

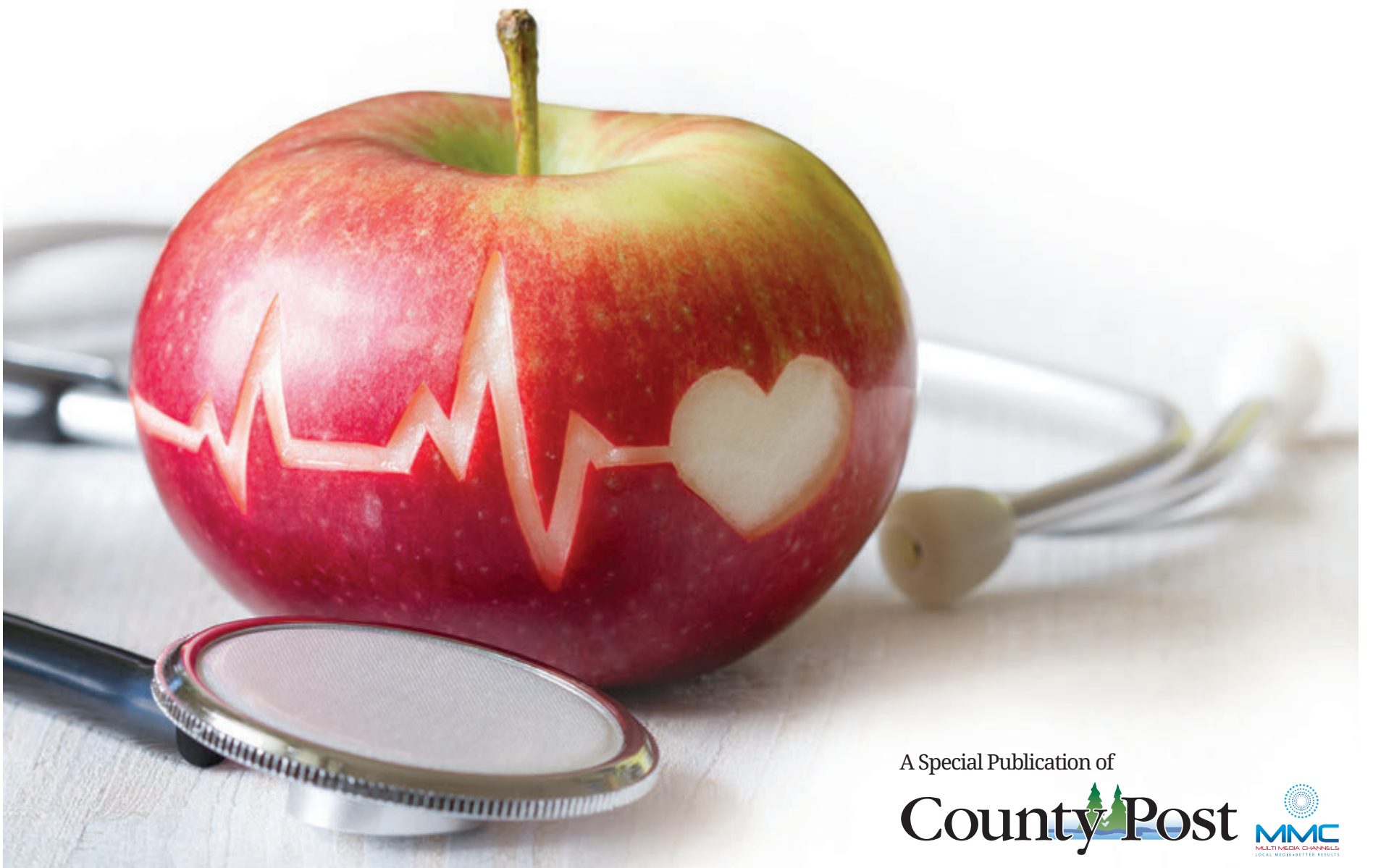
Health + Medical Guide

2025

*Dos and don'ts
of healthy
weight loss*

*Tips to
tame daily
anxiety*

*Habits that
affect cognitive
health*



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Dos and don'ts of healthy weight loss



The World Health Organization reports

that the worldwide obesity rate has tripled since 1975.

nutrients and is often fiber-rich and low in calories, which helps you to feel full.

