MEDICAL JOURNAL

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Yoga, turmeric among remedies praised for pandemic aches and pains

BY KATE CONE BRANCACCIO
Correspondent

Happy Anniversary. One year ago, almost to the day, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. And our lives have forever been changed. Our lives and bodies, mental health—you name it—have been undergoing seismic shifts, from working at home (hello, texting neck and rounded shoulders); learning how a pandemic spreads (I love you, surgical mask, uh, double surgical mask); determining who makes the cut to be in your "bubble," (sorry, friends, family only) and how to navigate crashing computer systems (hurry up and wait, for a vaccine).

But as frenetic as our lives have become, help is here and has been here for hundreds of years, waiting to be noticed. Yoga, a practice that originated in India and dates back thousands of years, and turmeric, the musky orange/gold root that makes curry that bright yellow color that mimics the sun, help keep our immune systems resistant to this novel virus.

....as we barrel toward the first anniversary of the World Health Organization declaring the coronavirus a pandemic, the physical consequences of extended disruption, isolation and stress have begun to make themselves known en masse, in doctors' offices and telehealth video calls.
Amanda Mull **"The Atlantic"**

Enter Kim Nashed, owner and founder of Kim Nashed Yoga in Waterville. She was drawn to yoga's stretching and inverted postures, such as headstands, as a pre-teen in the 1970s.

"When I had the house to myself, I'd turn on the stereo, put on Simon and Garfunkel, and I'd do stretches and inversions. I didn't know about yoga or meditation. Fast forward to about 2001: I came home twice in 24 hours to receive voicemails on the answering machine from two people I barely knew: " 'Kim, I just went to a yoga class and I thought of you. I was blown away. Thank you universe! I went to the classes and loved it.'"

As doctors are swamped with patients, either in their offices or in teleconference calls—with complaints as wide and varied as muscle aches, cramping, carpal tunnel syndrome, loss of balance (from lack of exercise or walking), and more—the list of possible remedies is a long one. But narrowing that list down to a few, or even one, one you can do at home, is Kim Nashed's specialty.

... the way we treat ourselves and talk to ourselves has a lasting impact on our well-being in the long run and affects the immune system in the moment. Facing a pandemic is worrisome on many levels. The natural fear of serious illness creates a biochemical difference that affects our minds and bodies.

KIM NASHED

Photo by Jamie Mercurio Photography, jamiemercurio.com
Kim Nashed, owner and founder of Kim Nashed Yoga in Waterville, in warrior pose.

How does it work?

So much is happening when people practice yoga. The lymphatic fluid in the body is moved by breath and movement. It's responsible for cleansing all the cells of the body, wipes away cellular debris, toxins (from air or what we eat or drink), cleanses when people have a virus—like taking an internal shower. As people are moving, breathing, putting their legs up, the lymphatic system drains away all that debris. It's like after a long air flight, people often have swollen ankles from inactivity; yoga is the opposite of that, according to Nashed.

The lymphatic system is a network of tissues, vessels and organs that work together to move a colorless, watery fluid called lymph back into your circulatory system (your bloodstream).
www.clevelandclinic.org

So when a person bends over and touches his or her toes, there is a purpose to that movement, as there is when a person reaches upwards and stretch. According to the Cleveland Clinic, the lymphatic system is part of the all-important immune system, something we hear about much more often. The entire system helps keep us healthy. The movement contained in the practice of yoga moves that fluid and cleanses the body.

Another simple way to keep healthy is to listen to words you may have heard from your mother: "Eat your greens, an apple a day keeps the doctor away and drink eight glasses of water a day." These suggestions remain still relevant, as old as the advice is, according to health experts. And one item that has gotten immense attention is turmeric. Mother may not have known about turmeric, or even made curry, so now the tables of advice are turned. Turmeric is one of the "hottest" and much discussed and studied foods, according to Dr. Michael Greger, creator of Nutrition Facts (*www.nutritionfacts.org*),

In recent years, more than 5,000 articles have been published in medical literature about curcumin, the pigment in the Indian spice turmeric that gives curry powder its characteristic golden color. Curcumin was first isolated more than a century ago, yet out of the thousands of experiments, only a few in the 20th century were clinical studies involving actual human participants. Since the turn of the century, however, more than 50 clinical trials have tested curcumin against a variety of diseases, and dozens more studies are on the way.

