



Six Steps to a Longer and Healthier Life

I'm turning 74 this month. How did that happen? I certainly don't feel that old. I tease my 40-something kids when they grouse about being old, but when you're north of 70, nobody laughs. At best, you're told you're doing great "for your age."

However, I'm a spring chicken compared to Masazo Nonaka, a 113-year-old Japanese gentleman Guinness World Records has confirmed as the oldest living man. (The oldest person is a 117-year-old woman.) "Super-centenarians," age 110 or older, are exceedingly rare—only around 300 of them in the world—but there are nearly 80,000 centenarians in the US alone. What's their secret?

Masazo Nonaka attributes his long life to eating sweets and soaking in hot springs, but he also chose his parents well. Genetics most certainly influences extreme longevity—but lifestyle matters as well. Harvard researchers recently published a study that identifies five lifestyle factors that have an enormous impact on health and longevity. People who adhered to all five could expect to outlive those with unhealthy habits by more than a decade!



Masazo Nonaka, the world's oldest man
Photo Credit: Guinness World Records

diet, regular exercise, optimal weight, no smoking, and moderate drinking conferred dramatic benefits.

People who maintained all five habits during middle age were 82 and 65 percent less likely to die of heart disease and cancer, respectively, compared to those with unhealthy lifestyles. Women with the healthiest habits at age 50 could expect to live 43.1 more years, compared to 29 more for those in the latter group. For men, the difference at age 50 was 37.6 versus 25.5 years. In other words, a healthy lifestyle conferred 12–14 extra years of life.

What drug has such broad and powerful effects? What surgical procedure? Nothing comes close! The study's conclusion, "Adopting a healthy lifestyle could substantially reduce premature mortality and prolong life expectancy in US adults," should be a wake-up call.

My entire career as a physician has been dedicated to teaching patients the importance of correcting unhealthy behaviors and helping them stick with a nutrition and exercise program. I've written 14 books about this therapeutic approach, shepherded tens of thousands of patients through my clinic's lifestyle changes program, and discussed it so much in *Health & Healing* that you're probably sick of hearing about it—that's how important it is.

Let's look at the five factors identified in the Harvard study—plus a sixth one that I strongly believe should have been included—and how you can make each of them a permanent part of your life.

Longevity Is More Than Dumb Luck

To determine the role lifestyle plays in longevity and premature death, the Harvard team sifted through 30 years of data on 78,865 women enrolled in the ongoing Nurses' Health Study and 44,354 men in the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study. A healthy

Inside This Issue

- Six Steps to Longer Life 1
- Works for Me 5
- COPD 6
- Endometriosis, Age Spots 4
- Medicinal Uses for Charcoal . . 5
- Breathing Exercises 7
- Glucose Self-Testing 4
- Monthly Health Quiz 5
- Did You Know? 8

Julian Whitaker, MD, practiced medicine for over 40 years, after receiving degrees from Dartmouth College and Emory University. Dr. Whitaker has long been an advocate of living a healthy life. Dr. Whitaker is compensated on the sales of the supplements he formulates with Healthy Directions, LLC. He is not compensated for other companies' products that he recommends in this newsletter. He is the author of 14 health books including: *The Mini-Fast Diet*, *The Whitaker Wellness Weight Loss Program*, *Reversing Hypertension*, *Shed 10 Years in 10 Weeks*, *The Pain Relief Breakthrough*, *Reversing Heart Disease*, *Reversing Diabetes*, and *Dr. Whitaker's Guide to Natural Healing*.

Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing® (ISSN 1057-9273) is published monthly by Healthy Directions, LLC, 6710-A Rockledge Dr., Ste 500, Bethesda, MD 20817, telephone 800-539-8219. Please write to us at *Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing*, PO Box 11, Montoursville, PA 17754, or call if you have a question concerning your subscription. Periodicals postage paid at Bethesda, MD and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing*, PO Box 11, Montoursville, PA 17754.

Author: Julian Whitaker, MD
Research Editor: Peggy Dace
Managing Editor: Larissa Long

© 2018, Healthy Directions, LLC. Photocopying, reproduction, or quotation strictly prohibited without written permission of the publisher. Subscription: \$69.99 per year. *Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing* is dedicated to providing timely, accurate information by drawing on Dr. Whitaker's expert opinion and experience. *Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing* cannot offer medical services; we encourage our readers to seek advice from competent medical professionals for their personal health needs. Dr. Whitaker will respond in the newsletter to questions of general interest.