DON'T overlook the impact of beverages on weight loss. The calories in sugary beverages, including some all-natural fruit juices, can add up quickly. Stick to water, tea or other unsweetened beverages to help with weight loss.

Maintaining a healthy weight promotes long-term health. Being overweight or obese are risk factors for various conditions, including type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The World Health Organization reports that the worldwide obesity rate has tripled since 1975. In 2016, more than 1.9 billion adults were overweight. Of these, more than 650 million were obese.

Health issues related to obesity are largely preventable. Losing weight in a healthy manner is essential for safe and lasting results. Individuals aspiring to lose weight can follow these guidelines on what to do and what not to do.

DO add lean protein sources to your diet. Healthline indicates the body burns calories when digesting and metabolizing protein, so a high-protein diet can help to shed up to 80 to 100 calories per day. Protein also helps you to feel full, reducing the propensity to overeat.

DON'T get hung up on numbers early on. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises that even modest weight loss of 5 to 10 percent of your total body weight is bound to produce health benefits, such as improvements in blood sugar levels, cholesterol and blood pressure. Start small and gradually build up.

DO eat at least four servings of vegetables and three servings of fruits daily. Produce contains an abundance of vital

DO get moving more. The Mayo Clinic notes that while it is possible to lose weight without exercise, getting moving can help burn off the excess calories you can't cut through diet alone. Exercise boosts metabolism and benefits mood and strengthens muscles and the cardiovascular system as well.

DON'T go shopping while hungry. If you do, you may make impulse buys that compromise healthy eating plans.

DO speak with a doctor if you are vetting diet and exercise plans. A healthcare professional can assist you by indicating if a particular diet or fitness routine is acceptable for your age, goals and current health status.

DON'T forget to track eating. Most healthy diets involve some sort of calorie-counting, whether they actually require you to document your intake or use a formula to attribute "points" or another measure related to what you eat. Writing or tracking the foods and beverages you consume will provide the most honest assessment of habits that could affect weight loss.

DO include foods you enjoy. Completely restricting access to occasional treats may cause you to resent healthy eating, which can derail weight loss goals. The principle of moderation can apply to healthy weight loss as long as you account for the more calorie-dense foods.

Losing weight in a healthy manner is achievable when you seek guidance and follow some time-tested techniques.

Primary care visit helps uncover critical heart concern

ThedaCare Physician helps Bear Creek man return to travel and hobbies

During a trip to Florida in early 2024, Mike Schertz developed heart symptoms. The signs were vague and intermittent at first. He would experience chest discomfort and tingling in his arm when he and his wife took walks. Since the pain wasn't severe, and it would go away within several minutes, he chalked the episodes up to heartburn.

It became easy to dismiss the symptoms, so much so that Mike didn't mention anything to his wife. He did bring up the issue to his primary care provider, Dr. Felix Odathil "Jolly" of ThedaCare Physicians-New London. That decision likely saved his life.

Noticing the Signs

Mike, 59, is retired and lives in Bear Creek with his wife, Rhonda. The couple owns a Christmas tree farm, and Mike volunteers as a first responder as well as devoting many hours to his local Lions Club and church.

"As time went on, I could feel the discomfort any time I exerted myself," Mike said. "It didn't matter if I was playing pickleball or working at home."

Mike admits that given his experience as a first responder, he should not have downplayed his symptoms. When it came down to it, though, he didn't want to worry Rhonda. Eventually, Mike talked to Dr. Jolly and arranged for a cardiac stress test.

"I do not want to dismiss anything as 'normal'," Dr. Jolly said. "I take everything seriously and always listen carefully to concerns from my patients."

When Rhonda eventually found out about the stress test, she was shocked at first. She decided to accompany Mike to the test.

'In Shock'

A stress test is designed to make a person's heart work harder and faster. It typically involves walking on a treadmill. As Mike's test unfolded, he could tell something might be wrong.

"The person administering the test asked how I was feeling and if I was having chest pains," Mike recalled. "I said I was having discomfort, but that it would probably go away eventually."