Greger has many videos about the results of those studies on the website and one has shown that just eating herbs can help the immune system: "Cloves, ginger, rosemary and turmeric were able to significantly stifle the inflammatory response." (Which spices fight inflammation? *www.nutritionfacts.org*)

Another crucial tool that people seem so reluctant to use, is self-compassion. These have been, are and promise to be, challenging times, according to Nashed.

It turns out, she said, that the way we treat ourselves and talk to ourselves has a lasting impact on our well-being in the long run and affects the immune system in the moment. Facing a pandemic is worrisome on many levels. The natural fear of serious illness creates a biochemical difference that affects our minds and bodies, she said.

More YOGA, **PAGE 11**

Yoga

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One way to de-escalate the fear and concern is to reframe the activities of the day to ask ourselves if we could see the day as a challenge— looking to what we can do rather than what we cannot do, according to Nashed. Amazingly, that shift in perspective stops the release of excess cortisol into our bodies and provides positive chemicals (hormones) to help us with challenges, boosting immunity.

In yoga and meditation practices, participants are always practicing how to meet challenges in (usually) small ways, such as trying to balance on one foot.

After people have taken a couple of yoga classes, they realize that they are engaging happily in challenges, pose by pose.

For now, Nashed and her life partner, John Parsons, are teaching yoga and meditation on the platform Zoom. The classes are free and open to all.

For more information go to *www.kimnashedyoga.com.*

Kate Cone Brancaccio is a writer in Waterville, who took her first yoga class in 1973 at Colby College. She still bends, but not as far.

Contributed photo

Uncle Dean's Natural Market in Waterville offers a great selection of local organic produce to help customers create delicious fresh smoothies.

KIM'S IMMUNE-SUPPORT SMOOTHIE

- 1 Carrot
- 1 Banana
- 1 Clementine
- 1 1/8-1/4" slice of peeled ginger root
- 1/4-1/2 cup OJ
- juice of 1//2 Lemon (if you like a bit of tart. Omit if you'd like a sweeter taste)
- 1/2" Turmeric root (if you like the flavor. Omit if it's too bold)
- 1 tsp ground Cinnamon
- 1/2 cup plain Yogurt (sweetened yogurt will defeat the purpose)
- 1 cup crushed ice

Add the ingredients one at a time, in this order, blending after each addition, in a high powered blender. And drink to your health!

The super nice thing about smoothies is that they are adaptable to your taste preferences, according to Nashed. Maybe you'd like to add pineapple, or start with a handful of spinach as your first ingredient. If you start out with greens as the first item in your smoothie, don't be alarmed if it ends up looking like swamp water— it will taste better than it looks!

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• **About Us:** Kennebec Valley Family Dentistry (KVFD) is a 501 C 3 safety net dental clinic founded in 2008. Our mission is to provide quality dental care including preventive, restorative and extraction services for adults and children in Kennebec County and surrounding areas. We provide services for uninsured, self-pay. Underinsured, MaineCare,and Private Insurance patients.

Kim Nashed Yoga, LLC

- **Contact Information:** Waterville, ME 04901
- **Phone:** (207) 649-9301
- **Web:** www.kimnashedyoga.com
- **Email:** kim@kimnashedyoga.com
- **Founded:** 2016
- **President:** Kim Nashed Yoga, LLC
- **Employees:** 2
- **Hours:** Weekly Yoga and Meditation Classes, Special Events and Yoga and Meditation Retreats in Europe

• **About Us:** We enjoy sharing all the benefits of Yoga and Meditation. Our classes promote deep wellbeing in body and mind, for All Levels. Beginners are welcome! Kim Nashed Yoga is online now, and will transition to in-person classes at the Children's Discovery Museum in Waterville when it is safe to gather together as a community. And as European borders open safely we will resume our European Yoga and Meditation Retreats. Yoga, Meditation and Exploration for all!

MAINE-LY ELDER CARE

- **Contact Information:** 28 Center St. Oakland, ME 04963
- **Phone:** (207) 465-3249
- **Web:** www.maine-lyeldercare.com
- **Chief Executive:** Denise Rogers-Stevens, RN
- **Founded:** 1999
- **Employees:** 100
- **Hours:** Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

• **About Us:** Maine-ly Elder Care provides Quality of Life Solutions to the people and communities we serve. We provide nursing, personal care by Christian caregivers, homemaking, transportation and home maintenance and repairs.