1. High-Quality Diet: Do What Works for You

A good diet goes without saying, but with so many competing regimens out there, it's hard to know what a high-quality diet really is. The Harvard team used the USDA's Healthy Eating Index to rate participants' diets. Scores increased with higher intake of fruits, vegetables, greens, beans, whole grains, dairy, protein, seafood, plant protein, and mono- and polyunsaturated oils; and decreased with higher consumption of refined grains, sodium, and empty calories.

You may not agree with everything on this list, and that's okay. There's no one diet that's right for everyone. Any regimen that emphasizes whole foods, lots of vegetables, adequate protein, healthy fats, and avoidance of junk food and sugars—whether it's Paleo, Weight Watchers, Whole30, vegetarian, or a diet of your own invention—is fine in my books.

I lean towards a Mediterranean diet because it isn't overly restrictive and offers enough options to satisfy most palates. Plus, its health benefits have been demonstrated in hundreds of studies, including a 2018 review showing that it protects against frailty in older people. I also recommend including regular servings of "super foods" such as salmon, olive oil, leafy greens, berries, avocados, cruciferous vegetables, nuts, onions, and high-fiber and fermented foods.

If you need help sticking with a diet, invest in a consultation with a nutritionist. A health-enhancing diet isn't something you jump on for a few weeks, lose a few pounds, and then abandon to go back to your old ways. It is a lifetime commitment.

2. Exercise: No Time Is No Excuse

I don't need to list the extensive benefits of exercise—you know them already. But I do want to emphasize the importance of physical activity for healthy aging. Regular aerobic and resistance exercise increases brain volume and reduces risk of dementia. It maintains strength, flexibility, and balance, which staves off falls and frailty and keeps us active and mobile. It prevents age-related declines in immune function. And it literally slows down cellular aging. Exercisers have longer telomeres, the protective caps on the ends of chromosomes that shorten with age and poor health.

Lifelong activity, or at least beginning in middle age, is most protective, but it's never too late to start. As with diet, the hard part is consistency—more than half of gym and health club members rarely use the facilities they pay for. However, working out doesn't require a gym, nor does it require that much time. Although the Harvard study's benchmark was 30 minutes of brisk walking or other moderate activity, there is plenty of evidence showing that short sessions of high-intensity interval training (HIIT) provide all the benefits of longer workouts.

An example of HIIT is 30–60 seconds of all-out running, cycling, or other intensive activity, followed by a minute or two of walking or slow pedaling, repeated for 10 minutes. Another is the 7 Minute Workout (available for free at the app store on your smartphone), which provides both cardio and major muscle groups training. This and similar apps have instructional videos and guide you through 12 30-second exercises such as lunges, pushups, wall sits, etc., with a 30-second rest period between each exercise. "No time" is no excuse—seven to 10 minutes and you're done.

Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program, and consider paying a personal trainer to learn proper technique. After that, whether or not you get off the couch is all on you.

3. Optimal Weight: Of Hefty Importance

More than 70 percent of US adults are overweight, and nearly 40 percent are obese. Obesity is a tremendous health risk, and it is linked with heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, depression, many types of cancer, and other chronic diseases. It is also associated with premature death. Cleveland Clinic researchers report that obesity is responsible for the loss of 47 percent more life-years than smoking!

Belly fat, which lies deep within the abdomen and around the organs, is particularly harmful. It releases fatty acids, hormones, and other chemicals that increase insulin resistance and inflammation, and take a serious toll on your health. Even if you are not obese, a big belly is bad news.

I know from personal experience how hard it is to lose weight. And the older you are, the tougher it gets—by then, as the joke goes, your body and your fat are really good friends. Metabolism begins slowing in our 20s, and unless we change our eating and exercise habits, weight gain is inevitable. Get serious about weight loss. Your health depends on it.

4 & 5. No Smoking & Moderate Alcohol

There's not much to add about smoking, other than to acknowledge that it is a stubborn addiction. I know of no easy solution, but I can tell you that acupuncture and neurofeedback have helped some of my patients kick the habit. If you can't quit on your own, get help.

