

SWELL LETTER

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What's the big hype about Zen?

Zen: It's Not Just Sitting Still

Zen gets a lot of buzz for being about "living in the moment," but it's so much more! It's about applying mindful awareness to everything we do. Let's see how Zen can transform daily experiences. Imagine yourself at the foot of a mountain. You can see it as a daunting obstacle, focusing on the sheer climb ahead. Or you can view it as a challenge, savoring the fresh air, the changing scenery, and the feeling of your body getting stronger.



The Power of Perception

Perception matters. When faced with an obstacle, all you see is the struggle. But with a challenging mindset, you appreciate the journey. You might notice the vibrant wildflowers, the playful squirrels, and the breathtaking vista unfolding with each step. The experience becomes enjoyable, not just an endurance test.

Zen in Action: Your Day Transformed

Zen doesn't mean becoming a sloth. With a Zen approach, you'd wake up feeling refreshed, savor a nourishing breakfast, and mindfully get ready for SWELL. At class, you'd greet your friends with a smile and focus on each exercise, appreciating the movement and its benefits for your body.

Weight Loss: It's About the Journey

Take weight loss for example. You can fixate on dropping 20 pounds, leading you towards fad diets and quick fixes. We all know those are unsustainable. Instead, Zen teaches us to focus on the process – eating healthy and exercising regularly each day. Instead of obsessing over the number on the scale, you savor the delicious, nutritious meals and enjoy the energy boost from exercise. The weight loss becomes a natural consequence of healthy habits, not a desperate battle.

Beyond Yourself: Zen and Relationships

Zen isn't just about you. It's about fostering genuine social connections. Instead of simply aiming to be "nice," you truly listen to others, care about their thoughts, and offer support. With Zen, every interaction becomes an opportunity to contribute something positive to the world. We have great opportunities to social connect at SWELL.

Focus on the Journey, Not Just the Destination

So, let's shift our focus. Instead of solely chasing your goals, let's embrace the process to reach them. Work hard, make positive choices, and celebrate the small victories along the way. Live each moment, savor the journey, and discover the joy in living Zen.

--Gary

8 Surprising Reasons to Try Tai Chi After 50



Pat Swartz sent me this article.

Many With benefits that include reducing blood pressure, boosting brain health and preventing falls, tai chi is at the top of the list of recommended exercises for older adults.

The research on the benefits of tai chi has long been compelling, says Ardeshir Hashmi, M.D., section chief of Cleveland Clinic's Center for Geriatric Medicine.

Dozens of studies have found the ancient art form can prevent falls, boost cognition, [reduce blood pressure](#), ease pain and more.

Now, Hashmi says, tai chi is the No. 1 activity his clinic recommends for older patients. He also recently started practicing tai chi himself.

Many studies have shown that tai chi offers a wide range of benefits for older adults, making it a top recommended exercise by healthcare professionals. Dr. Ardeshir Hashmi, section chief of Cleveland Clinic's Center for Geriatric Medicine, is a strong advocate, citing its effectiveness and even incorporating it into his own routine.

Benefits Beyond Compare

Tai chi goes beyond just physical exercise. Here's a look at its eight key benefits:

1. **Fewer Falls:** Studies show a significant reduction in falls – up to 50% – among tai chi practitioners. This is crucial as falls are a major concern for seniors, often leading to injuries and loss of independence.
2. **Sharper Mind:** Research suggests tai chi can improve cognitive function, memory, and learning. It may even slow cognitive decline in older adults with existing issues.
3. **Improved Mood and Mental Well-being:** Deep breathing and meditative movements promote stress reduction and a clearer mind. Dr. Hashmi emphasizes the mindfulness aspect, stating it allows you to focus on your body and breathing, leading to significant stress relief. Studies further suggest tai chi can alleviate symptoms of anxiety, depression, and mood swings, while boosting self-esteem.
4. **Lower Blood Pressure:** Numerous studies have shown tai chi's effectiveness in lowering blood pressure, potentially matching or even surpassing the effects of medication or other exercises.
5. **Pain Relief:** Tai chi can provide relief from chronic pain caused by conditions like osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia. Research indicates significant pain reduction and improved physical function in patients with knee osteoarthritis who practiced tai chi.
6. **Improved Lung Function:** The combination of movement and deep breathing in tai chi enhances breathing efficiency and oxygen intake. Studies show it improves exercise capacity, lung function, and quality of life for those with COPD.
7. **Better Sleep:** For older adults struggling with insomnia (10-30%), tai chi can be a game-changer. Research suggests it can significantly improve sleep quality and increase functional ability. Studies by Dr. Eckstrom further indicate falling asleep 17 minutes faster and sleeping 42 minutes longer after practicing tai chi.
8. **Boosted Immune System:** Research suggests tai chi can increase the number of immune cells in the body, helping fight off infections. It may also improve antibody levels after vaccination. Experts believe this boost is linked to stress reduction and better sleep, both crucial for a healthy immune system.