Once the test was done, Mike went to a waiting room while a cardiologist reviewed the results. Soon, he learned that he would need to have another diagnostic procedure called cardiac catheterization. The procedure can identify heart or blood vessel problems, such as clogged arteries or irregular heartbeats.

Mike's team told him that if they found an issue, they would put in a stent to treat the blockage, and he would

have to stay overnight in the hospital. Given that, he wasn't especially concerned.

"When I woke up from the catheterization, my wife was in the room," he said. "She was very adamantly talking to the two doctors and pointing. 'You're talking about this guy? You don't have the charts messed up?'"

Soon, Mike learned that he had four arteries that were blocked between 80% and 90% and would need open-heart surgery.

"We couldn't believe it," Rhonda said. "We were in shock. That was not the plan for the day."

'This was the Place to Be'

Mike and Rhonda understood what was at stake and knew they needed to decide quickly where Mike would have surgery.

"One of Mike's blockages was in the 'widow-maker' artery, which is a major blockage," Rhonda said of the seriousness of the situation. "It's named that for a reason."

Once Mike and Rhonda met Dr. Fayyaz Hashmi, a Cardiothoracic Surgeon with ThedaCare Cardiovascular Care, they knew they were in the right place. He, along with his team of Physician Assistants Adam Mielke and Jennifer Reese, provided exceptional care from the beginning, the couple said.

"We're very comfortable with them. They're very professional," Rhonda noted. "They put my mind to rest that this was the place to be."

Road to Recovery

Mike underwent open-heart surgery at ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Appleton on April 18, 2024. Following the procedure, Mike spent nearly a day in the intensive care unit.

After he emerged from the ICU, Mike said he experienced some discomfort. Care teams were there for him. His physical therapists taught him how to use the Heart Hugger he needed to wear. The device is a patient-operated harness that provides wound stability, support to the sternum, and pain management.

Once Mike got used to the Heart Hugger, he understood how crucial it was. The device made it easier for him to sit and stand on his own. Regaining mobility was key to his recovery and eventual discharge.

When Mike returned home, he had to work through restrictions around how much he could lift. Resuming normal activity took some time. In the months since his surgery, Mike and Rhonda have worked together to adopt diet and exercise habits aimed at helping Mike improve his heart health.



During a trip to Florida in early 2024, Mike Schertz of Bear Creek, developed heart symptoms. The signs were vague and intermittent at first. Mike would later learn he had four arteries that were blocked between 80% and 90%, and would need open-heart surgery. His wife, Rhonda, has supported his care journey.

Living and Learning

Thanks to the care Mike received from Dr. Jolly and his cardiovascular care team, Mike and Rhonda can enjoy their retirement together. They're back to traveling and recently returned from a trip to Yellowstone National Park.

Mike and Rhonda also set a goal of seeing their beloved Milwaukee Brewers play at every Major League Baseball ballpark. They've checked off several already and look forward to reaching the final ballparks soon.

Mike's diagnosis also led the couple to delve deeper into their family's medical history. As they began to put the pieces together, they realized that several family members had died young from heart conditions. Now they can share that information with their two kids and grandkids so they

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Tips to tame daily anxiety



Anxiety affects millions of people worldwide. The Anxiety & Depression Association of America indicates anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the United States, affecting 40 million adults age 18 and older every year, which equates to around 19.1 percent of the population.

What is an anxiety disorder?

The National Institute of Mental Health says anxiety disorders include panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, agoraphobia, specific phobia, social anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and separation anxiety disorder. Though the causes of these anxiety disorders may differ, each is characterized by excessive anxiety and related behavioral disturbances.

Anxiety disorders can range from mild to severe, and could affect daily life in various ways. Those with anxiety disorders are three to five times more likely to visit the doctor and six times more likely to be hospitalized for psychiatric disorders than those who do not have anxiety disorders, states the ADAA.

Who gets anxiety?

Factors such as genetics, personality and lifestyle can determine if a person is likely to develop an anxiety disorder. According to Healthline, those in professions such as healthcare and social work, people of color and members of the LGBTQIA+ community are more likely to experience anxiety and elevated stress levels.

The ADAA indicates
anxiety disorders affect 40 million adults 18 and older every year.