The Harvard researchers also consider moderate alcohol intake a healthy lifestyle factor. The benefits of alcohol, which include reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cardiovascular death, have been recognized for decades, and this study adds increased longevity to that list. Moderate is defined as one five-ounce glass of wine, 12-ounce beer, or shot of hard alcohol a day for women and up to two drinks for men. This is not to say you should start drinking for your health—this is one habit you can skip—but if you drink, do so only in moderation.

Alcohol, like tobacco, is addictive, and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism reports that geriatric alcohol abuse is a growing problem. Overuse can sneak up on you,

so be honest with yourself, acknowledge if you have a problem, and get help if needed. Alcoholism not only wrecks your own health, cognition, and safety, but also hurts those close to you.

6. Supplements: A Longevity Bonus

I propose adding a sixth lifestyle factor: nutritional supplements. The majority of Americans have an inadequate dietary intake of one or more micronutrients required for health and longevity, and older people are especially vulnerable.

A basic supplement program should include a daily multivitamin with above-RDA levels of antioxidants and B-complex vitamins, extra vitamin D 2,000–5,000 IU, and omega-3s 1,000 mg EPA/DHA.

For a more comprehensive regimen, consider adding resveratrol 100 mg and nicotinamide riboside 250 mg once or twice a day. These two compounds activate proteins (sirtuins) and enzymes (NAD+) that mimic the protective effects of caloric restriction, boost metabolism and cellular energy, guard against DNA damage—and are the focus of promising research on aging and longevity.

Get Serious About Lifestyle Changes

Although the benefits of lifestyle changes aren't breaking news, this study is the first comprehensive analysis to quantify longevity gains—and even the researchers were surprised by the significance of the impact. I hope this research gets the attention it deserves. Doctors need to prescribe nutrition, exercise, and weight loss programs just as they do medications, insurance companies need to reimburse for them, and patients need to get serious about making important changes.

Just one in 12 Americans adheres to all five healthy behaviors. Getting on board with everything at once is daunting, but committing to any of them is a giant step in the right direction. You may not make it to super-centenarian status or even to age 100, but this study suggests that with an optimal lifestyle, 93 for women and 87 for men are reasonable expectations.

References

[Li Y, et al. Impact of healthy lifestyle factors on life expectancies in the US population. *Circulation*. 2018 Apr 30. doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.117.032047. \[Epub ahead of print\]](#)

[Wang Y, et al. Adherence to the Mediterranean diet and the risk of frailty in old people: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Nutr Health Aging*. 2018;22\(5\):613–8.](#)

Dear Dr. Whitaker

Q *I have been adding two tablespoons of ground flaxseed to my morning smoothie for years. I always thought I was getting plenty of omega-3s, but was recently told that flaxseed is not a very good source. Is this true? I also take one fish oil capsule every day. Should I take more? — Harold B., Oklahoma*

A No and yes. Flaxseed is a great source of the omega-3 fatty acid alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). However, only a small proportion of the ALA you consume is converted into EPA and DHA, the omega-3s in fish oil that have been well studied for their health benefits. I suggest bumping up your fish oil to a total of about 1,000 mg EPA/DHA per day. But don't give up on flaxseed. It's also rich in lignans, which protect against cancer, and fiber, which supports intestinal health, nurtures the gut microbiome, and helps lower cholesterol levels.

Q *Are there any supplements that can remove age spots? I have a number of them on my hands and face. — Susan A., Irvine, CA*

A I also have some of these flat, round, darker spots (also called liver spots or solar lentigos), which can crop up on people of any age who spend lots of time in the sun. Some claim that lutein, astaxanthin, and other carotenoids help lighten them. However, although these supplements may provide some protection against skin damage, there is no evidence that they improve the appearance of age spots. You can try over-the-counter creams

 [Read more at drwhitaker.com](http://drwhitaker.com), and send your own questions to drwhitakerquestions@drwhitaker.com.

that contain niacinamide, glycolic acid, or hydroquinone, but stronger prescription hydroquinone and tretinoin (Retin-A and Renova) are more effective. Be patient—it takes weeks or months to notice improvements. For more rapid and dramatic results, ask your dermatologist about laser, intense pulsed light, cryotherapy (freezing with liquid nitrogen), dermabrasion, and chemical peels. Don't expect your insurance to pay, since age spots are harmless and these pricey treatments are classified as cosmetic.

