

Chatting with The Good Dr. Laura Shook
December 2008

Greetings Riverside, I hope your Thanksgiving was refreshing and joyous. Did your team win the game? Did the kids let you sleep in? Was the gravy flawless?

And away we go into the December line up of feasting, festivities, sweets, presents, travel and libations. For many it is a time of contemplation, reunion and worship. For some the days leading up to and following the winter equinox is a time of stress, overindulgence, bulimic wallets, bloated bellies and jumbo packs of Alka-seltzer.

Not everyone finds the holidays a wonderful and festive time of year. Here are a few tips for reducing holiday stress.

- 1) Don't overindulge in sugar, fat, caffeine and alcohol. Being buzzed, bloated and hung over is not going to help.
- 2) Take a walk. A short walk can do wonders for reducing stress.
- 3) Remember to breathe. Three slow deep breaths will help to calm the mind and relax your muscles. Breathe in through your nose and exhale slowly through your mouth.

Perhaps it is the combination of feasting, contemplation and stress that led us to the tradition of the New Years resolution. Have you considered making a New Years resolution? Perhaps something involving your health and fitness? Have you decided that it is time to embark on a journey that will lead you to a place of vibrant health and wellness? Everyone has a different starting point for their journey. Drinking more water and wearing comfortable shoes can lead to less coffee and more walks, turn a corner and you just might discover sound sleep, reduced stress and relaxed fitting jeans. Start packing your own lunch and you could find yourself eating more balanced meals, saving money and moving away from the tempting abyss of fast foods. And, like any journey, there can be unexpected disruptions and tempting distractions. As with any road trip you pick up the pieces, regroup and get help, if needed, so you can get back on the road to vibrant health and wellness. Remember, just like it says on the Kellogg & Oliver overpass, "The Journey is the Reward".

Recommended Reading!

1) "8 Weeks to Optimum Health" by Andrew Weil M.D.

This book offers the reader an 8 week plan for gradually making life style and dietary changes with the goal of achieving optimum health.

2) "Healthy Aging" by Andrew Weil M.D.

This book is about how to age gracefully, reaching the twilight years alive, alert, agile, enjoying life and minimizing the time spent in physical decline before the inevitable end. Making a comparison between human aging and fine whisky, Dr. Weil points out that given the right ingredients (or genes), the aging process, if conducted under the right conditions adds character and flavor to the finished product.

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