Addressing anxiety

There are several steps people can take to alleviate anxiety every day.

- **Exercise:** Moving more may help to relieve stress that can lead to anxiety. Study participants who engaged in exercise two days per week reduced overall perceived stress. Physical activity also can improve mood.

- **Sleep:** Quality and quantity of sleep can affect mental health. Doctors recommend around eight hours of sleep each night. If anxiety is affecting sleep, try to establish a healthy sleep routine. Turn off screens a few hours before attempting to retire. Be sure the bed is comfortable. Keep the room's temperature on the cool side. Also, stick to a schedule.

- **Supplementation:** Healthline notes that some studies have found that certain dietary supplements may help with stress and anxiety. An eight-week study of 264 people with low magnesium levels found that taking 300 mg of this mineral daily helped reduce stress levels. Combining magnesium with vitamin B6 was even more effective.

- **Psychotherapy:** The Mayo Clinic indicates counseling or psychotherapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, can effectively address anxiety. CBT often includes exposure therapy, in which a person is gradually exposed to the object or situation that triggers the anxiety to eventually build confidence that he or she can manage the situation and anxiety symptoms.

- **Medication:** Used in conjunction with other techniques, medications may help address severe anxiety conditions. Certain antidepressants and a medication called buspirone are used to treat anxiety disorders. In limited circumstances, sedatives may be utilized, but long-term use is not recommended.

Anxiety disorders can affect anyone. Various techniques could be used to alleviate anxiety.

Signs you or a loved one could be dealing with depression



Depression is among the most common mental disorders in the world. According to a 2019 report from the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, roughly 3.8 percent of the world's population is affected by depression. That percentage is higher among adults (5 percent) and even more so among adults 60 and over (5.7 percent).

Despite its prevalence, depression still carries a stigma, leaving many people to confront it in silence. However, over the last several years, public attitudes toward mental health have shifted, compelling millions of people to recognize the severity of the threat posed by mental health disorders like depression. That recognition has led various prominent public figures, such as comedian Jim Carrey, athlete Kevin Love and singer/actress Lady Gaga, to publicly acknowledge their own battles with depression.

Depression is nothing to be ashamed of, and recognition of that reality may compel millions of people to seek the help they need. One of the first steps toward overcoming depression is to learn how it can manifest itself. Though feelings of sadness are common in people with depression, according to ADA Health, depression is much more than a feeling of sadness, and its symptoms may be masked by physical complaints or substance abuse. That can make it hard to identify signs of depression, which underscores the significance of learning to spot its symptoms. The National Institute of Mental Health notes that the following signs and symptoms could be indicative of depression if individuals have been experiencing them most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks.

- **Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood**
- **Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism**
- **Feelings of irritability, frustration or restlessness**
- **Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness**
- **Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies or activities**
- **Decreased energy, fatigue or feeling "slowed down"**
- **Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions**
- **Difficulty sleeping, early morning awakening or oversleeping**
- **Changes in appetite or unplanned weight changes**
- **Thoughts of death or suicide, or attempts at suicide**
- **Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause that do not ease with treatment**

It's important that individuals experiencing these symptoms or those who witness them in loved ones avoid self-diagnosing their conditions or the condition of friends or family members. If any of these symptoms are present for two weeks or more, contact a physician immediately or urge a loved one to do so.

More information about depression can be found at www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression.

Did You KNOW?

According to a study published in the journal *Progress in Neurology and Psychiatry*, in a given year about 5 percent of the population of the United States experiences seasonal depression, a condition also known as seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. A separate study published in the journal *BMC Psychiatry* in 2021 found that 12.7 percent of students attending higher education or vocational schools who responded to a survey showed SAD. The organization Mental Health America notes that SAD is a subtype of depression or bipolar disorder that occurs and ends around the same time every year, typically beginning in fall and continuing into the winter. Curiously, the study published in *Progress in Neurology and Psychiatry* found that the main age of onset of seasonal depression is between 20 and 30.



A study published in the journal *BMC Psychiatry* in 2021

found that 12.7 percent of students attending higher education showed SAD.

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can take proactive steps for their health.

Reflecting on Mike's experience, Dr. Jolly shared wisdom for everyone to take away.