Q *My younger sister is really suffering with endometriosis. It is painful and she's worried about infertility. Her doctor suggests laparoscopic surgery. Are there any alternative therapies? — E.B., California*

A Endometriosis occurs when endometrial tissue grows outside the uterus. Like the normal endometrium, it responds to monthly changes in estrogen and other hormones and bleeds, causing pain, inflammation, adhesions, scarring, and in some cases bladder, bowel, and fertility problems. Natural therapies that may help include acupuncture, weight loss (fat cells produce estrogen), fish oil and curcumin to reduce inflammation, "female herbs" such as dong quai and chaste tree (Vitex), pycnogenol, melatonin at bedtime, and an anti-inflammatory diet. Many women find relief with natural progesterone. Progesterone creams are available without a prescription, but I recommend working with a doctor. Endometriosis is a challenging condition and medications or surgery are sometimes necessary.

New Online: Is Glucose Self-Testing Necessary?

Testing blood sugar with a glucometer and disposable test strips is a daily ritual for most people with diabetes. Self-monitoring can be helpful for those who are using insulin (everyone with type 1 and many with type 2) and are therefore at greater risk of hypoglycemia. Yet testing is routinely recommended for other patients with diabetes on the premise that it improves motivation, blood sugar control, and quality of life. This just isn't true. Research makes it clear that for those who are not on insulin, self-monitoring is a waste of time and money.

In a recent clinical trial, doctors in 15 primary care practices in North Carolina randomly assigned 450 diabetic patients who were not treated with insulin to one of three groups: self-testing once a day, self-testing plus motivating feedback messages, or no testing at all. After one year, there were no significant differences in A1C levels or health-related quality of life among the three groups. Self-monitoring didn't make a whit of difference! This isn't the first study to demonstrate the folly of glucose self-testing by patients with non-insulin-dependent diabetes. Talk to your doctor about discontinuing this overused, unnecessary practice.



Works for Me...

▶ **Low Energy** *At the end of a long workday, I was finding myself so exhausted during my commute home in traffic. Getting dinner on the table and then entertaining my five-year-old was a daily struggle, as I had little to no energy left in me. A few months ago, I was introduced to Dr. Whitaker's Mighty Mocha Energy Essentials and started taking one pill at about 2:00 pm every day. It was like magic! I found myself having the energy I needed to get through the rest of the day without having to stop for a coffee. And needless to say, my son enjoyed my attention and said I was fun again!* — Dayna S., California

▶ **Wound Healing** *I had a friend who was in rehab with an open wound on the bottom of her foot with a bone protruding from it. The rehab wasn't having success in getting it to heal. I smuggled in a bottle of zinc and a bottle of multivitamins. They were discovered in her bedside drawer a week later, but by then the sore had healed and she was released.* — Virginia C., via email

That's quite a dramatic story. However, deficiencies in zinc, vitamins A, C, and K, and other key nutrients do delay wound healing and dampen the immune response. Boosting nutritional status with supplements can help.

▶ **Snoring** *I will second the suggestion from a few months ago about Breathe Right for snoring. My husband used to snore like a freight train. He was tested for sleep apnea and didn't have it. A friend suggested Breathe Right strips (not the generic brand) from the drugstore. They work like a charm and we're both sleeping soundly at last.* — G.S., via Facebook

▶ **Gas** *I had irritable bowel syndrome for several years, and on top of that I started having terrible flatulence. It was so bad sometimes I did not even want to leave my house. My GP gave me a drug, which did not help. Finally, I went to your clinic, where I was diagnosed with candida and treated with IV nutrients, probiotics, digestive enzymes, and Candidid Forte. I also stopped eating sugar. I lost 18 pounds and felt like a young chick again.* — C.B., California

🗉 Do you have a Health Tip to share? We'd love to hear it! Send it to worksforme@drwhitaker.com.

