



strength * spirit * solace

Newsletter

March 2006

Dear friend...

In February, I had the good fortune to meet a new friend who is certain to become one of my great spiritual teachers and healers. Lisa Eller Davis is the personification of Reiki. Reiki is an energy healing system which channels universal life energy into the body by a gentle placing of the hands in specific positions on the body. Reiki is based on the belief that by channeling spiritual energy through the practitioner, the spirit is healed, and the spirit, in turn, heals the physical body. Lisa is everything (and more) you would expect from someone with 15 years of healing arts experience. She has tremendous energy, she is extremely kind, humble, witty, and humorous – yet she is also wise and open minded. Meeting Lisa, and experiencing my first Reiki session with her, was the highlight of my own spiritual work so far this year.

In the days after I worked with Lisa in Reiki, I had many powerful dreams. In one, I fought with my endocrinologist about the best care for my thyroid condition – I wanted to go a more holistic route. Upon waking, I interpreted this dream's message as a reminder to me that "healing" comes in many forms. Shortly thereafter, I began working with a wonderful Naturopath to implement better nutrition, relaxation and detoxification to heal my thyroid. In another dream, I finally experienced the sadness of losing my sister-in-law, whom I have been angry with since she divorced my brother last year. In my dream, I opened my heart to her and then awoke suddenly crying and wondering what had changed in me to allow forgiveness. For the next several days, my dreams continued to let my spirit travel to meet my subconscious fears and frustrations head on. Each gave me a great sense of peace upon waking. What luminosity!

We all have direct, personal, access to this power and wisdom. Channeling our own energy for good and healing connects us to our higher self, our own inner truth, power and wisdom – which is both Universal *and* unique to us! Ask yourself if there are questions in your own heart that could use some healing, then meditate, pray or sleep on it. The chances are that your own innate wisdom will have given you some clue to the truth of the matter. If you wish for assistance in the process, I highly recommend Lisa and her healing Reiki to guide you on your way. Lisa can be reached at LISA_E.D@comcast.net.

Keep up the great work and let your light shine on!

Namasté,

Sara

Meditation

Being aware of the cycle of life and our place in it makes us wiser. As we develop a true appreciation for the phase we are in, we can savor it more. A new mother going through a difficult time with her infant can more easily embrace her challenges because she knows that her child will grow up, and she will long for this time again. Difficult and challenging periods are inevitable, but – like everything that is a part of the cycle of life – they are temporary. When we are fully engaged with life, we get to savor and grow from each phase, and we are ready for the next one when it arrives. Fully embracing wherever you are in the cycle of life is the very essence to happiness.

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Poses You Can Do at Home

Uddiyana Bandha (Upward Abdominal Lock)

Benefits

- Strengthens the abdominal muscles and diaphragm
- Massages abdominal viscera, the solar plexus, and the heart and lungs
- Increases gastric fire; improves digestion, assimilation, and elimination; and purifies the digestive tract of toxins
- Stimulates blood circulation in the abdomen and blood flow to the brain
- Stimulates and lifts the energy of the lower belly to unite it with the energies localized in the navel and heart

Contraindications

- Stomach or intestinal ulcers
- Hernia
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Glaucoma
- Menstruation
- Pregnancy

Step by Step

1. Stand with your slightly feet apart, eyes open. Different teachers have different ideas about the proper way to perform this bandha. Here are four possibilities:
 - Practice with your torso rounded forward, knees bent, hands resting on your knees.
 - Learn the bandha first with your torso rounded forward and then, after getting some experience, practice the bandha standing upright, hands on hips.
 - Practice throughout with your torso upright.
 - Start the practice with your torso rounded forward, perform Uddiyana Bandha, and then stand upright, with your hands on your hips (Iyengar).
2. Inhale deeply through your nose, then exhale quickly and forcibly, also through your nose (or pursed lips). Contract your abdominal muscles fully to push as much air as possible out of your lungs. Then relax your abdominals.
3. Perform what's called a "mock inhalation"; that is, expand your rib cage (thorax) as if you were inhaling, but don't actually inhale. The expansion of the rib cage (without the inhalation) sucks the abdominal muscles and viscera up into the thorax and hollows the belly (some teachers say to actively but slowly lift abdominals, or navel, toward the spine). Because you should always perform Jalandhara Bandha along with Uddiyana Bandha, come into Jalandhara Bandha at this point.