"Most people want to live a long, healthy life. To do it, you might need some guidance," he said. "You need somebody to help navigate. You need somebody to advocate. You need somebody who understands where you're coming from and where you want to be. This is why it is so important to have a strong relationship with a primary care provider. This can help support your health goals."

Reflecting on all he went through, Mike said most of all he's thankful. Rhonda even wrote thank-you cards for Dr. Jolly and Mike's cardiovascular care team, as well as handing out "Lifesavers" candy.

"We're beyond grateful," Mike said. "Our experience with ThedaCare was phenomenal. I have nothing but respect for everybody on my team."

To schedule an appointment with a primary care provider, visit MyThedaCare.

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To learn more and to submit your story, please visit thedacare.org/patients-and-visitors/.

ABOUT THEDACARE

For more than 115 years, ThedaCare® has been improving the health and well-being of the communities it serves in Northeast and Central Wisconsin. The organization delivers care to more than 650,000 residents in 17 counties, and employs approximately 7,000 providers and team members at 180 points of care, including eight hospitals. As an organization committed to being a leader in Population Health, team members are dedicated to empowering people to live their unique, best lives. ThedaCare is a not-for-profit health system with a level II trauma center, comprehensive cancer treatment, stroke and cardiac programs, as well as primary care. ThedaCare also partners with communities to understand needs, find solutions together, and encourage health awareness and action. In 2024, ThedaCare and Froedtert Health combined to form one system to strengthen local health care and provide high-quality services for treatment and prevention in a coordinated manner.



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Coping with Stress in the Modern World

Stress is a natural human response that alerts us to challenges and threats in our lives. A certain amount of stress is necessary for growth, and can help us perform daily activities. Stress that continues long after the perceived threat has passed can cause physical and mental health problems.

When a perceived threat is detected, an alarm system is set off in the oldest part of our brain, releasing adrenaline and cortisol. Adrenaline increases our heart rate and blood pressure, while cortisol increases glucose into the bloodstream. This is known as the fight or flight response. An example might be if we came upon a tiger, and have to get away quickly. When the threat has passed, adrenaline and cortisol levels drop, the blood pressure and heart rate return to normal, and the body begins to repair itself. This fight or flight response is designed to be self-limiting. As a society, we no longer have to flee from tigers, yet our stress has become long-term, or chronic. That alarm system stays turned on. Mayo Clinic notes that continued exposure to cortisol and other stress hormones can disrupt almost all of

the body's processes, putting you at risk for health problems, or worsening pre-existing conditions.

Chronic stress makes it hard for us to relax. The Mayo Clinic lists the following common effects of prolonged stress:

- Tension or migraine headaches
- Muscle tension or pain
- Upset stomach
- Change in appetite
- Trouble sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Anxiety and depression

How do I manage stress?

The Mayo Clinic offers steps you can take to manage stress – which in turn will benefit your health. For example:

- Keep a daily routine
- Get plenty of sleep
- Exercise regularly
- Connect with family and friends
- Eat a healthy diet
- Decrease time spent in front of a screen
- Consider meditation, yoga, tai chi, being in nature
- Set aside time for yourself. Get a massage, listen to music, dance – whatever helps you relax.

The National Institute of Health and the World Health Organization published a guide with numerous tips for stress management. The guide includes sound healing with Tibetan singing bowls, mindfulness, Qi gong, acupuncture, and other practices that promote relaxation. Studies have shown that singing bowls/Sound Massage reduce feelings of tension, anxiety, and depression while promoting well-being.

What is sound healing/sound massage?

The use of sound and vibration for healing and relaxation has been practiced for centuries in Tibet and Nepal utilizing metal Tibetan singing bowls. This healing modality was brought to the West when Peter Hess, a young engineer from Germany, was visiting Tibet and became ill. He experienced first hand the influence of sound/vibration on healing. This encounter led him to develop protocols for Sound Massage, which started in Germany, and is now a trusted healing modality throughout Europe. It is fairly new in the United States.

Sound Massage utilizes singing bowls, made from a mixture of twelve metals hand hammered to produce a therapeutic instru-

ment. They are made in the traditional way, and correspond to different areas in the body. There is a bowl for the thyroid area, one for the heart and lungs, a bowl for all of the organs in the abdomen, and a bowl for the joints.