Health Hack: Medicinal Uses of Charcoal

You probably think of charcoal as black briquettes used to fire up the grill, but you may not realize it also has medicinal benefits. A specially processed form called activated charcoal has unique adsorption properties, meaning it binds to chemical and natural toxins in the digestive tract, prevents their absorption, and removes them from the body. It's used in emergency rooms to treat drug overdoses and food poisoning, and has gained a following as a safe, inexpensive remedy for diarrhea, bloating, and gas. Look for activated charcoal in capsules, pills, and powders and use as directed.

Monthly Health Quiz:

Gone Fishin'

Eating seafood once or twice a week reduces risk of heart disease and stroke—but some fish have high mercury levels. Which fish does the FDA advise limiting to once a week?

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| A) Oysters & scallops | D) Lobster & crab |
| B) Sardines & anchovies | E) Albacore tuna |
| C) Mahi-mahi & halibut | F) Salmon & trout |



Answer:

C and E—Canned light tuna and the rest are safe 2–3 times a week. Although the FDA's advice is directed to children and women of child-bearing age, no amount of mercury is safe for anyone.

Now Available at drwhitaker.com

- [Health Benefits of Spicy Foods](#)
- [Shield Your Eyes With Lutein and Zeaxanthin](#)
- [Boost Brain Function With Low-Dose Lithium](#)
- [The Top 5 Health Benefits of Avocados](#)

Visit drwhitaker.com and enter the article names into the search bar at the top. Click on the Content tab to find your results.

Notable Quote

“When you come to a roadblock, take a detour.”

— Barbara Bush, 1925–2018,
Former First Lady of the United States

No computer? Mail your question or health tip to *Health & Healing*, 6710-A Rockledge Dr., Ste. 500, Bethesda, MD 20817.

Real Hope for COPD

Ted Koppel, the highly regarded broadcast journalist and news anchor of ABC's *Nightline* for 26 years, is famous for his well-informed and penetrating interviews. During his long and distinguished career, his interviewees have run the gamut from Henry Kissinger and Warren Burger to Yasser Arafat and Nelson Mandela to Madonna and Tammy Faye Bakker.

In a segment that aired late last year on *CBS News Sunday Morning*, Ted Koppel interviewed his wife, Grace Anne, and discussed her struggles with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). When Grace Anne was diagnosed with COPD in 2001, the doctor told her it was progressive and incurable and gave her three to five years to live.

This is not an unusual prognosis. COPD, which encompasses lung diseases such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis, is America's third leading cause of death. Yet 17 years later, this woman is alive and well, and on mission to give hope to people with COPD.

COPD Can Be Treated

The primary treatment for COPD is medication. Inhaled bronchodilators and steroids relax the airway muscles and reduce inflammation, which helps with shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, fatigue, and other symptoms. Short courses of oral steroids or antibiotics are also prescribed for acute exacerbations or infections.

As the condition worsens, patients often end up on supplemental oxygen, tethered to an oxygen tank or concentrator. According to many experts, including the Mayo Clinic website, "Oxygen therapy can improve quality of life and is the only COPD therapy proven to extend life."

It's high time this misinformation is laid to rest. There is another therapy that has been demonstrated in scores of clinical trials to significantly improve labored breathing and shortness of breath, reduce fatigue and anxiety, boost exercise capacity, enhance quality of life and the sense of control patients have over their condition—and extend life.

That therapy is pulmonary rehabilitation, and Grace Anne Koppel says that it has enabled her to remain active, working, and relatively stable with 50 percent of normal lung function (an increase from 26 percent at her diagnosis) years after what she refers to as her "use-by date."

Pulmonary Rehab

Like cardiac and physical rehabilitation, which help patients regain strength and function after heart attacks, strokes, surgeries, and injuries, pulmonary rehab helps people with COPD and other lung problems breathe better.

A typical program educates participants about their condition and instructs them in lifestyle changes to improve respiration and overall health. For example, obesity impairs breathing and exercise tolerance, and weight loss may improve symptoms. On the other hand, advanced COPD is often accompanied by excessive weight loss and muscle wasting, and an appropriate diet and protein supplementation help regain lean muscle mass.

People with COPD tend to be sedentary. Who wants to exercise when walking across a room wears you out? That's why a program of gradually increasing aerobic activity to boost endurance and cardio-respiratory efficiency—plus resistance exercises to build muscle strength—is one of the most therapeutic elements of pulmonary rehab.