4. Hold the bandhas for five to 15 seconds. Then slowly release the abdominal grip and inhale normally. Perform three to 10 rounds, depending on your capacity, with one or more normal breaths between each round.

Anatomical Focus

Abdomen
Thorax

Therapeutic Applications

Constipation
Indigestion

Beginner's Tip

Instead of simply resting your hands on your knees in the standing position (as described above in Step 1a), firmly press the bases of your palms against the very tops of the thighs (right hand on the right thigh, left hand on the left). This downward pressure on the femur bones will create a slight natural hollowing of your lower belly.

** Poses You Can Do at Home are from Yoga Journal.*

Nutrition – Partake in a Spring Cleanse: 21 days to greater health!

What is a “cleanse”?

The purpose of a cleanse is to neutralize and eliminate any compound in the body that can be toxic. Cleansing is a natural process occurring on a continual basis in the body, but because of the modern diet, the enormous number of chemicals we ingest daily, and the increase in chronic degenerative diseases, many people believe that a regular cleanse program is necessary.

A cleanse diet strengthens the organs involved in detoxification and releases stored toxins, expelling them through the organs of elimination: the skin, intestines, liver, lungs, kidneys and lymphatic system. A cleanse program consists of a special diet, nutritional supplements, exercise, breathing techniques and/or meditation.

Where do toxins come from?

A toxin is a compound that can harm the structure or function of body cells and tissues. Toxins can come from the environment (alcohol, tobacco, pesticides, and heavy metals such as mercury, food additives, oral contraceptives, and drugs). The body, during its normal metabolic functioning, forms by-products that can also have toxic effects if the body didn't neutralize them properly.

Can't the body handle these toxins on its own?

The rising prevalence of diseases such as cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, multiple chemical sensitivity, attention deficit and hyperactivity (ADHD, ADD), and autoimmune disease *plus* the fact that there are few long-term studies on the cumulative health effects of all sources of toxins in our environment make periodic cleanse diets a prudent preventative measure.

In addition, we have to factor in the role that stress, sedentary lifestyles, use of prescription drugs and hormone therapies, and the increasing proportion of dietary fast food, saturated fats, salt and sugar play in our body.

What health conditions benefit from a cleanse diet?

Cleanse diets are believed to:

- help prevent disease, especially when someone has prolonged exposure to chemicals or hormones (such as oral contraceptives)
- improve symptoms of low energy, joint or other pain, headache, premenstrual syndrome, unhealthy skin, anxiety and irritability, frequent colds, heartburn, constipation, and gas.

- treat disease such as autoimmune disease, multiple chemical sensitivity, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, digestive disorders, heart disease, arthritis, attention deficit, and other chronic degenerative disease.

How do I start?

If you are unsure of your current health condition, or it has been a while since your last physical check-up, it is important to see your primary health care practitioner for a thorough assessment of your symptoms to ensure that you do not have a medical condition that requires treatment. You want to make sure you have a clean bill of health, and are not pregnant, before beginning a cleanse regimen.

Next, go to your local health food store and stock up on the finest quality (organic when possible) fresh foods! Once the foods are in your refrigerator and on the shelves of your cupboard, you will find it very easy to begin and stick with a cleanse program. It is suggested to follow a cleanse diet for 21 days for maximum health, vitality and results.