MAINEGENERAL HEALTH

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  149 North Street Waterville, ME 04901
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- **Email:** public@mainegeneral.org
- **Web:** www.mainegeneral.org
- **Founded:** 1898
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NEWPORT EYE CARE - WATERVILLE

- **Locations/Phone:** Newport Eye Care 166 Silver Street Waterville, ME 04901 (207) 873-3500

  Newport Eye Care 419 Moosehead Trail Newport, ME 04953 (207) 355-3333
- **Web:** www.newporteyecare.net
- **Email:** office@newporteyecare.net
- **Doctors on Staff:** Ian M. Jones, O.D. Kiran B. Jones, O.D.
- **Employees:** 18
- **Founded:** 2006
- **Hours:** Monday - Thursday 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

About Us: We offer comprehensive eye exams with state of the art technology that allows our doctors to diagnose and treat many different eye diseases. This allows us to keep your eyes healthy. We also offer a full range of services which include, specialized contact lenses, a full optical department with a premium selection of the most popular eyewear on the market. We believe quality of eye care goes beyond writing a prescription for medication or glasses. We take pride in the services we offer our patients. Most insurances accepted!

Plate

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ways, inflammation and self-destruction of abnormal cells" in laboratory studies.

According to AICR, no more than one-third of each meal should be made up of dairy products, poultry, fish or red meat. They recommend limiting red meat (beef, lamb and pork) to no more than 12 to 18 ounces a week. They report that processed meats, such as bacon, sausage, salami and hotdogs pose a greater cancer risk than unprocessed red meat.

AICR also advises that food choices that are highly processed and contain a lot of fat or added sugar make it more difficult to maintain a healthy weight ,which has been shown to play an important role in reducing the risk of at least 12 forms of cancer.

Chewing vegetables well maximizes benefit

Klimis-Zacas said that cruciferous vegetables, such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and brussel sprouts have an effect on the activity of liver enzymes to promote detoxification and upregulate their gene expression to help protect the body from cancer. She said those vegetables should be chewed well to obtain the most benefit because a compound from those foods known as "sulforaphane" is released during chewing, which effects liver enzyme activity. She said the protective effect from those vegetables lasts about 12 to 24 hours, which is why these foods should be eaten on a daily basis.

According to Klimis-Zacas, the flavonoids found in blueberries, citrus fruits and tea have been associated with a lower incidence of ovarian and breast cancer and have been shown to decrease inflammation. She also said that her recent laboratory research showed substances referred to as "anthocyanins," present in high levels in wild blueberries, inhibit cell migration and new blood vessel formation and thus may affect cancer progression. Blueberry bioactive compounds may speed impact wound healing aside from the potential of blueberries to lower cancer risk.

Klimis-Zacas was recently awarded a $25,000 grant from the Maine Technology Institute for her research involving wild blueberries and wound healing. She reported that wild blueberries have properties that help to speed wound healing. She hopes to develop a topical cream that can be used on wounds and market it commercially.

CREAMY BROCCOLI APPLE SALAD

This recipe is a delicious blend of fruits, veggies and protein meant to help someone living with cancer meet their basic nutritional needs. Greek yogurt is also high in probiotics and whey protein, which may play a role in immune system support. Due to the nutrient density of this snack, it is perfect for those with reduced appetite.

Ingredients

4 cups broccoli florets
1/2 cup carrots, shredded
1/2 red onion, sliced thin
2 apples, diced
1/2 cup pecans, chopped
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1 cup plain Greek yogurt
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 Tbsp. honey
Salt and pepper, to taste

Makes 8 servings (1 cup). Per serving: 160 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 5 mg cholesterol, 26 g carbohydrates, 3 g protein, 4 g dietary fiber, 330 mg sodium, 20 g sugar.

Directions

In large bowl, combine broccoli, carrots, onion, apples, pecans and cranberries.

In separate bowl, whisk together yogurt, lemon juice and honey.

Combine yogurt mixture with vegetable mixture and toss well. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Chill until ready to serve.

Notes

Full fat Greek yogurt can be used to promote additional caloric intake for weight gain. Adding more lemon juice may also improve the taste profile for someone with mild dysgeusia.

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