Breathing exercises are critical. They train the lungs to take in more oxygen and expel stale air and strengthen the diaphragm, which improves labored breathing, exercise capacity, and quality of life. Pulmonary rehab also provides emotional support. We all know the panicky feeling that arises when you can't catch your breath. Just imagine the stress of dealing with that day in and day out.

"Rodney Dangerfield of Diseases"

The Koppels are determined to raise awareness of this life-changing therapy. They have cofounded 11 pulmonary rehab centers and are working on more, but it's an uphill battle. There are only 230 treatment centers in the entire country, and a mere three percent of patients with COPD receive pulmonary rehabilitation. Medicare provides some reimbursement for moderate to very severe disease, but few insurance companies cover it, even though pulmonary rehab reduces hospitalizations and cuts costs over the long run.

Grace Anne calls COPD "the Rodney Dangerfield of diseases because it don't get no respect." More than 15 million Americans have COPD, an equal number are likely affected but have not been diagnosed, and it is a leading cause of death. Yet COPD ranks a measly

155th in government research funding. Why does diabetes, for example, which kills half as many people as COPD, get 10 times more allocations?

One reason is because COPD is usually caused by smoking, and as with AIDS, addiction, and obesity, there is a tendency to blame the patient for the disease—even though long-term exposure to environmental or workplace toxins are also common culprits, and one in four COPD patients has never smoked. Another reason is that COPD is still thought of as an incurable, essentially untreatable disease.

The Price of a Breath of Fresh Air

This must change. COPD is a serious but treatable chronic condition that, like diabetes and heart disease, can be stabilized and actually improved. Doctors need to recognize this, prescribe pulmonary rehab and lifestyle changes in addition to medications—and give their patients hope.

Patients must be more involved as well. Pay attention to early warning signs such as shortness of breath and chronic cough, especially if you've been a smoker or had occupational exposure to chemicals, dust, or other pollutants, and ask to be tested for COPD. Don't wait until symptoms are severe and lung function is seriously compromised.

If you have been diagnosed, own it. Take control of your health by learning everything you can about COPD, exercising regularly, mastering breathing techniques, and making other appropriate lifestyle changes. Of course it takes focus and effort, but that's a small price to pay for a breath of fresh air.

My Recommendations

- ▶ Ask your doctor about pulmonary rehabilitation. Visit aacvpr.org to locate programs in your area. To learn more about COPD, check out copdfoundation.org.
- ▶ Although I have focused on pulmonary rehab, I also recommend an antioxidant-rich multivitamin and high-dose N-acetyl-cysteine (NAC), which increases levels of glutathione (the primary antioxidant in the lungs), reduces inflammation, and thins mucus that accumulates in the lungs. The suggested dosage of NAC is 1,200–1,800 mg per day, taken in divided doses.

References

CBS News. *Clearing the Air About COPD*. 2017 Nov 26.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/clearing-the-air-about-copd/>

McCarthy B, et al. *Pulmonary rehabilitation for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease*. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*. 2015 Feb 23;(2):CD003793. doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD003793.pub3.

Breathing Exercises for Better Lung Function

Breathing exercises are a cornerstone of pulmonary rehabilitation and are recommended for everyone with COPD or other lung problems. In addition to improving labored breathing, exercise capacity, and quality of life, they often reduce medication and oxygen requirements. These techniques are also good for healthy older people, since lung function declines with age, and for anyone dealing with stress and anxiety. Slow, deep breathing helps clear the mind, calms the sympathetic nervous system, lowers blood pressure, and, when practiced at bedtime, improves sleep.

Pursed-Lips Breathing

Pursed-lips breathing is a good technique to use whenever you're feeling short of breath. Breathe in through your nose then out through your mouth with lips slightly pursed like you were blowing out a candle but slowly—do not force the air out. Try to make your exhalation at least two times longer than your inhalation, e.g., inhale to a count of two, exhale for four counts. Do a few rounds of this four or five times a day until it becomes second nature.