SWELL's Experience with Tai Chi

SWELL has witnessed the positive impact of tai chi firsthand, observing numerous benefits in its members. Many of SWELL's terminally ill patients tend to be living longer than most with the same illness.

The core message remains strong: tai chi is a valuable exercise for older adults, even as health declines. It promotes continued movement and well-being, encouraging participation regardless of age or physical limitations.

In summary SWELL has been doing tai chi for many years. We have seen all of these benefits with many of our SWELL members. We have seen terminal patients live up to 3 years longer than the average person. Jim Demmer played golf and came to SWELL a few days before he crossed over into the light of eternal life. We have 4 times more members, over 85, than the Dubuque age average. Toward the end of your life you may not feel good, or people might say you need to stop coming to SWELL because of your declining physical health. The opposite is true, you need to come to SWELL more frequently because of your declining health. You need to keep moving, don't stop until your eyes close for the last time.

Be Well Be SWELL

Article review by Gary



Tim and Claudette Bees enjoyed an eight-day Viking Danube River Cruise

From May 19 to May 26 they traveled from Budapest, Hungary to Passau, Germany with stops to Slovakia and Austria. They visited many historic landmarks including Gottweig Abbey, Saint Nicholas Church where Silent Night was first performed in 1818. Saint Stephen's Cathedral in Passau is home to the largest pipe organ in Europe. Both the Cathedral and the organ were breathtaking. The Nazi work camp in Austria is a place everyone should experience. The monuments there pay homage to the nations that were impacted. The cruelty experienced there was palpable.

The journey was as much fun as destiny. The food changed as the countries changed as did the cultures. They experienced several lock and dams which were amazing.



Garden Tip by Gary

How to grow green onions fast



Freshly planted



5 Days later



2 weeks getting ready to pick

Growing Green Onions from Scraps: A Quick and Easy Method



Ever bought green onions and wished you could regrow them? Well, you can! This method is perfect for using leftover green onion ends and avoids seed starting frustrations.

What you'll need:

- Green onions with about an inch of white bulb and roots attached (store-bought are fine!)
- Organic fertilizer (optional)
- Watering can

Steps:

1. **Prepare the planting area:** If you'd like, spread a thin layer of organic fertilizer and mix it into the soil. This will provide extra nutrients for your green onions.
2. **Plant the green onions:** Use your finger to poke a small hole in the soil, about 1 inch deep. Place the green onion root-end down into the hole and gently push the soil around the base to secure it.
3. **Water regularly:** Keep the soil moist, but not soggy. Aim for watering every other day or so, depending on your climate.
4. **Harvest:** You can start harvesting your green onions within 2-4 weeks, once the green shoots reach a desired height. Simply snip what you need with scissors, leaving the white bulb in the ground for continued growth.

Tips:

- Plant your green onions in a sunny spot for optimal growth.
- You can regrow green onions this way multiple times from the same bulb! Just keep harvesting the green shoots and watering regularly.

Enjoy your homegrown green onions!

-- Gary

Hy-Vee regularly offers free health screenings. Currently, you can get your Omega-3 level tested at the Asbury Hy-Vee, if you contact Dietitian, Megan Dalsing, for an appointment. See Megan's "Nutrition & Alzheimer's" article, which recently appeared in 365ink magazine, below to learn reasons you should check your Omega-3 level. Contact your local Hy-Vee registered dietitian for more information or schedule your appointment today by registering at hy-veehealthyyou.com.

Nutrition & Alzheimer's

What Registered Dietitians Want You to Know!