What can I expect during a Sound Massage?

A Sound Massage takes place in a low-lit, quiet massage room; four therapeutic bowls are used at varying times. The bowls are placed directly on the clothed body and gently tapped with a soft mallet. The resulting vibrations travel throughout the body in concentric waves, much like dropping a pebble in quiet water. Along with vibrations, the bowls produce an overlay of beautiful tones. Listening to the rich tones and overtones allows the mind to become quiet. This combination of sound and vibration is Sound Massage. The muscles, tendons, nerves, and cells in the body receive a pleasant massage, which encourages the body to release stress and tension. This produces deep relaxation, encouraging the body to come into harmony.

See **STRESS** page 7



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Habits that affect cognitive health



Various changes to appearance and health are associated with aging. Issues such as diminished vision, waning muscle strength and gray hairs are among the more common and noticeable side effects of aging. Cognitive decline is another symptom often associated with aging, even if that needn't be the case.

Certain lifestyle choices can protect against cognitive decline and dementias. While there is no surefire way to prevent dementias, here are some good habits for maintaining cognitive function well into your golden years.

Exercise frequently

Harvard Health reports that exercise, in addition to the many other benefits it provides, may help improve cognitive function in people who have already experienced memory issues. Exercise may be particularly advantageous to people who carry the APOE4 gene variant, which makes people more susceptible to Alzheimer's. Speak with a doctor about how much exercise is needed and what is safe for your age.

Enjoy video games

Playing a favorite video game may improve long-term cognitive function. Researchers at Cambridge Brain Sciences found study participants who played non-cognitive-training video games were associated with better performance in several cog-

nitive domains, but only for younger (age 18 to 64) participants. Cognitive training games, on the other hand, were not associated with any cognitive improvement.

Stay socially engaged

According to a study published in the journal *Experimental Aging Research*, seniors who have high levels of social engagement also have better cognitive function. Getting together with friends, participating in a club, attending religious studies, and any other activity that gets you out with other people can help with cognitive function.

Eat a healthy diet

Eating a diverse array of healthy foods is beneficial. Nutritious diets can help reduce the risk for illnesses that may affect cognitive ability. Eating well also helps keep the brain healthy. A Mediterranean diet appears to lower the risk or slow the progression of dementia in people who have the condition.

Get help for sleep disorders

Lack of sleep can affect memory and learning. By getting help for sleep disorders, you may reduce your risk for cognitive issues.

While it is not possible to prevent or cure cognitive conditions like dementias with lifestyle changes, certain behaviors can lower the risk of developing these illnesses or reduce their severity.

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What are the benefits of Sound Massage?

- Deep relaxation
- Reduction of stress levels
- Quieting of the nervous system
- Decreased muscular tension/pain
- Enhanced well-being
- Strengthening of the immune system
- Enhanced sleep

It is my desire to share the experience of Sound Massage with my community. I am a retired RN who has taken multiple trainings under the supervision of Gina Armstrong in Manitowoc. In 2016, I became certified as a Peter Hess Sound Massage practitioner. Additional information about Sound Massage can be found at BluePearlSoundMassage.com. I'm taking new clients on Tuesdays and Thursdays; I am located within Sunrise Acupuncture in Waupaca.

Did You KNOW?

Despite what people may believe, colds are not exclusive to the cold weather months and early spring. Although a person is more likely to catch a cold during the winter, it's still possible to get a cold in the summer. During colder months, people tend to stay indoors in close proximity to others. That can make it easier for contagious cold viruses to spread.

In addition, during the winter, the air is cold and dry, and these conditions are hospitable to cold viruses. In the summer, humidity can impede the common cold's easy spread, but air conditioning units with recirculated air can reverse the protective nature of this humidity. Even though people may spend more time outdoors during the summer, on especially hot days they may retreat indoors to cool off. That's when cold viruses can thrive. Symptoms of summer colds aren't different from winter colds. However, the heat and humidity of the summer months can make a person feel miserable. Also, when cold symptoms keep people from fun summertime activities, it can seem more impactful than suffering in winter when there's not much to do.



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