List of Foods to Enjoy

1. **Fresh Fruit** - Enjoy all fresh fruit and some dried fruits in moderation. Fruits are higher in glycemic load and may cause symptoms of low blood sugar in some individuals if consumed too heavily. One or two pieces of fruit or a handful of dried fruit per day is recommended.
2. **Fresh Vegetables** - All fresh vegetables except corn, which can be an allergenic food. Great cleansing veggies include broccoli, cauliflower, broccoli sprouts, onions, garlic, artichokes, beets, dark red and bright green leafy vegetables.
3. **Rice** - Rice is easily digested by most people. Choose brown or basmati rice. Try to avoid rice cakes, rice crackers and rice pasta because they often use wheat and other fillers in their processing. Whole grain rice steamed in the traditional cooking method is best.
4. **Other Grains** - Quinoa, amaranth, millet, and buckwheat can be used instead of rice. They can be purchased at a health food store and are usually simple to make and delicious to enjoy. Expand your grains pantry and experience a whole new world of flavor!
5. **Nuts and Seeds** - Unsalted raw nuts, seeds and nut butters can be sprinkled over any meal. Includes flaxseed, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, almonds, cashews and walnuts. Avoid peanuts because they are a common allergen.
6. **Beans** - (Such as black beans, pinto beans, navy beans, white beans, garbanzo beans, etc. Also, fresh string beans or green beans.) Keep in mind that sometimes beans can cause digestive distress including gas, bloating, indigestion, etc. If you have any issues such as those, please avoid beans. Otherwise, beans are a healthy protein source which are low-fat and contain lots of fiber! You may soak and cook your own beans, or buy them canned (organic is preferable).
7. **Fish** - Poached, broiled or steamed fish can be enjoyed in moderation, up to one 4 ounce serving per day. Preferable fatty fishes include salmon, mackerel and swordfish, which are good because of their high Omega-3 Essential Fatty Acids content.
8. **Healthy fats** - Extra-virgin olive oil, pure unrefined coconut oil, and cold-pressed flax oil are best. Avocados also fall into this category, but remember to eat all things in moderation.
9. **Condiments** - Kosher salt or Celtic sea salt, vinegar, naturally fermented soy sauce or tamari (Bragg's Liquid Aminos is a good brand), fresh or dried herbs, limited amounts of honey and blackstrap molasses may be used. Don't forget essential seasonings like garlic, ginger, green onions, crushed red pepper and any of your favorite spice mixes. You just want to watch out for combinations that have too much sodium. For example, sometimes a Cajun spice blend will add unnecessary salt to the mix - instead, create your own!
10. **Herbal Tea** - Herbal non-caffeinated teas may be consumed hot or cold, you may use a bit of honey and/or fresh squeezed lemon juice in your tea.
11. **Other Beverages** - Water, lemon water, rice milk, almond milk, and Emergen'C beverage are delicious alternatives when on a cleanse diet.

List of Foods to Avoid

1. **Sugar** - Refined sugar and mixtures containing refined sugar, including sucrose, dextrose, corn syrup, brown sugar, and turbinado. Avoid ALL artificial sweeteners.
2. **Dairy Products** - Milk, eggs, butter, yogurt and other dairy products.
3. **Meat** - Eliminating meat from your diet allows your liver to get to work cleaning up the other toxins in your system. Meat is harder and takes longer to break down than plant food. For sources of animal protein while on the cleanse program, please refer to the section above which recommends the intake of fatty fishes because they are high in Omega-3 Essential Fatty Acids.
4. **Wheat** - Wheat and all products containing wheat. Check labels very carefully, wheat is a hidden ingredient in many processed foods (although you should not be consuming any processed food at this time). Wheat is a common allergen.
5. **Gluten** - All gluten-containing grains, including barley, oats, rye, spelt and kamut. Some people are sensitive to gluten, a protein fragment in these grains. Gluten also forms a glue-like substance in the digestive tract and when eliminated may help to increase digestion and absorption of nutrients, as well as eliminate common digestive ailments.
6. **Corn** - Corn and all corn products. Corn is a common allergen and contains gluten.
7. **Caffeine** - Coffee, both regular and decaffeinated, black tea, and other drinks containing caffeine.
8. **Other Foods to Avoid**
 - Fast food!!!!
 - Yeast (found in most bread products)
 - Alcohol
 - Food additives and preservatives (found in most processed and junk foods)
 - Chocolate
 - Over-indulging in any one food, or any food that makes you feel ill...practice moderation in all things!