By Hy-Vee Nutritionist Megan Dalsing

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month. During this time there are many things you can do as an individual and in your community to promote brain health and increase awareness of Alzheimer's research including prevention and treatment. Your Hy-Vee registered dietitian and the Alzheimer's Association want you to know what you can do and what you need to know about nutritional strategies around brain health.

Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that affects memory, thinking, and behavior. Symptoms eventually grow severe enough to interfere with daily tasks. Dementia is a general term for loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia. Nationwide, nearly 7 million people are living with Alzheimer's disease. In Iowa, there are 62,000 people living with the disease.

On top of that, there are 11 million people in the United States caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's.

With so much at stake and so many lives affected, it makes sense to do everything we can to boost brain health. Studies have shown that early identification of those with poor diet quality and interventions such as the MIND (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) eating pattern can decrease the risk of developing Alzheimer's. The MIND style of eating employs elements of the Mediterranean and DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diets and is rich in nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids, B vitamins, and other antioxidants. The eating pattern is high in plant-based nutrients and includes the recommendation to have at least one portion of fish each week. Fish can be an important source of brain-health-promoting omega-3 fatty acids.

Omega-3 fatty acids perform many other essential functions in the body including supporting a healthy heart. They also work to lower cholesterol, specifically triglyceride levels. You can register for the Hy-Vee Healthy You Omega-3 Index Screening Tour thanks to our generous sponsors at Nordic Naturals and GOED. Contact your local Hy-Vee registered dietitian for more information or schedule your appointment today by registering at hy-veehealthyyou.com.

You also can get involved with the Alzheimer's Association's Walk to End Alzheimer's in your community by starting a team, fundraising, and getting your company involved. Every dollar raised benefits those affected by Alzheimer's disease in your community by providing local care and support programs and advancing toward treatment, prevention and, ultimately, a cure. Learn more at act.alz.org/walk. ■

Dave and Ruth Assmus Trip to the Black Hills

In early June Dave and Ruth Assmus took a trip to the Black Hills of South Dakota. We are originally from South Dakota and have been to the Black Hills numerous times and have favorite stopping places along the way.

A suggestion, if you are thinking of traveling west on I-90 we recommend that you stop at the Chamberlin rest stop. It is located on the bluffs of the Missouri River and has an excellent interpretive center. The rest stop is in the general area where Lewis and Clark camped on their expedition.

We both cannot drive past the town of Wall without stopping at Wall Drug. In addition to free ice water their donut shop makes delicious donuts. Dave couldn't just walk by the replica of Mt. Rushmore in the courtyard.

We spent most of our time visiting with friends and family, so the only sightseeing we did was to spend time at Crazy Horse Memorial and Museum. There is a large collection of artifacts and historical information in plus they have free coffee.

Next time we are in the Hills we will try to go to Mt. Rushmore and Custer State Park. The park has the largest public herd of bison, which you can often see when you drive on the game loop.

If you have question about traveling to the Black Hills ask us, we are happy to share information.



Recipe by Jean Delaney queen of the kitchen



Chicken Cherry Pasta Salad

16 - 1 cup servings

1 tbsp olive oil

2.25 lbs. boneless chicken breast

Heat Oil, brown chicken, cook – covered on low

Heat until just tender, cool, cut in small chunks

16 oz pkg shell pasta. (I prefer gemelli, you can sub penne or fusilli)

Cook pasta, and rinse in cold water

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped celery

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped red onion

5 oz pkg dried tart cherries

Combine chicken, pasta celery, onion, and cherries in large bowl.

Sauce $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dressing, refrigerate overnight

4 cup baby spinach tear off stems

1 cup chopped walnuts (you may toast them.)

Fold in spinach, walnuts, and dressing.

Ready to serve



Social Connection

Mark your calendars

2024 Dates

SWELL Picnic at Gary and Lisa's house

Wednesday October 2nd, Rain date Thursday October 3rd.



Upcoming performances at the Heritage Center

BritBeat new music set.

Saturday October 19, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

We will submit money in an envelope and hand to Gary.

THE STAFF

Editor..... Gary

Feature Writer Gary

Feature Writer Tim and Claudette Bees

Feature WriterDave and Ruth Assmus

Submitted Tai Chi article Pat Swartz

Submitted Omega-3 article.....Karen Knepper

Healthy Recipe..... Jean Delaney

Thanks to those who submitted wonderful articles to our SWELL newsletter.