Belly (Diaphragmatic) Breathing

Belly breathing strengthens the diaphragm, which is the primary muscle of respiration. Sit or lie down and place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen. Breathe in deeply through your nose and breathe out slowly through pursed lips, focusing on the rise and fall of your belly. Practice for five to 10 minutes a couple times a day, as well as at bedtime to facilitate sleep.

Harmonicas for Health

Harmonicas for Health was created specifically for people with COPD and other lung diseases. Playing this inexpensive, portable instrument requires both blowing out and drawing in air, which exercises the diaphragm and abdominal muscles and improves breath control. Participants in this program report improvements in symptoms—plus it's a fun social activity. Visit copdfoundation.org or call 866-316-COPD (2673) for more information or to order a \$15 starter kit.

Innovations in Wellness Medicine

Coenzyme Q10, Magnesium, and Feverfew for Migraine Prevention

The FDA just approved the first prescription drug for preventing migraines. I understand the excitement among migraine sufferers, but it's by no means a sure cure. Aimovig, which is administered by monthly self-injections at an annual cost of \$6,900, worked really well for some study participants—and not at all for others. On average, it resulted in one to two and a half fewer monthly migraine days than placebo injections. Aimovig may turn out to be the answer to migraines. However, it's always prudent to hold off on using new drugs until safety and efficacy are confirmed with longer “real world” use.

Meanwhile, I suggest you try a natural approach. In a study published last year, French researchers treated patients who suffered with migraines two or more days a month with a daily supplement containing feverfew 100 mg, coenzyme Q10 100 mg, and magnesium 112.5 mg. After three months, three-quarters of them had a 50 percent or greater reduction in migraine days. You have nothing to lose by trying this combo for a few months—and it won't cost you \$575 a shot. If this doesn't help, talk to your doctor about older medications such as beta-blockers, which have a long track record of reducing migraines.

Fish Oil and Warm Compresses for Dry Eyes

Dry eye syndrome has many causes, including environmental irritants, drug side effects, autoimmune diseases, and simply aging. Whatever the cause, it involves disruption of some aspect of tear production. In many cases this has to do with the meibomian glands, which line the edges of the eyelids and secrete an oily substance that stabilizes tears and slows their evaporation. When these glands are blocked or damaged, the tears—and the eyes—dry out too quickly.

A small pilot study demonstrated that omega-3 supplements and moist heat may provide relief. Participants with dry eyes due to meibomian gland dysfunction took three fish oil capsules (each containing 390 mg EPA/193 mg DHA) and used eye compresses heated in a microwave for 30 seconds and applied to closed eyes for five minutes per day. Reevaluation after four weeks revealed significant improvements in tear breakup time and ocular surface disease index scores. This protocol, which takes about seven minutes a day, is certainly worth a try for anyone with dry eyes.

Did You Know?

- Asthma is twice as common in women as in men.
- About a third of Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans have a genetic variation that causes alcohol-induced flushing and headaches.
- Don't clean your ears with Q-Tips; they are responsible for half of eardrum injuries seen in ERs.
- An ostrich's eye is larger than its brain.
- Obesity quadruples risk of atrial fibrillation in men and doubles risk in women.
- Researchers have linked a high intake of oily fish, peas, and green beans with later menopause.
- Contrary to popular belief, mayonnaise is not a leading cause of food poisoning.
- Several antibiotics increase risk of kidney stones, especially in children.
- Humans “shed” (lose more hair) in the summer than in the winter.
- Older people who eat lots of produce, nuts, and fish have less brain shrinkage.
- Birth rates in the US are the lowest they've been since 1987.
- Inadequate sleep increases attention lapses and slows reaction time—limitations we're often unaware of.

Health & Healing Resources

- **Renew Your Subscription** 800-539-8219 (M–F 9 AM–5 PM EST)
- **Buy Supplements** 800-722-8008 or drwhitaker.com
- **Sign Up for My Free E-News** drwhitaker.com

Coming In Future Issues:

- IV Vitamin C Could Save Your Life
- Do Supplements and Grapefruit Juice Mix?
- Cholesterol: How Low Is Too Low?



Become a fan on Facebook at facebook.com/WhitakerMD



Follow Healthy Directions on Twitter at twitter.com/HealthyDir



Watch me on YouTube at youtube.com/user/drwhitakerinfo