Daily Cleanse Tips

- ❖ Drink a minimum of one half your body weight in ounces of pure spring water (not tap water!) per day, warm or at room temperature (iced water may be hard on the stomach and/or prevent you from drinking enough water on colder days – room temperature water is most easily absorbed into the body's cells). Water is essential to clear waste from the blood. And, thirst is often mistaken for hunger. If you are hungry, drink some spring water!
- ❖ Take the time to settle in before each meal and chew all your food well, especially grains, for proper digestion and absorption of nutrients.
- ❖ Light exercise for minimum of 30 minutes daily – walking, yoga, swimming – are good for flushing the lymphatic system and helping to remove toxins from the body's fat cells and blood stream.
- ❖ Try skin brushing – The skin is the largest organ in the body, and is responsible for one-fourth of the body's detoxification each day, also making it one of the most important elimination organs. Skin brushing can help your lymph system to clean itself of the toxins that collect in the lymph glands.
- ❖ Take baths – Epsom salt baths are an excellent way of combating stress and alleviating muscular aches and pains. The high magnesium content in Epsom salt baths facilitates the removal of acids through the skin.
- ❖ SLEEP! Let your body rest and rejuvenate. Try to get a minimum of eight hours each night. Avoid stressful situations or strenuous activities at night which deters your body from slowing down and getting to work on healing.
- ❖ If you are hungry – eat! **Do not starve yourself**, that is not the point!
- ❖ Try eliminating other “toxins” from your life – television, disturbing newspaper articles, surfing the Internet, arguments or hurtful words and thoughts, negative people, etc. Try to spend time meditating, going outside and enjoying nature, and enjoy the company of loved ones. This is the best medicine there is!
- ❖ Once you complete the body cleanse, ease back into your regular food routine slowly and carefully – your system will be hyper-sensitive, so it would be best not to go for a steak, French fries and milk shake the day after you are done. ☺

Your Questions Answered!

Do you have a question? Email it to me at Tsara@saradelaney.com.

Q: *My sister's doctor recommended soy formula for her baby now that she is done breastfeeding. What are your thoughts on soy? (My nephew is nine months old.)*

A:

Soy, once touted as America's favorite health food, has been under scrutiny by various groups for more than a decade. In regards to soy formula, caution is urged for parents considering giving daily doses to their children. Soy has high amounts of phyto-estrogens, or plant based chemicals that mimic estrogen. They possess a wide range of hormonal and non-hormonal activities. Research shows that the daily exposure of infants who consume soy formula was 6-11 times higher than adults consuming soy foods. The blood concentration of these hormones was 13,000 to 22,000 times higher than estrogen in the blood. Researchers speculate that this concentration may be sufficient to exert biological effects, whereas the contribution from breast-milk or cow-milk is negligible. Soy has many problems and it is not really designed to be consumed as a food unless it is fermented as in tempeh or miso. You might want to share this information with your sister and encourage her to consider other options.

When possible, the best food for baby is breast milk, and many mothers choose to breast feed their babies for as long as two years. However, many situations call for a good substitute: adopted babies, babies born to mothers with serious health problems, and babies whose mothers do not have enough milk deserve to receive something better than most commercial formulas, which are indeed laden with soy.

If he cannot be breastfed, the ideal milk for a baby older than nine months, is clean, whole raw milk from old-fashioned cows, certified free of disease, then feed on green pasture. For sources of good-quality whole raw milk, see [Twww.realmilk.com](http://www.realmilk.com). For more information about concerns over soy-based formulas, as well as homemade baby formula recipes, please visit the Weston A. Price Foundation's website – www.westonaprice.org.

In addition to considering whole raw milk, egg yolk should be baby's first solid food, starting at 4 months, whether baby is breastfed, formula-fed, or milk-fed. Egg yolks from pastured hens will contain the special long-chain fatty acids so critical for the optimal development of the brain and nervous system. The whites may cause an allergic reaction and should not be given to baby until he is at least one year old.

- 1 organic egg from a pasture-fed hen
- pinch sea salt

Boil egg for 3 1/2 minutes. Place in a bowl and peel off shell. Remove egg white and discard. Yolk should be soft and warm, not hot, with its enzyme content intact. Sprinkle with salt.

Source: Nourishing Traditions by Sally Fallon with Mary G. Enig, PhD.

Contemplate...

Our bodies are mostly water, and so the ongoing intake of water is essential to our every function. Drink the appropriate amounts, and everything is much more likely to function at optimal levels. Don't drink enough water, and over the short term you will experience routine fatigue, dry skin, headaches and constipation; over the longer term, every body function will degrade more quickly. It really is as simple as that.



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*"When you come to the edge of all that you know, you must believe one of two things:
There will be earth upon which to stand, or you will be given wings to fly."*

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