Practice Mindful Eating. Most Thanksgiving meals I find it ironic that we spend all day cooking and then eat in 20 minutes. Studies show that slow, mindful eating helps us eat healthier and helps us avoid overeating. Make sure to have

enough breakfast that you don't end up inhaling your Thanksgiving meal, and enjoy conversation with anyone joining you to help slow the process of eating down.

3. Jump-start digestion before your big meal by drinking a glass of room temperature water 20 minutes before starting the meal. You can also sip some ginger tea while you are eating or sip it 20-30 minutes prior to the meal. Pre-hydrating the stomach wall creates a buffer and allows for better digestion.
4. Lie on your left side for 10-15 minutes after a large meal. This is not a nap, but a short rest to allow the stomach to empty gracefully and effortlessly. The stomach is on the left side of the belly and empties left to right. By lying on the left side, you allow the stomach to hang freely and contract naturally to move the food through when it is all digested.
5. A few no-no's: don't drink iced or cold water with this meal, do not start eating until you are really settled and ready to enjoy each bite, don't eat while standing, and don't fill up with bread first as it is hard to digest.

5 Minute Guided Meditation to Enhance Gratitude

Take five minutes out of your day and practice gratitude this Thanksgiving with one of my guided meditations. If I know I have a busy day ahead, I'll set my alarm to wake up a few minutes earlier so I can sit in meditation before anything else that day. It always helps me feel centered, relaxed, and happy that I took a few minutes for myself before I start putting out energy for others. [Practice Here](#)

Almond Butter Oat Energy Bites

These Almond Butter Oat Energy Bites are the perfect healthy snack. They're full of healthy fats, easy to make, travel well, and kids like them just as much as adults do.

Ingredients

1 cup oats
1/4 cup hemp seed
1/4 cup flaxseed
1 tablespoon shredded coconut
1/4 cup almond butter
1/4 cup maple syrup
1 tsp cinnamon
*optional dark chocolate chips

Directions

Blend together the oats, hemp seed, flaxseed, and shredded coconut (I used a bullet blender and it worked fine but a food processor would be ideal). In another bowl mix the

almond butter and maple syrup. Mix the blended ingredients with the almond butter and maple syrup mixture as well as the cinnamon and optional chocolate chips. Roll the dough into balls. Enjoy immediately or after refrigerating.

Notes: No baking here but keep these refrigerated. I have made these without blending the dry ingredients and they came out just as delicious, but I prefer the consistency of blending them.

Best Wishes,
Eva