

Providing your wellness committee with updates and relevant health information!

Wellness Works Coordinators' Bulletin

September 2017

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Time to Book

Can you believe we are already in September?

The year is flying by! So it is time to get a jump on 2018 by thinking ahead to wellness classes and activities for the upcoming year.

Our staff does book up pretty quickly, so if you have dates or topics you are interested in scheduling, contact us today to get it on the calendar.

Danielle, Abby and Anne are already booking into 2018—so it is never too early to plan!



7 Tips for Taming Your Monkey Mind and Becoming More Productive

By Beth Passehl, *WebMD*

Ever feel like you are in an energy slump and can't get motivated or accomplish anything? Those times when you just *cannot* focus, no matter what?

You're probably familiar with the usual slump-inducing culprits: lack of sleep, nutrition that doesn't nourish, and not enough exercise, among others. But there's also an underlying player that often goes undetected—it's what we in yoga call "The Monkey Mind."

The Monkey Mind refers to the frontal brain, where thoughts basically just spin around. It never stops—ever. Sometimes the thoughts are a bunch of nothing that lead nowhere. Other times, the spinning thoughts are random and take us in ridiculously unproductive directions. And then there are the thoughts that create a host of overwhelming emotions and may wake us at night. **Bottom line:** an untrained monkey mind does not let us focus. It steals our present moment and drains our best intentions and plans. Let's face it, all of this is just plain exhausting.

We literally cannot stop thinking, and without something to focus on, our minds will take us all kinds of places we did not intend to go. This is where you come in. There are abundant and successful strategies to help tame those spinning thoughts—and a tame mind is a calm mind, which in turn boosts your energy. (Bye-bye, slump!)

Here are a few ideas to get that monkey under control. Give a few of these things a try! Again, in yoga, we believe *everything* you do matters.

- ◆ **Smile.** Yup—even that much helps. Not even kidding, there is science to back this up.
- ◆ **Roll a tennis ball under each foot for at least 1 minute.** If you find a tender-ish spot, roll a bit longer in that area. Might as well breathe consciously while you are at it...see if you can inhale as you roll the ball forward and exhale as you roll the ball backward.
- ◆ **Go outside and walk for at least 5 minutes.** And, **WITHOUT A HANDHELD DEVICE.** Just focus on your breathing. See if you can take 5 breaths without losing your focus. The minute your mind starts to wander, just come right back and start counting over again until you get 5 breaths undistracted. When you have mastered 5, move up to 10 breaths, and so on.
- ◆ **Stand up and stretch your arms over your head.** Keep your arms over your head and lift one foot off the ground. Balance as long as you can and switch sides. Oh yeah—and breathe deep, slow inhalations and faster exhalations while your foot is lifted.
- ◆ **Any type of forward-folding stretch is extraordinary for invigorating the brain.** And, yes, still breathing—deep, slow inhale and quick exhales.
- ◆ **Twisting stretches are also good to refresh the spine** (for folks with lower back issues, these should be done with extra care and instruction).
- ◆ **One of my favorite things to do** is come down on all four's, pick up your right leg and cross over the left foot. Keeping the right leg straight, turn and look to the left in order to see your right foot. This one is bound to mix up the monkey and help get your mind off of random things.

Flu Season is Around the Corner



For many people basking in the warmth of summer, the flu season may seem like a distant memory.

Truth is, the start of the next one is only a month or two away. Have you scheduled your flu vaccine yet?

Here are a few possible symptoms of flu:

- ⇒ Fever
- ⇒ Shortness of breath
- ⇒ Pain in the chest or abdomen
- ⇒ Nausea and vomiting
- ⇒ Trouble holding down food and liquids
- ⇒ Weakness and fatigue
- ⇒ Sore throat
- ⇒ Cough

It is important to get vaccinated before the start of flu season to reduce your risk of becoming infected. If you have concerns about whether the vaccine is right for you, contact your healthcare provider today.

To get your worksite geared up for flu season, consider offering Anne Charles' **"The Flu and You"** class. This is a very informative class and puts a lot of flu myths to rest. You can reach her at acharles@memun.org.



Recognizing Lyme Disease

Maine has a high rate of Lyme disease. This disease is caused by the bacterium *B. burgdorferi*, and is transmitted by biting deer ticks that are quite small and may be difficult to see. Within 30 days of a deer tick bite, a circular red patch of about five inches' diameter often appears. The rash, if it shows up at all, commonly resembles a bull's eye, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration says.

Other symptoms may include:

- ◆ Muscle and joint aches
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Chills and fever
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Swollen lymph nodes



Lyme is treatable, especially in its early stages, with antibiotics. But left untreated, the disease could progress to arthritis and problems of the heart and nervous system. If you have these symptoms, see your doctor without delay.

To find out more about ticks and the diseases they carry, consider adding the class **"Tick Talk"** to your wellness plan for 2018. It is one of Abby DiPasquale's new classes and you can contact her at adipasquale@memun.org to schedule.

Caregiving at a Distance

More Americans are faced with caring for older relatives, and frequently this involves long-distance care. It can be difficult to manage the care of a loved one from afar. But with proper planning, time-management and dedication, a long-distance caregiver can be as effective as one who lives nearby.

The National Institute on Aging offers these suggestions to make long-distance caregiving more manageable:

- * Be informed. Know what you need to know about the health of your loved one. Read about the loved one's condition and learn as much as you can.
- * Plan your visits and allow for enough time to accomplish everything.
- * Spend time actually visiting with your family member. Don't make the trip only about the illness.
- * Get in touch with all relevant doctors whenever you visit to make sure you are well-informed about the health of your loved one.
- * Help the person stay in contact with you by providing a dedicated landline or cell phone.
- * Take a course on caregiving.
- * Gather a list of resources near the loved one, so you can best help that person

Source: Health Day News, 2017

Danielle Yale offers a great class called **"Taking Care of the Caregiver"** which address these and other important issues for caregivers. Contact her at dyale@memun.org

